

MR.
price
Branded Bargains

LIGHT THE WAY





Welcome to "Light The Way" a celebration of inclusion, talent, and collaboration.

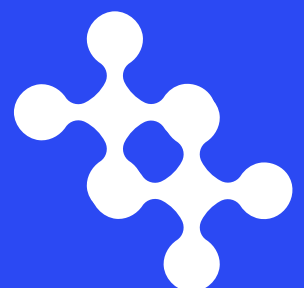
As we gather here, we shine a spotlight on the journeys, talents, and stories of individuals who have overcome barriers, embraced opportunities, and paved the way toward a more inclusive future.

This event is a platform for storytelling, shared learning, and meaningful connections.

We hope this day inspires you to embrace inclusivity and champion the diverse talents that enrich our communities.

Table of Contents

Agenda	01
Opening Ceremony	02
Panel Discussion	03
Skills-First Hiring	04
Fireside Chat Self-Employment & Social Enterprises	05
Partner Showcase	06
Book Launch DJ Kelleher's Illustrated Poetry Collection	09
Contact Information	10



Agenda

08:45 – 09:10 - Arrival & Registration

- Art Exhibition

09:10 – 09:35 - Opening Ceremony

- Welcome Speech: Edel McSorley, Operations Director, MrPRICE Branded Bargains
- Opening Remarks: Minister Dara Calleary, Department of Social Protection
- Master of Ceremonies (MC): Gerard Lawlor, MrPRICE Branded Bargains Newbridge

09:35 – 10:20 - Employment Panel Discussion

- Stories of empowerment, breaking barriers, and future aspirations.
- Key Focus Areas:
 - Career Journeys: Overcoming challenges and reaching milestones.
 - Inclusive Workplace Practices: Effective strategies for fostering inclusion.
 - Future Aspirations: Enhancing accessibility and opportunities.
 - Breaking Stereotypes: Personal experiences of challenging societal expectations.

10:20 – 10:30 - Skills-First Hiring

- Aidan McLaughlin , Director of Inclusion Marketing, Indeed

10:30 – 11:00 - Fireside Chat: Self-Employment & Social Enterprises

11:00 – 11:20 - Break / Refreshments

11:20 – 12:20 - Partner Showcase

- Highlight successful disability employment initiatives - Shine a light on meaningful partnerships and employment pathways

12:20 – 12:40 - Book Launch - DJ Kelleher's Illustrated Poetry Collection

- Live readings and a Q&A session

12:40 – 12:50 - Q&A Session

12:50 – 13:00 - Closing Speech

- Bobbie Hickey - Equality, Diversity, Inclusion People Officer, MrPRICE Branded Bargains

Opening Ceremony

Opening Speech

Edel McSorley

***Operations Director
MrPRICE Branded Bargains***



Opening Remarks

***Minister Dara Calleary
Department of Social Protection***



Master of Ceremonies (MC)

Gerard Lawlor

***MrPRICE Branded Bargains Newbridge
A speaker with an acquired disability***



Panel Discussion

- **Theme:** Stories of empowerment, breaking barriers, and future aspirations.
- **Key Focus Areas:**
 - a. Career Journeys: Overcoming challenges and reaching milestones.
 - b. Inclusive Workplace Practices: Effective strategies for fostering inclusion.
 - c. Future Aspirations: Enhancing accessibility and opportunities.
 - d. Breaking Stereotypes: Personal experiences of challenging societal expectations



Karl Kavanagh
(MrPRICE Coolock)



Patrick Collins
(MrPRICE Nenagh)



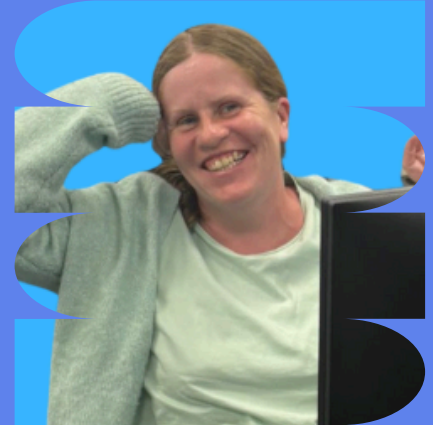
Jack Doyle
(MrPRICE Arklow)



Edel Kavanagh
(MrPRICE Tallaght)



Seadna O'Hara
(MrPRICE Blanchardstown)



Edel O'Gorman
(Accounts Team)



Daniel Glynn
(MrPRICE IT Internship NLN)



Moderator : Anne Marie McDonnell
(NLN / Rehab Group)

Skills-First Hiring

Aidan McLaughlin

Director of Inclusion Marketing, Indeed



Aidan McLaughlin is Director of Inclusion Marketing at Indeed, the world's leading hiring and matching platform. He leads strategic storytelling and marketing initiatives that promote accessible hiring and inclusive work environments. His work focuses on expanding access to opportunity through Skills-First Hiring and advancing digital accessibility as a core business priority.

At Indeed, Aidan champions campaigns that elevate marginalised voices and break down systemic barriers to employment — helping people get jobs, no matter their background or ability.

Fireside Chat

Self-Employment & Social Enterprises

Moderator: Jeanne McDonagh

CEO of the Open Doors Initiative, Jeanne has over 30 years experience in DEI, politics, campaigning, mental health and LGBTQ+ issues and board work. She has bipolar which informs her work through lived experience.



Miriam Spollen

CEO and Founder of Connections Arts Centre, a social enterprise dedicated to supporting neurodivergent adults and adults with intellectual disabilities through inclusive arts, education, and community programmes. With a background in social entrepreneurship and a deep commitment to accessibility, Miriam has led the development of award-winning initiatives such as Connecting Artists and Creative TY Connections, which promote visibility, creativity, and inclusive learning. Under her leadership, Connections Arts Centre has become a national model for inclusive practice, recognised for its meaningful impact and innovation.



Kevin Gregory

Director of Social Enterprise & Employability with Rehab Group, a social enterprise with over 300 people with and without a disability across Ireland, Scotland and Poland. Rehab Enterprises provides services to customers in recycling and secure destruction in digital and paper format as well as kitting and logistics from large multinationals to smaller indigenous companies. Kevin joined Rehab Group in 2023 as Director of Strategy and Business Development an organisation of over 3,000 employees. Prior to joining Rehab Group, Kevin trained as an accountant and held senior Finance, HR, Governance and Operations roles in a range of for profit and not for profit organisations such as Barnardos, Focus Ireland, Business in the Community and Savills. Kevin is a Board member of the Irish Blood Transfusion Service and has served previously on non-profit boards.



Professor Thomas Cooney

Professor of Entrepreneurship at Technological University Dublin, and he is also Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurial Behaviour, Inclusion and Innovation at TU Dublin. He is a former President of the International Council for Small Business (2012-13) and of the European Council for Small Business (2009-11), and was Chair of the ICSB 2014 World Entrepreneurship Conference. He is a policy advisor to Governments, European Commission, OECD and other international organisations. He is a Director of two enterprises and works in various capacities with a range of businesses. He has published widely on the topic of entrepreneurship, particularly in the area of minority / disadvantaged entrepreneurship, and his works include 14 books, 26 book chapters, 40 academic journal articles, and 21 case studies. He has developed customized entrepreneurship courses for persons with disabilities, refugees, marginalized youth, prisoners, and other disadvantaged communities. Further details about his work can be found at www.thomascooney.ie.

Partner Showcase

- *Highlight successful disability employment initiatives*
- *Shine a light on meaningful partnerships and employment pathways*

Anne Marie McDonnell

Head of Service & Programme Design and Development at National Learning Network (NLN) / Rehab Group



Anne Marie McDonnell is Head of Programme and Service Design in National Learning Network, part of Rehab Group. As a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellor, she has over 25 years' experience working in the areas of Disability Inclusion, Further Education and Training and Inclusive Employment. Anne Marie also worked as a technical advisor on Disability Inclusive Employment Practices in Public Employment Services in the Middle East. She is currently a Board Member with the European Platform for Rehabilitation.

Discover Our Collaboration in Action by Clicking Here ([NLN Video from MrPRICE website](#))

Laura Donnellan

Explore Team Leader at Chime

Laura Donnellan is the Coordinator of the Explore Mentoring Programme with Chime the National Charity for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People. With nearly 30 years of experience in residential care, community development and programme coordination, she has a passion for inclusive support systems. She leverages her expertise to foster meaningful mentoring relationships that empower Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in accessing further and higher education and employment. She works closely with employers to promote more inclusive hiring practices, with a particular focus on increasing workforce diversity through the inclusion of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. Laura is passionate about breaking down barriers to employment and creating meaningful opportunities for all individuals to thrive in the workplace.



A portrait of Debbie Merrigan, a woman with blonde hair, smiling. The background is a bright yellow with abstract, jagged shapes.

Debbie Merrigan

**Head of Employment & Over 18's
Transitions at AslAm**

Debbie joined AslAm in 2021 and established the Adult Support Department. Since then, she has worked closely with both industry and the Autistic community to level the playing field and address the 85% unemployment/ underemployment rate among Autistic adults in Ireland.

Marie Devitt

**Business Partnerships Manager at the Trinity
Centre for People with Intellectual
Disabilities (TCPID)**

Marie Devitt is the Business Partnerships Manager in the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities in the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. Marie is responsible for building the TCPID Business Partners Network and securing both financial and practical support from the business community for the TCPID. She works closely with the TCPID Business Partners to develop and nurture the partnerships and to source and support work placements, paid internships and employment opportunities for students and graduates of the programme.

Marie has an honours degree in French and Italian from University College Dublin and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Business Studies from the Michael Smurfit Graduate School of Business. Marie brings over 20 years of business experience to the Business Partnerships Manager role, primarily in the areas of business development, strategic planning, product development, marketing and customer relationship management.

A portrait of Fiona Ward, a woman with short brown hair, wearing a dark blazer over a white top. The background is a bright blue with abstract, jagged shapes.

Fiona Ward

**Assistant Secretary, Employment
Services, Department of Social
Protection**

Fiona Ward is Assistant Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, with responsibility for Employment Services, encompassing the public employment service, policy and operations, comprising employment activation supports, Intreo employment services countrywide and Intreo partner employment services (contracted services), as well as active labour market employment programmes and employer relations/engagement. She also has responsibility for the Department's European Union and International Division, and she serves as Ireland's representative on the Board of the EU Public Employment Services Network. Fiona has held many roles across the Department at senior management levels with a strong track record of service delivery and service modernisation.

Lyndsey Ann Litton

Employment Officer at Kare



Lyndsey Ann Litton is an experienced professional currently employed by KARE, an organisation that provides a comprehensive range of services for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. She has dedicated the past 25 years to KARE, making a meaningful impact through various roles. Previously, Lyndsey served as a Local Service Leader within the Day Service. Over two years ago, she transitioned to the Supported Employment team, where she now holds the position of Employment Officer. In this role, she is responsible for identifying, securing, and maintaining meaningful paid employment opportunities for the individuals KARE supports. Lyndsey is passionate about the transformative power of employment, recognising that it not only provides financial independence but also fosters a sense of purpose, promotes inclusion, and affirms each individual's valued role within society.

Lyndsey recently featured in a video about Supported Employment, sharing insights on inclusive hiring practices and the value of tailored support for individuals entering the workforce.

[Click here to view](#)

Bridget Kelly

National Programme Manager, Traveller

Apprenticeship Incentivisation Programme at Irish Traveller Movement



Bridget Kelly is a Traveller woman and Traveller activist who works from a human rights-based approach. Bridget's career has spanned a number of roles in both local and National Traveller organisations, including the National Traveller Women Forum and the Galway Traveller Movement. Bridget is currently the manager of the Traveller apprenticeship incentivisation programme within the Irish Traveller movement. Bridget has a degree in Community, Youth & family studies from the University of Galway and has completed several pieces of research, mainly around her interest in advocating for labour market equality for Travellers. Bridget believes in Full Equality for All .

Moderated By

Steven Brosnan

DEI Officer , MrPRICE Branded Bargains



Book Launch DJ Kelleher's Illustrated Poetry Collection



Spring, the time of year when the simple and meaningful things get respect

It's the first day of spring,
the time when the blue skies return,
to welcome the birds who are coming home,
as the colours of the rainbow in the sky brightly burn.

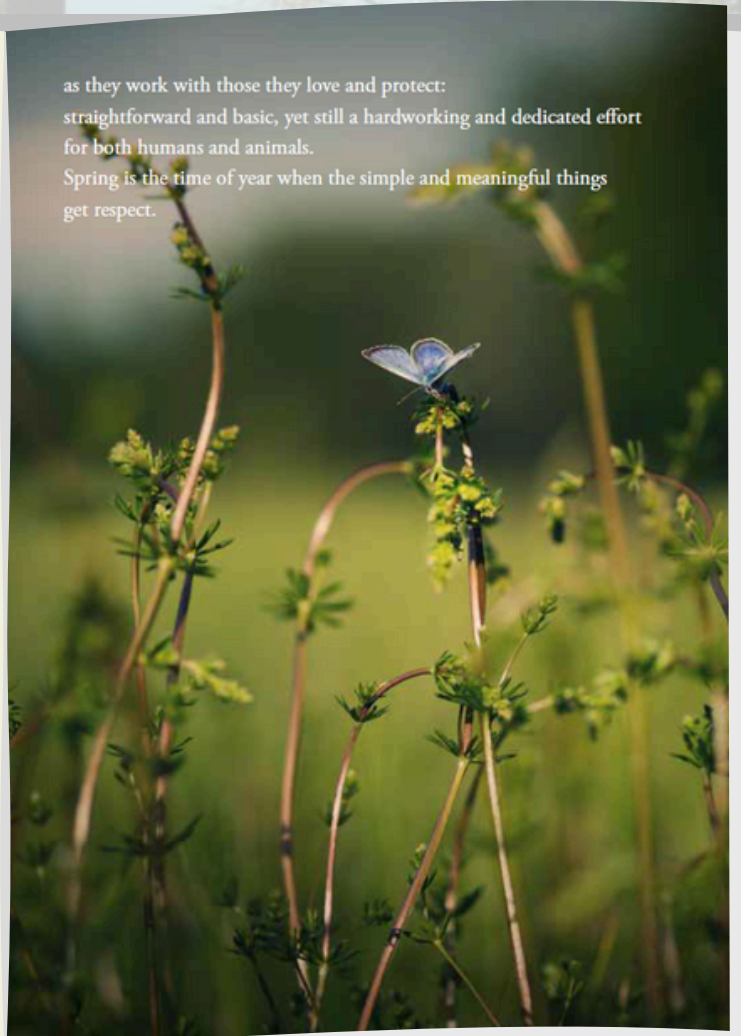
We see people today talking more through screens than face to face;
it's a sign that times are changing but also a sign to think of past pleasures,
the things that we can do from home can have a greater impact on us
by going outside,
further proving that a normal, physical, and friendly conversation is truly
a great treasure.

This is the time when the sun shines its spring rays,
and with the help of water from its fellow clouds
it can give life to even a wilted flower,
just like the sky above, it brings colours to the land below,
further proving that above all, Mother Nature does possess great power.

When we want to write a letter to someone who lives somewhere else,
we could do it by email, as it's faster, and then put it away,
but it's important to continue to do it on pen and paper,
adding heart, dedication and mindfulness to what we do,
as we gain a greater benefit in every way.

We see bees on flowers collecting pollen and bringing it home to make honey,
showing that big things do come in small packages,

as they work with those they love and protect:
straightforward and basic, yet still a hardworking and dedicated effort
for both humans and animals.
Spring is the time of year when the simple and meaningful things
get respect.





DJ Kelleher

**Sales Assistant
MrPRICE Kilkenny**

Official launch of DJ's book of poems.

- *Highlight: Live readings and a Q&A session with DJ.*
- *Q&A session*

Introductions by:

Martina Cato

Introductory Skills Training Instructor
National Learning Network, part of The Rehab Group



Contact Information

Thank You: To all partners, speakers, panelists, and attendees who made today possible

Below, you'll find the contact information for all of today's speakers in case you'd like to connect or follow up.



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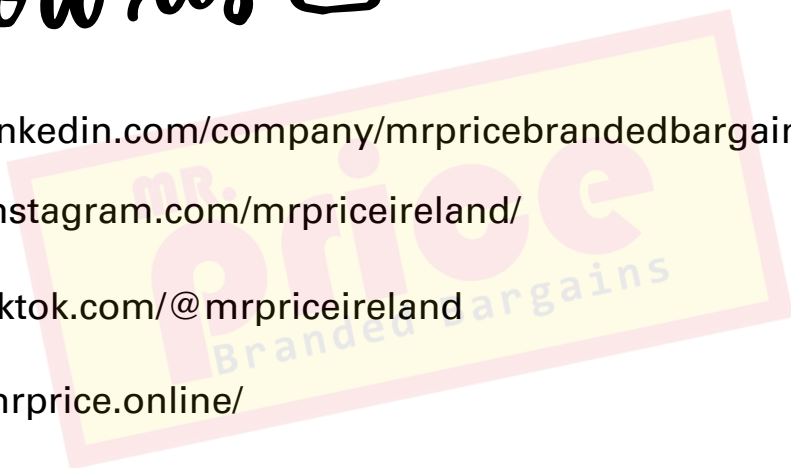
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towards a
fairer,
more
rewarding
employment
landscape.

WORK WITH US



Founder Assistiv Ireland

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Alan Craughwell



GAISCE
THE PRESIDENT'S
AWARD



Seirbhís Phríosúin
na hÉireann
Irish Prison Service

Join us for

GENERATION CHANGE

Embracing New Horizons

A Powerful event that shines a light on the transformative impact of employing people with experience of the criminal justice system.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Inspiring guest speakers including employers embracing inclusive hiring practices and people with lived experience of the criminal justice system.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

- This event will also celebrate the role of the Gaisce award for young people currently in custody engaging in the Award and explore how the programme is helping them to unlock new pathways to personal growth and employment.

Whether you are an employer, policymaker, advocate, or simply passionate about the social impact of second chance opportunities, this event offers a unique chance to learn, connect and be part of a movement for change.

www.gaisce.ie

DATE:

9th

October
2025

TIME:

10^{am} - 3^{pm}

VENUE:

Indeed Ireland, Sir
John Rogerson's
Quay, Dublin 2



OUR COMMITMENTS TO INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT

In partnership with our disability employment allies

At MrPRICE we are proud to stand for respect, inclusion, and opportunity for all. We are dedicated to creating a workplace where every individual is valued, supported, and empowered to succeed.

As part of this commitment, we pledge to:

Create meaningful opportunities by partnering with organisations that champion disability inclusion.

- Remove barriers to ensure that our hiring practices, workplaces, and development programmes are accessible to all.*
- Listen and learn from the lived experiences of people with disabilities to continuously grow and improve.*
- Build a better future by taking purposeful steps—one person, one opportunity, and one conversation at a time.*

This is not about ticking a box. It is about showing up with purpose, growing with curiosity, and fostering a workplace where everyone can truly thrive.

