

# Case Study – Early Warning Pilot

## Introduction

The man was identified as a potential client under the Early Warning Pilot scheme which had been started with the guidance of Pobal in 2009. As part of this initiative, representatives of the Department Of Agriculture from Limerick and North Cork, Department of Social Protection, H.S.E. Limerick and representatives from Ballyhoura Development Limited came together to provide a service to clients who were in need of support.

The case studies centre on one farmer in North Cork who was living in very poor circumstances.

The individual farmer was identified by the veterinary office of the Department of Agriculture in Limerick. He was a 62 year old single man with some literacy issues. Two years ago his house was in very bad repair and he was living in one room as it was the only heated room in the house with one small stove. He also had little income and a number of cattle which were not registered which meant his herd was 'locked up' and he could not sell cattle. This led to his identification by the District Veterinary Office who noticed that his living conditions were very poor.

## Activities

Once the person was identified he was visited by Ballyhoura Development's Development Officer. His living conditions were appalling and the Development Officer suggested that he should apply for Farm Assist. He was assisted in filling out an application and the associated paperwork was assembled by the Development Officer. The application was dealt with very quickly by the Department of Social Protection. In one month he received a Farm Assist payment and at the ensuing meeting of the Early Warning Pilot, the H.S.E representative suggested that the farmer would be eligible for a once off hardship welfare grant to repair his house.

To maximise the potential of this €4,000 grant, Ballyhoura Development Limited suggested that Ballyhoura Rural Services which is part of the Rural Community Care Network should be contacted to carry out the house improvements. With the aid of the Rural Services workers the works were carried out in the following six weeks with an input of €4,500 in labour value from Rural Services. New doors were fitted and the house was insulated. They also fitted a new boiler and four radiators. This maximised the potential of the once off payment as there was no labour costs involved. The house is now warm and comfortable and the farmer has a regular social welfare payment in the form of Farm Assist. The farmer is now in receipt of €123.00 per week.

In the meantime he was also being assisted with his animal registration and identification problem by Agriculture Government Officer from the Limerick District Veterinary Office. His issues were resolved and he was allowed to sell some of his cattle to generate some income.

## **Lessons Learned**

An interagency approach is required to support and identify people as it enables agencies to support the individuals in need. This man was identified at an earlier stage than would normally happen because of this approach. This allowed services that this farmer required to be put in place in a very speedy manner. From his initial Farm Assist application to the completed refurbishment of his house only ten weeks elapsed. It also highlighted the fact that some people are totally unaware of supports that are available and because of literacy issues some people cannot avail of these services without one to one support. Every agency became more aware of services that were available from the other agencies and are now in a better position to support their clients because of this knowledge.

## **Success**

The farmer is now very comfortable and has a reasonable standard of living. The success of this case led to further meetings of the E.W.P. and other farmers in need were identified. The farmer has been able to allow his farming enterprise to develop and now has a business which although not viable without the Farm Assist payment is providing him with a decent standard of living. The level of need was great and regular Farm Assist payments mean that the man's diet and his social life has improved as he has tax and insurance on his car and is able to go to social events.

## **Conclusion**

An interagency approach leads to early identification of problems. This ensures a speedy and coordinated delivery of services, optimising the potential of funding for the benefit of the individual. The potential of an interagency support is it maximises the brokerage potential from all agencies for the client. In the initial year this client received €14,896 in support and receives €6396 annually. It also highlighted the lack of knowledge amongst the agencies of each other's services and created links amongst the organisations to speedily address cases that arise in the future.