

Start the Journey, Empower Yourself: Aware to showcase Life Skills Programme at National Ploughing Championships

Mental health organisation Aware highlights extensive services available to rural communities nationwide

- 450,000 (1 in 10) people in Ireland experience depression
- 45,000 (1 in 100) people with bipolar disorder
- Aware offers support, education and information services nationwide

Ireland. Thursday 31st August 2017: Mental health organisation Aware will highlight the wide range of support, education and information services available to rural communities throughout Ireland at the 86th annual National Ploughing Championships (19th-21st September). Proudly hosted by ESB Networks, the Aware tent will encourage visitors to 'Start the Journey, Empower Yourself' offering a taste of its popular Life Skills programme. Information will also be available on nationwide support services for those affected by depression and bipolar, along with the organisation's free programmes for adults and adolescents, designed to educate and empower people to look after their mental health.

Brid O'Meara, Director of Services at Aware commented: *"We are delighted to be attending the National Ploughing Championships for the first time this year and see it as an excellent opportunity to engage with people from rural communities all over Ireland. Depression can be a very isolating condition and we want people to know that the supports are there for them – whether it's in person at one of our 37 support groups nationwide or a confidential conversation over phone or email."*

Marguerite Sayers, Managing Director at ESB Networks added: *"ESB Networks is delighted to host Aware at our tent at this year's Ploughing Championships. We have worked with communities throughout Ireland for the last 90 years, and want to continue to work with and support those communities in different ways. We are therefore very happy to help Aware connect with people from all over Ireland as they visit our stand at the event this year. We hope that many people will take the opportunity to find out about the services, information and support that Aware can provide to people experiencing emotional and life difficulties."*

Commenting on the Life Skills programme and Aware's commitment to empower individuals to look after their mental health, **O'Meara** said: *"Our adult and school-based programmes are also available on a nationwide basis. These free programmes are based on the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and aim to equip individuals with the skills to deal with the daily stresses of modern life and begin the journey to healthier and more confident living."*

In addition to the up-coming partnership at The National Ploughing Championships, ESB supports Aware's Life Skills for Schools programme through ESB's Energy for Generations Fund. Commenting on the relationship, **Pat O'Doherty, Chief Executive of ESB** said: *"ESB's Energy for Generations Fund is proud to partner with Aware in a 3-year strategic partnership supporting the national roll-out of their Life Skills for Schools programme for Transition Year students. ESB staff themselves decide on priority areas in our Corporate Social Responsibility activities, and how to support positive mental health in young people is particularly close to our hearts. Our aim with the Energy for Generations Fund is to maximise the impact of our investment by taking a more strategic approach to effect change. We recognise funding is only part of the jigsaw – which is why we leverage the skills and resources we have within the company to bring about more sustainable and positive outcomes for Aware."*

The Aware and ESB Networks tents are situated at Block 3, Row 11, Stand No. 269.

Overview of Aware Services:

Support

Aware offers three core support services: Support Groups, Support Line and Support Mail.

Support Groups offer individuals the opportunity to talk openly about depression, bipolar and other related mood disorders and their impact. There are 37 support groups for individuals experiencing depression or bipolar located throughout Ireland, in addition to a number of specialised groups to include a Young Adults Support Group and Perinatal Support Group.

The Aware Support Line operates 7 days a week from 10am – 10pm. Freephone 1800 80 48 48.

The Aware Support Mail provides support and information supportmail@aware.ie with all emails answered within a 24hr period.

Education

Aware aims to educate and empower people to look after their mental health through adult, workplace and school based education programmes. The Life Skills programme is a free 6-week programme based on principles of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and is available to adults in a group setting or online. Aware offers a number of free school based education programmes to include Life Skills for Schools and Beat the Blues, a 70 minute talk for senior cycle secondary school students.

Aware has recently introduced a free Relatives & Friends programme and also offers Wellness @Work, a mental health education and training programme for employees and managers.

Information

Aware provides information on depression and bipolar disorder for individuals who are experiencing the mood related disorder, those who are concerned for a family member or friend and people who are seeking to learn more about the conditions. Extensive information on depression, bi-polar, Aware services, self-help tips and the monthly Aware Public Lecture Series are available at www.aware.ie

-ends-

MEDIA CONTACT

Jamie Good

Communications & Events Manager at Aware

Jamie.good@aware.ie

01 237 4908 / 087 9408028

ABOUT AWARE

Aware is the national organisation providing support, education and information services around depression and bipolar disorder. Founded in 1985 the organisation developed in response to the clear need for information, understanding and support, both for individuals who have had a diagnosis of depression or bipolar as well as family members supporting a loved one. www.aware.ie

ABOUT ESB'S ENERGY FOR GENERATIONS FUND

ESB's Energy for Generations Fund sees over €2m per year disbursed across a range of community and issues-based initiatives. Each year the Fund awards €1m in direct funding through a quarterly fund to charities working in the areas of suicide, homelessness and education access and support. A further

€1million annually is allocated across a range of initiatives including staff volunteering, support for ElectricAid, wind farm community fund, and other CSR initiatives.

More information on the Fund is available at <https://www.esb.ie/acting-responsibly/community-stem-and-the-arts/esb-corporate-responsibility>