

OVERVIEW OF SHEP TRAINING PROGRAMME



THE SHEP CERTIFICATE IN FACILITATION COURSE 2023 INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE FILLING IN THE APPLICATION FORM

Introduction

The SHEP Certificate in Facilitation is a largely experiential **intermediate-level course in facilitation** which supports participants to develop a basic competence in the skills necessary to facilitate group processes in a variety of group settings. Practical skills development is complemented by continuing attention to the personal awareness needed by group leaders in order to be able to remain grounded and to be emotionally present to group members.

The approach in the SHEP Certificate in Facilitation Course is one which emphasises the use of the self in facilitation. For this reason, the SHEP course provides opportunities for personal and group process work, along with skills development and engagement with theory. The here-and-now experience of the group provides opportunities for learning about group-work – **theory in practice**. Facilitation practice is conducted in pairs, in small groups and in the whole group.

This training course is intended to serve as a **foundation for SHEP's specialised practitioner training courses** in areas such as the delivery of personal development courses, the provision of advocacy support, and working as a facilitator in community or organisational settings.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Those applying for this course should normally have satisfactorily completed the **SHEP Certificate in Personal Development course** and the **SHEP Certificate in Social Awareness and Community Empowerment**. An opinion on each applicant's readiness for training may be sought from trainers on earlier courses in The Social and Health Education Project. The trainers will be asked only in general terms for their views of the applicants' readiness to undertake intermediate-level training as facilitators. Issues shared in confidence with trainers by individual participants *will not* be discussed. It will be assumed that, in applying for the course, trainees agree to the views of trainers being sought in this way.
- People may be exempted from the SHEP Certificate in Personal Development (SCPD) course requirement because of equivalent work done elsewhere. Such work done elsewhere, needs to be recognised as equivalent to the SCPD course, through an application to **SHEP's Recognition of Prior Learning process**. In such instances, applicants may be asked to provide a reference from a

trainer who worked with them, giving their view as to their readiness for intermediate-level training in group facilitation.

- c) People who have not completed the Social Awareness course, are eligible to apply and can be offered places on the Facilitation course subject to their commitment to undertake the Social Awareness and Community Empowerment (SACE) course at the next feasible opportunity (or through establishing equivalence via the Recognition of Prior Learning process). When offering places, priority is given to those who have the Social Awareness course completed.

I'm not sure I want to be a group facilitator – is there any point in participating?

Yes! Many people have found that the course brought many benefits - increased self-confidence, better relationships with family and friends, greater effectiveness at work, encouragement to pursue further education.

When can I apply? Applications are now been taken.

Latest application date - Monday 23rd January 2023.

How are places allocated?

Priority of offer of places will be given first to applicants who have completed both the SHEP Personal Development year and the Social Awareness & Community Empowerment courses and secondly to those with exemptions (through SHEP's Recognition of Prior Learning process) or who are making an undertaking related to the Social Awareness Course. Priority is also given to those who have a clear sense of how they intend to use the training in future years. Some applicants may be asked to come for interview. Places among those considered ready for training will be allocated largely on a **first-come, first-served basis**. Early application is advised.

How is the course structured?

SHEP is aiming to organise one group in 2023 (Blended with **60% of course time in-person and 40% online**).

The course will involve 111 contact hours in total from March to November, with a break in the summer. (20 weekly on-line sessions and 10 weekend days – this is 60% in-person overall). We are aiming for one course to run (subject to sufficient applications) commencing in early March 2023; we are planning for a group of 16 participants, working with two regular trainers. Over the course of the year, participants are also expected to undertake a total of 18 hours' collaborative learning in small groups.

This year we are opting for the SHEP Facilitation course to be blended so as to make it accessible to as wide a geographic spread of people in the Project as possible. The weekly sessions will be on-line and the weekend day sessions in-person. This involves a reconfiguration of the programme to make 60% of it in-person. We consider this is the optimal choice of course design that supports wide geographic access, the necessity for significant in-person contact in facilitation training and the lessening of travel time and cost. It is likely that at least a third of the physical location of in-person sessions will be Cork City - the geographic spread of the group participants will be considered in finalising the location of the remaining in-person sessions – a decision around this will be clear when offers of places are being made.

Early in the training, small learning groups will be formed and will commence meeting to discuss and explore material relevant to the theory of groups and the practice of group facilitation. Each learning group will undertake a small project on group facilitation and will prepare and deliver a presentation to the whole training group. The emphasis of the training in the post-summer period will be on

facilitation practice, with opportunities being provided for trainees to facilitate in different configurations and with a variety of foci.

What approach is used in training?

A variety of training methodologies is used during this course, including formal teaching, experiential exercises, practice sessions, personal development workshops and collaborative learning in small working groups.

Participants on all Social and Health Education Project training courses are encouraged to reflect on their experience and this emphasis continues in the SHEP Certificate in Facilitation course. Because this is the first level of formal skills training in The Social and Health Education Project's training programme, this type of personal reflection extends beyond personal awareness to reflection on skills acquisition and practice and to evaluating the knowledge that has been learnt during the training. For this reason, a course requirement is that participants keep a regular record in a personal learning journal.

Is there assessment?

On-going self-, peer- and trainer-assessment takes place during the course. At the end of the training course, each participant will complete a personal learning evaluation and will hear feedback from their trainers in a one-to-one session.

Do participants receive a certificate?

A certificate will be awarded to those who complete the course satisfactorily. Except in the most exceptional circumstances, attendance at a minimum of 80% of both the evening sessions and of the day-long workshops will be considered essential for satisfactory completion of the course.

Does the course lead on to further training?

Those who successfully complete this course have a considerable number of progression options. Some participants will choose, over time, to complete two or more of the options, depending on interest and circumstances:

- Graduates of this course may apply for one of three **practitioner programmes** currently offered by SHEP (Specialised Community Tutoring, Community Advocacy Practice, and Applied Facilitation in Community & Organisational Settings).
- Graduates of this course may continue training with SHEP by undertaking **stand-alone, open-access modules**, such as the Leadership in the Community course, without committing to undertaking a full programme of practitioner training.
- Graduates of this course qualify for entry to the two-year part-time **SHEP UCC Diploma in Social and Psychological Health Studies (Levels 6 & 7)** which provides participants with a very thorough grounding in the theoretical basis for SHEP's work. (The next cycle will commence in Sept. 2023 with intake early in the year)

What is the course fee?

The cost is **€800 (cost in 2019 was €930)** which continues to be significantly subsidised. In exceptional circumstances, and depending on grant funding, a limited number of bursaries (usually €300) may be available. A Reduced Fee Application form needs to be completed if applying for a bursary. A Mid-West region bursary option is also available. The €800 course fee is payable before taking up a place, although the Project is willing to make payment plans with participants to spread the payments over a period of time. **There is no booking deposit.**

Using Zoom & Booking Rooms

We are using the Zoom platform in SHEP for on-line courses. Access to a Laptop Device is necessary to get the best from the experience and to participate easily on this on-line course. If needed, SHEP may be able to support participants with a loan of a laptop device. SHEP facilitates participants and learning groups to meet using one of the SHEP Zoom accounts and a room in SHEP Project centre for learning group meetings can be booked if there is availability.

Important Information on SHEP Fees & Payment Methods

Summary

Thank you for your interest in training, or further training, with SHEP. Our philosophy is to keep our training **as affordable and as accessible as possible**. The vast majority of our courses have a participant fee, which we try to keep to a minimum (and in the main the fees charged have not increased since 2008). We believe our training offers tremendous value for money. In general, the training fee to each participant is less than €8 per hour.

Because we are core-funded by the HSE, **all SHEP courses are subsidised**. Every participant benefits from this HSE support because without it the standard course fee for all courses would be significantly higher.

The HSE core grant to SHEP is used to cover most of the coordination and administration costs of SHEP courses. Fees collected from participants are used to pay the costs of the two Trainers (and where applicable the module Trainers) who co-facilitate the course and to contribute towards costs such as supervision, promotion, administration, and the presentation of certificates.

The payment of fees is arranged between the participant and SHEP Finance Team who can be contacted if you have a query. It is a deliberate policy in SHEP not to involve Trainers in the collection of participant fees: this is to allow the Trainers to focus on their work with participants. However, should you experience difficulty the important thing is to talk to someone in the Project, and this may include approaching a Trainer if this is what you wish to do.

Depending on the course you may be able spread the payments over a number of months

Our preference is to receive the balance of the fee in one payment when the course place is being offered. We appreciate this is not possible for everyone. For the moment, for most courses, SHEP operates an interest-free **Fees Payment Plan**. This means that the cost of the course may be paid over a number of months (though not longer than the length of the course) on a monthly basis, by Standing Order. If this option is available, and if you wish to apply for it, you will need to complete the Payment Plan Form and Standing Order Mandate (which you will receive with your letter of offer) and return them to SHEP by the agreed date before the course commences. Please do not arrange the standing order independently of SHEP - it needs to be done through the SHEP Finance Dept.

You may be able to source some grant support yourself

Some participants have been supported by their employers or by their Local Development Partnership to undertake training with SHEP. Other participants have received assistance from the Department of Social Protection. St Vincent de Paul has also provided support to some applicants who met certain requirements. SHEP cannot make such applications on behalf of participants, but we encourage you to make your own enquiries.

Booking Deposit

To simplify the application process this autumn, there will be no booking deposit required with the application form.

Reduced Fee Approach in 2023

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Fully Funded Places

Unfortunately, the fully funded place option, which was available for some people on the Personal Development course, is not available on this course.

What happens if you have financial difficulties?

The Project understands that from time to time a participant may experience difficulties with the payment of fees. The Project will be as supportive as possible and will make every reasonable effort to accommodate participants with financial difficulties. However, if such a situation arises, it is essential for the participant to contact either the Financial Officer, the relevant Training and Development staff, or the Director (in confidence) as soon as possible so that a suitable arrangement can be put in place.

A participant who has not paid the fee in full (and who has not made arrangements with SHEP to pay the balance) will not receive a Certificate (or a Statement of Attendance).

What happens if you leave the course before it ends?

It is the policy of The Social and Health Education Project that if a participant leaves the course before it ends he/she is liable to pay in full the cost of training delivered up to his/her last date of attendance, as well as a sum amounting to 20% of the cost of the remainder of the course and that in such instances the initial deposit is also forfeited.

Don't hesitate to contact us if you need assistance

Thank you again for your interest in SHEP training. If you are unsure about any of this and need assistance please don't hesitate to ring us at the main office on (021) 4666180 or on

(087) 7728089 for courses run in Kerry

(085) 8626844 for courses run in Limerick.