



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Our Rural Future: Minister Humphreys announces suite of new initiatives to support Remote Working

- ***Launch of the second phase of Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme***
- ***Connected Hubs Users can claim three free vouchers at facilities across the network***
- ***Some 23 counties to receive funding to attract remote workers to their areas***
- ***Minister announces 'Hub Summit' to take place on November 24th.***

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has today launched a series of new initiatives designed to support and promote Remote Working across the country.

Minister Humphreys launched Phase Two of the Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme – which will see remote workers receive three free vouchers at hubs across the country.

During Phase One of the Scheme, over 3,300 vouchers were used– providing remote workers the opportunity to avail of the benefits of using a digital hub.

Phase Two will run from September 21st-December 31st, 2022 and is aimed at any person registered via ConnectedHubs.ie.

Minister Humphreys launched the new phase of the scheme during a live panel discussion on remote working at the National Ploughing Championships in Ratheniska, County Laois.

Announcing Phase 2 of the Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme, Minister Humphreys said:

"It was fantastic to hear the really excellent feedback from hub managers and users about Phase 1 of the Voucher Scheme.

"This is all about giving people the opportunity to achieve a much better work-life balance through the benefits of their local digital hub.

"Under Phase 2, any user of 'Connected Hubs' can receive three free vouchers at any stage until the end the year.

"Hubs have the potential to make a significant impact on rural communities and our regional towns. Given where I am today, at the National Ploughing Championships, I am delighted to announce that Phase two of the Voucher Scheme is now open."

Phase two of the scheme will run from September 21st to December 31st.

Marketing supports will be in place ensure that potential hub users are aware of the many hubs available for them to use across the country.

Minister Humphreys continued:

“This scheme will run to the end of December so I hope that some of our returning diaspora may consider extending their trips home for Christmas and look at working remotely in a local hub with a strong, reliable broadband connection.

“The scheme is open to any member of the public with an account on [ConnectedHubs.ie](https://connectedhubs.ie). If you haven't already tried a hub, now is the time to do so. I would encourage anyone interested to visit [ConnectedHubs.ie](https://connectedhubs.ie) and register for an account today.”

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Minister also announced that €1.1 million has been provided to local authorities through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme this year to support innovative marketing campaigns to attract remote workers to locations across rural Ireland.

Announcing the funding Minister Humphreys said:

“Funding of up to €50,000 per local authority was available under this measure and I am delighted to see the uptake amongst local authorities, further demonstrating their commitment to growing remote working.

“I very much look forward to seeing the imaginative campaigns each local authority comes up with and maybe a bit of healthy competition between counties as well!”

National Hub Summit

Minister Humphreys also announced that the National Hub Summit will take place on November 24th, bringing together hub managers, representative bodies, state

agencies and government departments to map out the future of the National Hub Network.

The one day summit will take place in County Roscommon, bringing together delegates to participate in workshops, breakout sessions and panel discussions.

Making the announcement Minister Humphreys said:

"This event will bring together all of the key stakeholders involved in co-working, enterprise, research and development and community hubs around the country to discuss the potential of the National Hub Network to fundamentally change the way many of us work, live and do business."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme:

Anybody wishing to register for their free vouchers can do so online at www.connectedhubs.ie or via the ConnectedHubs mobile app.

The Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme is administered via the connectedhubs.ie platform. Vouchers may be redeemed against a day of hot-desk use at participating hubs when booking online.

Registered customers will automatically receive 3 vouchers each, credited to their online profile. Participating hubs may accept up to 50 vouchers each.

National Hub Summit

The Summit will be held in Co Roscommon and will involve representatives from the hub sector, hub users and remote workers, representative and community organisations, commercial operators, state agencies and government departments.

The Summit is being organised by the WDC and DRCD in close collaboration with members of the National Hub Network Inter-departmental Working Group and the wider stakeholder network.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme Marketing Measure

Every local authority was invited to apply for up to €50,000 towards the cost of launching a campaign marketing the remote working opportunities in each local authority area. 23 local authorities have now had funding approved.