

COMBATING PREJUDICE AGAINST THE UNEMPLOYED

Making the most of our human resources

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge all the individuals and organisations who have been of tremendous help in helping to organise and implement the project:

We would firstly like to thank all of the participants from Ballyfermot for their involvement in the project. These men have shown a great interest and dedicated a lot of time to the project both in filling out the questionnaires and taking an active part in the group sessions.

We would also like to thank those employers who took the time and the interest to respond to our requests and fill out the questionnaire.

Special thanks, in particular, are due to Frank Cahill, Christy Dawson and John Daly from the Ballyfermot Local Employment Service, as well as Ms. Anne Delaney, from the Ballyfermot office of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.

Appreciation is also due to the INOU staff members for their help throughout the project. And to Angela Copeland, from the Ballyfermot Resource Centre, where most of the events with the long-term unemployed men, were held.

We would also like to thank the members of the consortium for their support: Patricia Curtain and Ger Walker from FAS, Con Ward from the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs. Pat Delaney and Patricia Callan from the Small Firms Association, Allison Begas and Malcome Byrne from the Chambers of Commerce of Ireland, and Cathal Kelly from the National Union of Journalists.

Sincere thanks to Anne Eustace for her excellent advice, help and support throughout.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the support of the staff of the WRC in particular, Tom Ronayne.

Stephen Grogan, Researcher.

LIST OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
SECTION 1	
Background	5
Research Questions	6-7
Executive Summary	7-18
SECTION 2	
Profile of the Long-Term Unemployed respondents	19
Employment History	19-21
Job-Seeking	21-23
Barriers to Employment	23
SECTION 3	
Profile of the Employers.....	24
Recruitment	24-26
SECTION 4	
Perceptions of each other	26-27
SECTION 5	
Employers & The State Employment Services	27-29
Long-term Unemployed People & State Employment Services	29-30
SECTION 6	
Long-term Unemployed People's Perceptions of the Media	30
Employers Perceptions of the Media	31
SECTION 7	
Recommendations	31-32
APPENDIX:	
Appendix 1 Area Profile of Ballyfermot	33
Appendix 2 (Tables)	34-47
Bibliography	48

SECTION 1

BACKGROUND

The Employment Initiative, is one of the European Unions human resources programmes designed to target particular groups, which face specific difficulties in the labour market.

Within the Employment initiative, Integra aims to improve the employability and access to employment, of people excluded or at a risk of exclusion from the labour market.

Through Integra, organisations such as the INOU, have been able to pilot innovative actions which promote the integration of long-term unemployed men, who are excluded or at risk of exclusion from the labour market. These projects also provide learning for labour market policy and practice.

In the case of the INOU's project "Combating prejudice against the unemployed – Making the most of our human resources", which is a systems development measure, concerned with piloting actions aimed at developing new institutional arrangements and practices in the area of labour market services, training and education.

Unemployed people, particularly long-term unemployed men over the age of 35 years, were the specific target group around which the INOU designed its project, because it is this group in particular, who have experienced persistent exclusion from the Irish labour market over many years.

The labour market context just prior to the beginning of the project in 1996, was such that despite continuous growth in the number of people employed over the preceding two years, long-term unemployment had remained unchanged at 103,300 people or 6.9% of the labour force.

Since the project began in 1998, the continued growth within our economy has substantially reduced both the overall rate of unemployment and, more significantly the rate of long-term unemployment. For the same period in 1998 the rate of long-term unemployment had fallen to 63,500 people or 3.9% of the labour force.

However, and despite these overall improvements, there still remains a significant number of people both currently long-term unemployed and those who have recently experienced long-term unemployment, who suffer labour market exclusion. At the end of the projects cycle in 1999, the number of people long-term unemployed stood at 37,900 or 2.1% of the labour force.

Within this context, the INOU designed its Integra project with the following features:

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To examine the relationship between long-term unemployed people and employers, so as to identify and promote strategies that will contribute to the breaking down of prejudices or misconceptions concerning unemployment and increase the number of job vacancies filled and retained by long-term unemployed people.

In order to meet this overall aim, two objectives were devised in relation to the research

- To identify and document the experience and attitudes of long-term unemployed people, in seeking employment.
- To identify and document the experience and attitudes of employers toward long-term unemployed people.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research with both long-term unemployed people and the owner/managers of Small to Medium sized Enterprises was carried out in four locations throughout Ireland, namely Ballyfermot and Blanchardstown in Dublin, Castlebar in County Mayo and Dundalk in County Louth.

LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

In each of these areas the research with long-term unemployed people involved a structured interview during which the respondent replied to a detailed questionnaire. This was then followed up with four discussion groups.

Through the structured interviews, the men were asked detailed questions about their employment history, the patterns of their job seeking, their use of labour market and services, awareness of training, education and employment options.

The structured interview also examined the respondent's job seeking activities, their interview preparation, the type of work they would most like to do and what they saw as the main barriers to obtaining employment. The respondents were also asked whether they felt employers treated long-term unemployed people differently from others, what had to happen for their employment prospects to improve and what they thought about the media's portrayal of unemployment.

The questionnaire was discussed and agreed by the projects consortium and external consultant, and then piloted with different unemployed people, prior to being implemented.

As mentioned, the respondents in each area were invited to participate in four two-hour group sessions. A discussion element was built into these sessions which enabled the men to interact with each other and allowed the researchers to explore in more detail, how unemployment affects the lives of these men. The aim of the group discussion sessions was to build up a picture of the type of issues and attitudes, which were of concern to the men. One of the other objectives of the group work was to track their progression over the duration of the project. The work with the group in Ballyfermot spanned an eight month period.

Design and implementation of the group sessions

The content of these group sessions was based on four modules:

- The first module was designed to encourage debate and discussion among the long-term unemployed men themselves, about the realities facing unemployed people. Two videos were shown to the men to promote discussion. One was a FÁS promotional video (FÁS Working for you). The other was a video produced by Finnish TV in 1995 titled "Unemployment in Ballymun".
- The second module incorporated a guidance process, which was delivered by the projects external consultant. This guidance module involved the use of an Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ). The main objective was to promote personal development and build confidence. The guidance process provided the participating men with the opportunity to reflect on their current position in a confidential one-to-one session with an occupational psychologist. Each participant was invited to complete an occupational personality questionnaire (OPQ) and was offered a one-to-one feedback based around the results of this questionnaire. The purpose was to facilitate reflection and review tailored to the challenges and issues facing each individual and action planning for the future.
- The third module provided one-to-one feedback to those who participated in the OPQ.
- The fourth and final group session provided information on the local services and programmes, with a speaker from the Ballyfermot Local Employment Service and from the INOU itself. This session also finalised some of the key issues that had arisen

EMPLOYERS

This research was targeted at the owner/managers of micro (less than 10 employees) and small (less than 50 employees) sized enterprises.

A postal questionnaire was developed which was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on the employer's recruitment practices and methodology, their perceptions of long-term unemployed people and their level of awareness and use of labour market services.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What is the employment history of long-term unemployed people?

How does their experience of long periods of unemployment affect their interest in job seeking?

What recruitment and selection methods have and are being used by owner managers, particularly for semi and unskilled positions.

What are the main barriers identified by these long-term unemployed men in finding work?

What are the perceptions and experiences of long-term unemployed people regarding employers?

What are the perceptions of owner/managers toward long-term unemployed people?

What is the experience of and how adequately do the unemployed feel their needs are being met by the various state agencies and schemes?

What level of awareness and experience do owner/managers have concerning the local labour market services?

What level of knowledge and experience do owner/managers have of the financial subsidies available to employers of the long-term unemployed?

What are long-term unemployed peoples and employers perceptions of the media's portrayal of unemployment?

What improvements do these long-term unemployed people feel need to be made on the part of employers/the state?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Profile of the long-term unemployed men

Nine men from the Ballyfermot area of Dublin took part in the interview and questionnaire stage of the research and all of these men participated in the focus group sessions, which followed.

All but one of the men interviewed were over the age of 35 years, the majority aged between 45 – 54 years.

Two thirds of the men (6) are in receipt of Unemployment Assistance (UA), the remaining three were in receipt of invalidity pension.

Only one of the men had been unemployed for less than a year, and he had been on a training course. Two of the men had been unemployed for between one to two years. A third of the men (3) have been unemployed between six to ten years and a further third have been unemployed for ten years or longer.

Overall 66.6% (6) of the men have been unemployed for six years or longer.

None of the nine men had obtained the leaving certificate, two had gained the intermediate certificate. Three of the men had completed primary school and attended secondary school upto the intermediate certificate, three had completed primary school, one man had not.

When asked if the respondents had ever gone back to study at either school or college, two replied that they had

Profile of the employers

Seven employers from the Ballyfermot area participated in the survey, all of which operate within the services sector, primarily in such activities as food packaging and processing, health food and baking. The activities also included vehicle repairs, apparel and waste disposal.

The study with employers concentrated on the owner/managers of small to medium sized enterprises (SME's). All of the companies surveyed employed at least 10 people or more with 2 respondents employing between 10 and 19 people, four employing between 20 and 49 and one company employing more than 50 people.

As such, these companies would be typical examples of small-medium enterprises. Such companies, employing less than 50 employee's, make up 98% of all enterprises and 37% of all employment. ¹

245 people are employed in the respondent companies, with men accounting for 77% (189) of the total workforce and women accounting for 23% (56).

93% (237) of the workforce are employed on a full-time basis, men accounting for 74% (182) of the total and women full-time workers, the remaining 19% (45).

¹ White Paper on Human Resource Development 1997, Department of Enterprise & Employment

THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED MEN & THEIR EMPLOYMENT HISTORY.

This section of the research examined the employment background of the men, looking at their previous occupations, the number of jobs held since leaving school and how their last job came to an end.

Before the current period of unemployment, eight men had been working full-time, and one had been taking part in a training course.

Since leaving school three of the men had held between 3-5 jobs, one man had held between 6-10 jobs and five of the men had held more than 10 jobs each since leaving school.

Prior to becoming unemployed, the men had been employed in a range of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations, primarily within the manufacturing and service sectors

One of the men had been made redundant, one had walked out of his last job, two were dismissed and the remaining five men had finished for other reasons.

The respondents were asked if they had left their last job, what had contributed most to their leaving. Six were in a position to respond to this question, three citing the low pay on offer, two gave reasons of health - sickness, one boredom and a further three men explaining that it was other reasons, which led to them leaving their last job.

EXPERIENCES AND EFFECTS OF JOB SEEKING AFTER LONG PERIODS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

This section of the research examines the pattern of the men's job seeking, from when they became unemployed right through to the last 12 months. It also asks whether any of the men gave up looking for work or if they had ever turned down an offer of employment, and what the reasons were. The final part of this section looks at the men's job seeking skills and what they would consider to be their "ideal job", including rates of pay.

"There are many stages to getting a job and the long-term unemployed find barriers at every one: people don't hear about the jobs on offer, if they do hear they are less likely to get an interview because of where they live or how long they have been unemployed, and if they get considered they are less likely to have the required skills."

Mike Allen (1998:193) in "The Bitter Word".

JOB SEEKING

All of the eight men who declared themselves as seeking work, made formal applications for a job during their first year of being unemployed. One man applied for between 1 and 5 jobs, a further two men applied for between 6 and 10 jobs, four men had applied for between 11 and 20 jobs, and one man made between 21 and 30 job applications.

Four of these men were called to interview for between 1-5 jobs and attended all interviews. A further man was called for between 6 -10 interviews and again attended each interview. Three men who had made job applications, were not called for any interview.

In the second year of being unemployed all of the four men who declared themselves as seeking work, made formal applications for a job. All four applied for between 1-5 jobs.

Three of these men were called for interview, the remaining man was not called for any interview.

Over the last 12 months, five of the seven men who declared themselves as seeking work made formal applications for a job. Four men applied for between 1-5 jobs, and one applied for between 11-20 jobs.

Three of these men were called for interview. All of the men called for interview, attended. Two men who had applied for jobs were not called for any interview.

The respondents were asked if they had given up looking for work at any stage in their job seeking and what the reasons were?

The majority of respondents did not at any stage consider that they had given up looking for work. For those that, at some stage during their unemployment, did give up looking for work, the main reasons cited were depression / withdrawal, fear of rejection and considering that they would not be able to fit in.

Other reasons, less frequently mentioned, include giving up hope of getting a job, family commitments, sickness/health and age. No jobs for older people, a perceived gap between skills and jobs and "other" reasons were also mentioned.

The 'other' reasons cited were "Concern about employers attitudes to the area I'm living in and my prison record", "Its more my level of education and a feeling of being unemployable".

REASONS FOR CONTINUING TO LOOK FOR WORK

Seven out of the eight men who responded to this question stated that money was one of the prime reasons for them continuing to look for work. But money was not the only reason. "Being active", "my marriage and responsibilities", "my interest in computers", "my involvement with the LES and CE scheme" "not wanting to live on social welfare and its realities" and overcoming "boredom" were the other factors mentioned by the men which keep them looking for work.

OFFERS OF EMPLOYMENT

During their search for work, four out of the nine men had been offered employment, but had turned it down because in three of the cases, their was too little financial incentive and in the remaining case the reason was family commitments.

JOB SEEKING SKILLS

Job seeking itself requires a variety of skills. Preparing a CV and a cover letter to suit a particular job is a skill that needs to be developed through practice and tuition. Researching the job itself and developing your interview skills are also improved through practice and in some cases tuition. Demonstrating to an employer that you have knowledge of the company/products etc, as well as displaying appropriate interview skills can put you at an advantage.

The many and varied stages of job seeking, commonly used nowadays have progressed significantly since many of these men held their last job, when it was the norm for an informal interview with the employer, to be all that was required.

As a result, many long term unemployed people, may find difficulty in assessing and communicating what their skills and abilities are, which is necessary to firstly reach the interview stage and more importantly acquire the job.

There are a number of various indicators to emerge from our study with long-term unemployed people and employers, which show that improving and developing unemployed people's job seeking skills would contribute to their gaining employment.

Only three out of the nine men had taken part in any form of job-seeking skills training. All of these men had found this training useful.

Just over half the men (6) men had a current up-to date CV and five men stated that they had been asked for a CV at their most recent job interview.

Only one of the nine men felt that a CV was not a useful tool in job seeking.

The men were also asked about their preparations for job interviews? Just over half (6) stated that they had found out about the company with the job vacancy, one man stated that he had practised his interview skills, while another man stated that he engaged in other forms of preparations.

What type of jobs are the men looking for?

The men were also asked to describe their ideal jobs in terms of wages, conditions, prospects, advantages and disadvantages.

The type of jobs listed as being "ideal", by the men corresponds closely to their previous occupational backgrounds.

In terms of pay a range of responses were recorded. Each man, formulated their own response to the question asked. The result as presented in terms of gross pay, set an average weekly wage expected by 3 of the respondents as £400, and in terms of nett pay, a further three set the average weekly wage expected by the remaining as £216. The other two respondents who replied to this question stated that they would expect either a "living wage" or anything above their current social welfare payment of £111 per week.

In terms of advantages and disadvantages, three out of the nine respondents cited income, but included other advantages as well, not income alone. The responses invariably included remarks concerning confidence, self-respect, doing what they do best and being able to look after their family responsibilities.

In terms of disadvantages only two of the respondents cited any issue, these were the need to be careful about their health and low wages.

THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION METHODS USED BY EMPLOYERS.

This section of the research looks at the recruitment methods used by employers and compares them with the job seeking methods used by the long-term unemployed men. It also examines the selection methods used by employers and whether they had any applications from unemployed people in 1998.

The employers were asked for the details of any recruitment they carried out during 1998.

During 1998, all seven companies recruited new staff, with 34 people (13.8% of their total workforces) joining the staff of these companies

27 people or 79% of new recruits were employed on a full-time basis, 19 of which were male (70%) and eight of which, female (30%). 7 people were employed on a part-time basis during the same period or 21% of all new recruits. Men accounted for 85% (6) of these posts while women accounted for 15% (1).

RECRUITMENT METHODS

The respondents were asked which recruitment methods they use to fill job vacancies. The most frequently used methods were referrals from someone in the company (7) and by someone the employer knows (4). The next most frequently used methods were CVs on file, FÁS, LES and unsolicited applications. (3 respectively)

The least used recruitment methods were recruitment agencies, DSCFA, advertisements in shop windows, the local newspapers, and unsolicited applications (1 respectively).

The main methods used by the long-term unemployed respondents to find out about jobs.

The long-term unemployed respondents were asked what methods they used to find out about job vacancies. Word of mouth was the most frequently cited method, followed by national newspapers and LES. The least used methods were recruitment agencies, FAS, local newspapers and calling in person to companies.

SELECTION METHODS

Structured interviews and references, were the most frequently used selection methods. The least used methods were, ability and personality tests.

The emphasis on references, as one of the main recruitment methods demonstrates how long-term unemployed people could be at a disadvantage.

Most job applicants are either asked for or consider that they must include their most recent employer as a reference. For people who are long-term unemployed, this aspect of job seeking can be quite daunting as they may consider acquiring referees from past employers, to be impossible because it was so long ago or because their last employer was based in the UK or elsewhere, etc.

Research has proven that the single most important way that employers discriminate is by automatically rejecting applications from the long-term unemployed before the interview stage is reached. In addition if the unemployed person does get an interview they are further burdened by the need to provide evidence of recent employment and references. Long-term unemployed people become disadvantaged at this point. Meager and Metcalf 1987 concluded that:

"The major barriers to employment faced by the long-term unemployed were those of automatic rejection or the burden of providing additional evidence of suitability".²

Recruiting long-term unemployed people

Four out of the nine companies had received applications from long-term unemployed people in 1998. These companies interviewed all of the long-term unemployed people who applied.

CHARACTERISTICS SOUGHT BY EMPLOYERS WHEN RECRUITING

This section of the research examines the characteristics sought by employers of job applicants. This employer's were asked to divide and rate a list of 25 characteristics into three categories, being essential, desirable and not important. The employers were also given the opportunity of formulating their own response to the question of which three factors would they consider when selecting someone to fill a semi/unskilled vacancy. This section also contrasts these findings with similar questions asked of the long-term unemployed men about what characteristics they think employers seek and what characteristics they consider themselves to have.

The characteristics considered "essential" for filling semi-skilled/unskilled vacancies in Ballyfermot were evidence of reliability, health/fitness and awareness of health and safety procedures.

In contrast the most unimportant characteristics were the presence of a friend or relative in the current workforce, age, and being unemployed.

The most important factors these employers consider when recruiting were cited as attitude, honesty, trust, appearance/personality, skills, time-keeping and common sense.

The long-term unemployed men were asked what characteristics they believed employers sought when recruiting. The most frequently mentioned characteristics ranged from: experience (8), reliability (7), honesty (7) and motivation (6).

When the long-term unemployed respondents were asked about the characteristics they believed that they themselves possessed, the most frequently cited characteristics were Reliability (8), honesty (7), personality (6), experience (5), appearance (5) and own initiative (5) to education qualifications (2) and youth (1).

THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED BY THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED MEN IN GAINING EMPLOYMENT

This section of the research examined the barriers to employment as seen by the long-term unemployed men, it also looks at what factors would encourage the men to continue to apply for jobs.

The most frequently mentioned barriers were age, low pay and no suitable jobs. Other less frequently mentioned barriers included, impact of unemployment on the person, lack of skills and education qualifications.

THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE REGARDING EMPLOYERS

Nearly all of the long-term unemployed respondents (7) surveyed did believe that employers treat long-term unemployed people differently from others. When asked to describe the way in which the respondent had been treated by employers, so far in their search for work? Four of the men had something positive to say, the rest of the men (5) felt that they had not been treated well. The positive and negative remarks were:

² Meager N and Metcalf H (1987) Recruitment of the Long Term Unemployed, Institute of Manpower Studies: Brighton.

- 'Fairly'
- 'Good'
- 'My experience has been good'
- 'Employers have negative attitude, were not treated fairly'
- 'Off-handed manner'
- No concern for the personal needs, just get the job done'
- When employers ask how long you have been unemployed they think your hiding something.

EMPLOYERS PERCEPTIONS REGARDING LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE.

When asked to describe their perceptions of long-term unemployed people, the employers had the following to say:

"In our business "long-term unemployed" is not an issue as we mostly employ skilled staff."

"I have no problem with employing long-term unemployed, but generally I find that they do not apply."

"Never again."

"Not overly interested in getting employed."

"In general not keen unless there are exceptional circumstances."

"If someone is able to do the job we will employ them no bother".

The employers were also asked to rate long-term unemployed people against five criteria. In nearly all categories the long-term unemployed people were rated as having a medium level of skills, a low level of reliability, ability adjusting to work, motivation and level of wages demanded.

SHORT-TERM VS LONG-TERM

The employers were also asked if they would make a distinction between someone who was short-term unemployed and someone who was long-term unemployed, and the reasons they would give, for this preference.

There was an almost even response to this question, with just over half the employers stating that they would make a distinction and that it would be in favour of short-term unemployed people.

The reasons given were as follows:

- 'Because of a bad experience'
- 'Short-term unemployed tend to be more interested and have worked in similar role in recent past'
- In our industry there is no reason to be long-term unemployed'

Manning³ (1999) conducted a recent UK study of the process by which employers in five relatively low wage British firms fill vacancies. This study found that in selecting workers for interview employers are likely to reject those not currently in employment or lacking relevant work experience.

However, it was found that when offering a job, employers rely more on their general impression of candidates. Therefore, at this stage, personal habits are more important as are issues about the exact hours that the individual can work. This leads to the conclusion that unemployed job applicants have more difficulties in getting an interview than those who are currently employed. However, once interviewed, they do not appear to face any further difficulties in getting employment.

It would appear from the research highlighted so far that "personality" and "reliability" along with "appearance", "experience" and "flexibility" seem to be the key factors. Many employers assume that long-term unemployed people lack personality, are not reliable, have an unsuitable appearance, little or no experience and are inflexible. This leads to rejection even before interviewing them to find out if they would be suitable.

3 Manning, A. (1999). Pretty Vacant: Recruitment in Low-Wage Labour Markets. Discussion Paper 418. Centre for Economic Performance. London.

WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED EXPERIENCES OF THE VARIOUS LABOUR MARKET AGENCIES AND HOW ADEQUATELY ARE THEY MEETING THEIR NEEDS?

This section of the research looked at the long-term unemployed men's use and perceptions of the effectiveness of the labour market services.

LEVEL OF CONTACT

The respondents were asked if since they became unemployed had they used the services of six listed agencies or organisations, they were also asked to rate the agencies/organisations on a scale of "fully useful" through to "not useful".

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MAIN LABOUR MARKET SERVICES

FÁS

Seven of the nine long-term unemployed men who had at some stage used the services of FÁS, rated the agency as either 'somewhat' (4), 'considerable' (1), or 'fully useful' (1) The remaining man thought that FÁS was 'not useful'.

Local Social Welfare Office

Six of the men stated that they had used the services of Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (DSCFA). Only one man rated the DSCFA as 'somewhat useful'. The remaining men (4) thought that the DSCFA was 'not useful'.

LES

Eight of the men stated that they had used the services of the Local Employment Service. They rated the LES as either 'somewhat useful' (1) or 'fully useful' (7).

Vocational Education Committee

Two men had used the services of the VEC. The ratings were all negative with both men stating that it was 'not useful'.

Partnership

The least used service was that of the local Partnership, which had been used by one man, who felt it to be 'somewhat useful'.

Other

Contact had also been made with a sizeable number of other public and private organisations, including the local community centre, the Candle Centre, the Money Advice Bureau, the local credit union, St. Vincent de Paul and the Citizen Information Centre.

LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLES PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF TRAINING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

This section of the report examined the level and source of awareness among the men of some 21 training, education and work experience programmes targeted at long-term unemployed people. It also looks at the men's experience of the community employment programme - a programme which practically all the men had strong views.

Training

The respondents were asked if they were aware of nine different training programmes and where they obtained information about these training programmes.

There was a mixed level of awareness among the men of the various training schemes. The schemes which commanded the greatest awareness were Community Training Workshops (7), Job Training Scheme (6), followed by Travellers Training Workshops (5)

The least familiar training programmes were those provided by CERT (3), Teagasc (3), Bord Iascaigh Mhara (2) and Re-integration training (2).

By far this awareness stemmed from 'other sources' such as word of mouth, with FÁS being the only other source of note.

Education

The respondents were asked if they were aware of four different education programmes and where they obtained information about these education programmes.

There was a higher overall level of awareness about the various education programmes, with adult literacy schemes and part-time and evening courses scoring the highest.

The least familiar education programme was the third level Back to Education Allowance with only three of the men stating that they were aware of the programme.

Again, the main source of awareness came from 'other sources' followed by the Vocational Education Committee.

Work experience / employment options

The respondents were asked if they were aware of eight different work experience programmes and where they obtained information about these programmes.

There was a mixed level of awareness amongst the men of the eight work experience and employment options. Community employment (CE), Family Income Supplement (FIS) and the Back to Work Allowance (BTWA) were the most familiar programmes

The remaining work experience programmes, with the exception of Job Start (5), scored quite low levels of awareness amongst the men. None of the men had heard of Workplace

The primary source of information for the respondents concerning these work experience programmes varied from programme to programme. For Community Employment, FAS was the primary source, for Family Income Supplement, DSCFA was the primary source and for the Back to Work Allowance the primary source was the LES.

'Other' once again accounted for most of the information about work experience programmes.

It is a worrying fact that, with all of these programmes, the greatest level of awareness stemmed from word of mouth. Misinformation can easily arise from an over reliance upon this method and further complicate the outreach and information activities of the agencies and organisations themselves.

EMPLOYER'S AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE LOCAL LABOUR MARKET SERVICES?

This section of the research looked at employer's awareness, experience and view points about the local labour market services.

Contact with the services

The employers were asked if they were in contact with either FAS, LES, CERT and/or the Department of social, community and family affairs. Five of the respondents were in contact with FAS. Two employer respondents were in contact with LES. Just one employer was in contact with the DSCFA. Among the respondents in Ballyfermot there was no contact with CERT.

FÁS

Four of the five respondents who were in contact with FÁS, did so because they sought a job seeker. FAS had not been in contact with any of these employers to investigate their recruitment needs or to put a job seeker in contact with them.

The employers were given the opportunity of explaining why there was or wasn't any contact, the response was:

'There is no need for contact'

'Not hiring'

'To recruit office staff'

'You would want to ask that question of the above agencies. Our job is to produce and market food products'

An opportunity was also provided for the employers to make any specific remarks about FÁS, the points made were:

'My understanding of Fas is they are only involved in training. Have gone to them in the past and they have not referred anybody for employment'

'Our experience of Fas is very good, but I feel the people who apply are generally very good'

The overall rating received by Fas, in terms of flexible approach, awareness of employer needs, the expertise of its staff and customer focus was 'average'

LES

In terms of contact with LES, of the two employers who were in contact it was because they sought a job seeker. The LES had also been in contact to investigate the company's recruitment needs and to put a job seeker in touch with the employer. The overall rating the service received in terms of flexible approach, awareness of employer needs, the expertise of its staff and customer focus was 'good'.

DSCFA

The only reason for contact with DSCFA was when an employer sought a job seeker. The overall rating the department received, from this employer was 'not useful'.

EMPLOYERS KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE OF THE EMPLOYER INCENTIVE SCHEMES AVAILABLE WHEN RECRUITING LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

This section of the research looked at employer's awareness of incentive schemes, their effectiveness and viewpoints.

Awareness of Employer Incentive Schemes

The back to work allowance (BTWA) and the PRSI Exemption were clearly the programmes with the highest level of awareness by the employers (5), but just over half of the employers were aware of these incentives.

Effectiveness of Employer Subsidy Schemes

Six of the respondents had actually used some of these programmes, namely the BTWA (2) and the employers PRSI exemption (4). Four of these employers stated that they would use the programmes again

An opportunity was also provided for the employers to make any other remarks about employer schemes, the points made were:

'The PRSI exemption supplements the increase in salaries when employing new people'

BTWA 'People are only interested in the money, from both parties i.e. the state and jobs'

BTWA 'It helps the long-term unemployed to get back on his feet and back into the work system'

PERCEPTIONS OF THE MEDIA'S PORTRAYAL OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE.

All of the respondents, long-term unemployed and employer, were asked a series of five questions at the end of the structured interview concerning their perceptions of how the media portray issues of unemployment and long-term unemployed people.

Long-term unemployed men

Of the seven men who responded, four felt that the media was fair, three that it was not. Just two of the men felt that it was informative, four did not, no-one thought the media accurate in their portrayal of unemployment and all thought that the public are influenced.

The men were also given an opportunity to make 'other' remarks about the media, these were:

"The media is providing an inaccurate and distorted picture".

"The media put unemployed people down as spongers".

"Unemployed people are normally shown in the most negative terms its racist in some ways".

Some of the reasons why the respondents felt the public are influenced by the media were listed as being:

- People respond to what they hear
- A false picture is shown to people
- People believe what they see and read in the newspapers.

In response to the last question "should there be a change in the way the media portrays unemployment and unemployed people" the response was that eight of the men believed there should be a change, while one person was unsure. The suggestions for improvement included:

- Objective reporting is needed.
- The media should write about the people who cause unemployment i.e. Banks, Government, Crime etc.
- The media should give space for those who argue for better wages and conditions on employment schemes, especially for single men.
- More information is needed about the real experiences of unemployed people and this information needs to be more accessible.
- Reporters need integrity not a sensationalist approach.
- Need to go to the grass-roots and speak to genuine unemployed people – they shouldn't pick out individuals such as drug addicts and homeless, and use them as the example of all unemployed people.

Employers

The employers in response to the same questions recorded an almost opposite result. The majority (5) felt that the media was fair, There was a divided response to the question of whether the media was informative, with two employers agreeing and two disagreeing. The majority however, chose not to answer. When asked if the media is accurate the same response was solicited.

The employer respondents were also asked if they felt themselves influenced by the media's portrayal of unemployment and unemployed people and whether they thought that there needs to be a change in how these issues are covered.

All of the employers who responded (6) felt that they weren't influenced by the media's portrayal, there was no dissenting opinion .

When asked if there needs to be a change in the way unemployment is covered by the media, there is the same divided response, with the majority not answering the question.

The employers also put forward some additional viewpoints under the heading 'Do you feel influenced by the media?'

"Long-term unemployed by definition have a problem. What is the problem? How long is a piece of string. Each long-term unemployed has to look to his or her case, find the problem and resolve it with the help of one of the agencies."

"I have personal knowledge of long-term unemployed people"

Under the heading of 'What type of changes should happen in media?' the following responses were recorded:

'How could you change it?'

'More coverage of what they are doing to improve their situation e.g. education'

'The Government needs to do something to create jobs'

WHAT HAS TO HAPPEN FOR YOUR JOB PROSPECTS TO BE IMPROVED?

This section of the research asked the long-term unemployed men what they thought needed to happen for their job prospects to improve.

'Positive attitude from employers who wouldn't be concerned about my past'

'Work opportunities and better pay'

'Reform of the taxation system'

'Radical re-assessment of job infra-structure and economy'

'Get started the LES can help'

TRACKING

Throughout the follow-up group sessions, all the men attended the first three sessions, attendance at the final session dropped to four men. All of the men were sent a final questionnaire just prior to these reports being drafted, these asked the men what their current status was.

It asked if they were in work or on a programme and if so when they started, they were asked whether since starting the INOU course they had sought any information and/or advice.

Five of the men responded, two of the men had begun a community employment scheme, the remaining three were unemployed. All of the men had sought information or advice from the labour market services.

EVALUATION OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

As part of the last focus group discussion, the men were asked for an evaluation of the entire project.

1 What were the good points or valuable aspects of the Meetings?

- Very Useful. Found STEPS interesting (a programme run by the LES)
- Found discussion that there are organisations/people that can help if you are cut off the dole very useful.
- The meeting with Ann Eustace was interesting.
- Found it useful that people are trying to get work.
- Learned a lot.
- Good to find out about different groups in the area, I wouldn't have known about.
- STEPS was very good. Gave a bit more confidence/ choices.
- Found the use of TV helpful at a couple of meetings.
- Questionnaires were good.
- People were there to help out with questionnaires.
- Ann Eustace was "like a fortune teller" with results given back.
- The Money was useful.
- Venue and times were fine.
- It wasn't a waste of time. Would have been sitting at home either way.

2. What would you like to have changed about the sessions?

- Didn't know what half the words/questions/meant in the questionnaire

[Note: The four unemployed men discussed other issues during this question. They didn't forward anything else about altering the sessions. There was some discussion on CE during question – three negative experiences of CE/Not learning anything/No new skills/CE not worth it financially.]

3. Are your work prospects better, worse or the same as when you started?

- Before the meetings started, I had no hope of a job. Now I have "a bit of hope". Job has to pay.
- Job guarantee is needed, with long-term prospects.
- No hope in long-term, though I learned a lot.
- Example of one of group going for security job. Had no CV.
- Same person said what had happened before was that when he said he was from Ballyfermot the phone was put down. Another person in group saying that is no longer case.

4. What should INOU be arguing for?

- Flexibility for unemployed people with disability eg Invalidity Pension.
- Similarly, flexibility for people who are unemployed over 40's.
- Long-term unemployed people taking up employment should be tax-free for first year.
- Need to fight against tightening of Genuinely Seeking Work legislation.
- GSW – a huge worry.
- Decent Jobs
- Unemployed people don't know entitlements. Information for unemployed people.

SECTION 2: PROFILE OF THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED RESPONDENTS:

Nine men from the Ballyfermot area of Dublin took part in the interview and questionnaire stage of the research and all nine of the men participated in the focus group sessions, which followed.

AGE

All but one of the men interviewed, were over the age of 35 years, one man is aged between 35 and 44 years and the remaining seven aged between 45 and 54 years. (see table No. 23)

UNEMPLOYMENT PAYMENT

Two thirds of the men (6) are in receipt of Unemployment Assistance (UA), the remaining three were in receipt of invalidity pension. (see table No.24)

DURATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Only one of the men had been unemployed for less than a year, and he had been on a training course. Two of the men had been unemployed for between one to two years. A third of the men (3) have been unemployed between six to ten years and a further third have been unemployed for ten years or longer.

Overall 66.6% (6) of the men have been unemployed for six years or longer. (see table No. 25)

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

None of the nine men had obtained the leaving certificate, two had gained the intermediate certificate. Three of the men had completed primary school and attended secondary school upto the intermediate certificate, three had completed primary school, one man had not. (see table No. 26)

RETURNED TO STUDY

When asked if the respondents had ever gone back to study at either school or college, two replied that they had. (see table No. 27)

WHAT IS THE EMPLOYMENT HISTORY OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE?

Employment history

Before the current period of unemployment, eight men had been working full-time, and one had been taking part in a training course. (see table No. 28)

Number of jobs held since leaving school

Since leaving school three of the men had held between 3-5 jobs, one man had held between 6-10 jobs and five of the men had held more than 10 jobs since leaving school. (see table No. 29a)

Main Occupation prior to becoming unemployed

Prior to becoming unemployed, the men had been employed in a range of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations, primarily within the manufacturing and service sectors (see table No. 29b)

How most recent job finished

One of the men had been made redundant, one had walked out of his last job, two were dismissed and the remaining five men had finished for other reasons (see table No. 30)

Reason for leaving last job

The respondents were asked if they had left their last job, what had contributed most to their leaving. Only six were in a position to respond to this question, three citing the low pay on offer, two reasons of health - sickness, one boredom and a further three men explaining that it was "other reasons", which led to them leaving their last job. (see table No. 931)

HOW DOES THEIR EXPERIENCE OF LONG PERIODS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AFFECT THEIR INTEREST IN JOB SEEKING?

Seeking work since becoming unemployed

During the first year of being unemployed the vast majority of respondents (8 out of the 9 men) sought employment, the remaining person did not.

In the second year of being unemployed only four out of the nine respondents continued to seek work.

Over the last 12 months, seven out of the nine respondents have continued with the search for employment. (see table No. 36)

Seeking work in the first year of being unemployed

All of the eight men who declared themselves as seeking work, made formal applications for a job during their first year of being unemployed. One man had applied for between 1 and 5 jobs, a further two men applied for between 6 and 10 jobs, four men had applied for between 11 and 20 jobs, and one man made between 21 and 30 job applications.

Four of these men were called for interview for between 1-5 jobs and attended all their interviews. One man was called for between 6-10 interviews and again attended each interview.

Three men who had made job applications, were not called for any interview. (See table No.37)

Seeking work in the second year of being unemployed

In the second year of being unemployed all four of the men who declared themselves as seeking work, made formal applications for a job. All four applied for between 1-5 jobs.

Three of these men were called for interview and attended each. The remaining man was not called for any interview. (See table 38)

Seeking work over the last 12 months

Over the last 12 months, five of the seven men who declared themselves as seeking work, made formal applications for a job. Four men applied for between 1-5 jobs, and one applied for between 11-20 jobs.

Three of these men were called for interview and attended. All the men called for interview attended. Two men who had applied for jobs were not called for any interview. (see table 39)

Reasons for giving up looking for work

The respondents were asked if they had given up looking for work at any stage in their job seeking and what the reasons were, the following table shows their response.

Table 48: Reasons for giving up looking for work

REASON FOR GIVING UP LOOKING FOR WORK	YES	NO
Given up hope of getting a job	2	7
Depression / withdrawal	3	6
Fear of rejection	3	6
Not able to fit in	3	6
Didn't want to be hurt further	–	9
Family commitments	2	7
Sickness / health	2	7
Age	2	7
No jobs for older persons	1	8
Gap between skills & jobs	1	8
Other	1	8

As can be seen from the table, the majority of respondents did not at any stage consider that they had given up looking for work. For those that, at some stage during their unemployment, did give up looking for work, the main reasons cited were depression / withdrawal, fear of rejection and considering that they would not be able to fit in.

Other reasons less frequently mentioned, include giving up hope of getting a job, family commitments, sickness and health and age. No jobs for older people, a perceived gap between skills and jobs and other reasons were also cited.

The 'other' reasons cited were "Concern about employers attitudes to the area I'm living in and my prison record", "My marital status and family responsibilities is such that low paid work is not sufficient." "It's more my level of education and a feeling of being unemployable".

Reasons for continuing to look for work

Seven out of the eight men who responded to this question stated that money was one of the prime reasons for them continuing to look for work, but money was not the only reason cited. "Being active", "my marriage and responsibilities", "my interest in computers", "my involvement with the LES and CE scheme" "not wanting to live on social welfare and its realities" and overcoming "boredom" were the other factors mentioned by the men which keep them looking for work.

Offered employment but turned it down

Four men out of eleven had been offered a job since becoming unemployed, but had turned the offer down because their was little financial incentive in accepting the offer in three cases or family commitments in the case of the other man.

UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE'S JOB SEEKING METHODS

Methods used to find out about jobs

The respondents were asked how they found out about job vacancies? Table 49 shows their response.

Table 49: Methods used to find out about jobs

METHOD	COUNT T = 9
Local Newspapers	3
National Newspapers	4
FAS	3
LES	4
Word of mouth	5
Recruitment agencies	-
Calling in person to the company	2
Other	2

As can be seen, the most frequently used method of finding out about job vacancies in the Ballyfermot area is through word of mouth (5) followed by national newspapers (4) and the LES (4), the local newspapers (3) and FAS (3). The least frequently used methods are calling in person to the company (2) and other methods (2). No respondents cited recruitment agencies as a method used in their job seeking.

Training in job seeking skills

Only three respondents had received any training in job seeking skills, with all of them rating this training as fully useful. (See table No. 41)

CV's

The respondents were asked if they had an upto date CV? If they thought it was useful in their job seeking? And, whether they had been asked for a CV at their last interview?

Five out of the nine men stated that they did have an upto date CV and three men explained that they had been asked for a CV at their last interview.

In response to the question about the usefulness of a CV, two men thought that it was not at all useful, two felt that a CV was somewhat useful, one felt that it was considerably useful and two felt that a CV was fully useful in their search for work. (see table 42)

Preparations for job interviews

The respondents were asked if they engaged in any preparations prior to attending an interview. Three of the respondents replied that they had found out about the company with the job vacancy, no-one had practised interview skills and two of the men had engaged in some other forms of preparation. (see table No. 50)

Performance at interviews

The respondents were asked to rate their own performance at interviews. Three out of the nine men stated that they felt very satisfied with their interview performance, one respondent was neither satisfied or dissatisfied and two respondents stated that they felt very dissatisfied. (see table No. 43)

Employers conduct at interviews

The respondents were also asked if they were satisfied with the employers conduct of the interview. Six men replied to this question, all of them stated that they felt satisfied with the conduct of the employer. (see table No. 44)

Seeking feed-back after interviews

The respondents were asked if they had sought feed-back from the employer after the interview and how useful this was. Only one out of the nine men explained that they had sought feed-back and rated it as not at all useful. (see table No.45)

WHAT TYPE OF JOBS ARE THE UNEMPLOYED MEN LOOKING FOR?

Ideal job and conditions

The respondents were asked what type of job they would like to do the most, and to describe it in terms of pay, conditions and prospects, as well as describing what the possible advantages and disadvantages of taking up the job. The following table shows their response:

Table 51: Ideal job and conditions

LTU	TYPE OF JOB	PAY	CONDITIONS	PROSPECTS	ADVANTAGE	DISADVANTAGE
	Painter/decorator	£200-220 nett per week			Confidence & possibly start own business	Need to be careful about health
	Factory shift work or driving	Over £200 nett per week	Shift Work	Wouldn't quit if happy with conditions and money	Income and being able to look after family	Low Wages
	Customer Relations in Hotel Sector	£400-£500 gross per week	Usual Conditions	Pay & Conditions important	Doing what I do best	None
	To run local paper	Living Wage	Work in office & outside		Would suit me & my interests	None
	Local community work	£350 gross per week				
	With Computers	£400 gross per week	9-5 normal conditions	Opportunity to go forward & pension	Printing is a standing up all day job	None
	Working with people in the community					
	Forklift or Driving	Anything above £111 week		Happy to have a job	Financially better off & self-respect	None
	Gardening/ painter	£200-£230 nett per week	No work outside in rain with no gear	Content if wages & conditions acceptable	Kept busy and paid a fair wage	None

As can be seen from this table the type of jobs the respondents have listed corresponds closely with their occupational background (see table 29b). In terms of pay a range of responses were recorded. Each man, formulated their own response to the question asked. The result as presented in terms of gross pay, set an average weekly wage expected by 3 of the respondents as £400, and in terms of nett pay, a further three set the average weekly wage expected by them as £216. The other two respondents who replied to this question stated that they would expect either a "living wage" or anything above their current social welfare payment of £111 per week.

In terms of advantages and disadvantages, three out of the nine respondents cited income, but included other advantages as well, not income alone. The responses invariably included remarks concerning confidence, self-respect, doing what they do best and being able to look after their family responsibilities.

In terms of disadvantages only two of the respondents cited any issue, these were the need to be careful about their health and low wages.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BARRIERS IDENTIFIED BY THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED MEN IN FINDING WORK?

Barriers to obtaining work

The respondents were asked what they saw as being the main barriers to obtaining work. Eight out of the nine men identified their age as the single largest barrier followed by their address (5) and lack of educational qualification's (4).

Lack of skills (2) and experience (2), were seen as the least important barriers, along with the impact of unemployment on the person (1) and other/ distance from the workplace (1). No suitable jobs and gender were not cited at all. (see table No. 53)

Comparison of the characteristics believed sought by employers held by the long-term unemployed men

One of the last sets of issues that the structured interviews explored was that of the respondent's opinion of the characteristics that employers would seek in and from a job seeker and to contrast this with their opinion of their own characteristics. Table No.54 illustrates the findings.

Table 54: What characteristics do you think employers seek & that you have

CHARACTERISTIC	SOUGHT BY EMPLOYERS	THAT YOU HAVE
Educational Qualifications	4	2
Reliability	7	8
Experience	8	5
Youth	4	1
Specific Skills	4	3
Flexibility	4	3
Personality	6	6
Appearance	5	5
Honesty	7	7
Motivation	6	4
Competence	5	3
Own Initiative	5	5
Other (Literacy)	1	

The characteristics the respondents felt employers seek ranged from: experience (8), reliability (7), honesty (7) and motivation (6), to education qualification's (4), youth (4), specific skills (4), flexibility (4) and other, being literacy (1).

The correlation between these characteristics and those felt to be held by the respondents themselves ranged from: Reliability (8), honesty (7), personality (6), experience (5), appearance (5) and own initiative (5) to education qualifications (2) and youth (1).

SECTION 3

PROFILE OF THE EMPLOYERS

Business sector

Seven employers from the Ballyfermot area participated in the survey, all of which operate within the services sector, primarily in such activities as food packaging and processing, health food and baking. The activities also included vehicle repairs, apparel and waste disposal (See table No. 2)

Position of the respondent in the company

The largest category of the respondent was that of managing director (2), followed by manager, director, operations, production and office managers (1 each respectively) (see table No. 1)

Size of company, number, gender and status of employee's

245 people are employed in the respondent companies, with men accounting for 77% (189) of the total workforce and women accounting for 23% (56).

93% (237) of the workforce are employed on a full-time basis, men accounting for 74% (182) of the total and women full-time workers, the remaining 19% (45).

7% (18) people work part-time, with men accounting for 38% (7) and women 62% (11) of part-time jobs.

All of the companies surveyed employed at least 10 employees or more with 2 respondents employing between 10 and 19 people, four employing between 20 and 49 and one company employing more than 50 people. (see tables No. 3 and 4)

Occupational categories of full-time employee's

Of all the full-time employees, 20 people (10.5%) are employed within the managerial, professional and technical category, 85% (17) of whom are men while 15% (3) are women.

Within the non-manual category there are 51 people (26.8%) employed full-time, 30 (57%) of whom are men while 22 (43%) are women.

48 people (25.2) are employed in the skilled – manual category, 47 (98%) of whom are male along with one woman.

Within the semi-skilled unskilled category 71 people (37.3%) are employed, 97% (69) are men while 3% (2) are female. (see tables No. 5 & 6)

Recruitment during 1998

The respondents were asked for the details of recruitment during 1998 in terms of overall numbers, full-time/part-time status and by gender.

During 1998, all seven respondent companies recruited new staff, with 34 people (13.8% of their total workforces) joining the staff of these companies.

27 people or 79% of new recruits were employed on a full-time basis, 19 of which were male (70%) and eight of which, female (30%). 7 people were employed on a part-time basis during the same period or 21% of all new recruits. Men accounted for 85% (6) of these posts while women accounted for 15% (1). (see table No. 7)

Recruitment method

The respondents were asked which recruitment methods they use to fill job vacancies. The most frequently used methods were referrals from someone in the company (7) and by someone the employer knows. (4). The next most frequently used methods were CV's on file, FÁS, LES and unsolicited applications. (3 respectively).

The least used recruitment methods were agencies, DSCFA, advertisements in shop windows, local newspapers, centre for the unemployed and unsolicited applications (1 respectively). Advertisements in national newspapers, scored slightly higher with 2 employers stating that they had used this method to attract job applications. (see table 8).

Ratings of recruitment methods

The respondents were also asked to rate a list of twelve various recruitment methods in terms of their effectiveness, on a scale of "not useful" through to "excellent". (see table No. 9)

Referrals by someone in the company and by someone the employer knows scored the highest positive ratings.

The DSCFA, advertisements in the local newspapers, shop windows and the Centre for the Unemployed scored the lowest ratings.

Effectiveness of selection methods

The respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of six various selection methods. (see table No. 10).

Structured interviews scored the highest positive rating, followed by references. None of the employers had used ability or personality tests.

CHARACTERISTICS EMPLOYERS CONSIDER IMPORTANT WHEN RECRUITING STAFF

In order to find out how important/unimportant certain characteristics are to employers for filling semi-skilled/unskilled vacancies, a list of 25 characteristics was devised. The respondents were asked to rate each characteristic as "essential", "desirable" and "not important" when selecting a job applicant.

Essential characteristics

The characteristics rated as "essential" by the respondents can be seen from table No. 11

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS	NO. OF EMPLOYERS T=7
Evidence of reliability	4
Health / fitness	4
Awareness of health & safety procedures	3

* The numbers represent the frequency of selection

The most essential characteristics chosen were reliability, health and fitness, followed by awareness of health and safety procedures reflecting the manufacturing and equipment background of these company's.

Desirable Characteristics

The characteristics rated as "desirable" by the respondents can be seen from table No. 12. The most desirable characteristic's chosen were general work experience, experience in a similar job, employment record and personal hygiene. Many other characteristics were also reflected under this desirable category, all achieving similar scores.

DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS	NO. OF EMPLOYERS
General Work Experience	6
Experience in similar job	5
Employment record	5
Personal hygiene	5
Skills training	4
Literacy	4
Communication skills	4
Flexibility	4
References	4
Distance job seeker lives from work	4
Unemployed less than 12 months	4
Immediate availability for work	3

Unimportant characteristics

The characteristics rated as “unimportant” by the respondents can be seen from table No. 13

Table 13: Unimportant characteristics

The least important characteristics were: presence of a friend in the workplace, age below 25 years and above 35 years, and being unemployed more than 12 months.

UNIMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS	NO. OF EMPLOYERS T=7
Presence of a friend or relative	6
Age below 25 years	5
Age over 35 years	5
Unemployed more than 12 months	5
Educational qualifications	4
Gender	4
Area where job seeker lives	4
Technical competence	4
Personal recommendation	3
Age below 35 years	3

Table 14: Most important factors

FACTORS	COUNT T=7
Attitude / willingness to work	4
Honesty / trust	3
Appearance / personality	3
Skills / ability	3
Punctuality / timekeeping	2
Common sense	2

The most important factors chosen were attitude, honesty, appearance and skills.

SECTION 4

LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE’S PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYERS

The long-term unemployed men were asked if they felt that employers treat unemployed people differently from others. The vast majority (7) felt that they did.

The men were also asked to describe the way they felt they had been treated in their job search by employers. These were their replies:

“Employers have negative attitudes, we are not treated fairly”

“The same as other people treat me”

“My experiences have been good”

“In an off-handed manner”

“Fair”

“No concern for personal needs, just in getting the job done”

“Good”

“When employers ask how long I’ve been unemployed they think I’m hiding something”.

“No recent dealings with them”.

EMPLOYERS PERCEPTIONS OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

The respondents were also asked how they would rate long-term unemployed people against five criteria. Table No. 15 shows their response.

Table 15: How would you rate long-term unemployed people

CRITERIA	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Level of skills	–	3	2
Reliability	–	2	3
Ability adjusting to work	–	1	4
Motivation	–	1	4
Level of wages demanded	1	1	4

In nearly all categories, the respondent's perceptions of long-term unemployed people's skills, reliability, ability, motivation and the level of wages demanded, is dominated by the low criteria.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN LTU

The employers were asked if they would make a distinction between someone who was long-term unemployed and someone who is short-term unemployed. Three would make a distinction in favour of short-term and four wouldn't make any distinction

For those employers who stated that they would make a distinction, the following are the reasons why:

"Because of a bad experience"

(Short-term unemployed people) "tend to be more interested and have worked in similar role in recent past".

"In our industry there is no reason to be long-term unemployed"

The employers were also asked what their perceptions of long-term unemployed people are? The following responses were recorded.

"In our business "long-term unemployed" is not an issue as we mostly employ skilled staff."

"I have no problem with employing long-term unemployed, but generally I find that they do not apply."

"Never again"

"Not overly interested in getting employed"

"In general not keen unless there are exceptional circumstances"

"If someone is able to do the job we will employ them no bother".

SECTION 5**EMPLOYERS AND THE STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

The respondents were asked a range of questions concerning their knowledge and experience of local labour market services.

Contact with labour market services

The respondents were asked if they were in contact with FÁS, LES, CERT and/or the Department of social, community and family affairs. Five of the respondents were in contact with FÁS. Two employer respondents were in contact with LES. Just one employer was in contact with the DSCFA. Among the respondents in Ballyfermot there was no contact with CERT. (see table No. 16)

Who initiated the contact

The respondents were asked who had initiated this contact with either FÁS or LES, in all cases, but one where the LES had made the approach, contact was initiated by the employers. (see table No. 16a)

Reasons for contact with FÁS

Four of the five respondents who were in contact with FÁS, explained that they had been in contact because they sought a job seeker. The other respondent had been in contact for a general discussion or other reason. The respondents explained that FAS had not been in contact to investigate their recruitment needs or to put a job seeker in contact with the respondent. (see table No.16b)

Reasons for contact with LES

In terms of contact with LES, of the two employers who were it was because they sought a job seeker, because the LES had been in contact to investigate their recruitment needs and because they were putting a job seeker in touch with the employer.

Reasons for contact with DSCFA

The only reason for contact with DSCFA was when an employer sought a job seeker.

Employer ratings of FÁS

The respondents were invited to rate the service they had received from FAS against a number of criteria. The rating scale ranged from “excellent” through to “not useful”. Table 17 shows their response.

Table 17: Summary of employer ratings - FÁS

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	NOT USEFUL
Flexible approach	–	1	3	1	–
Awareness of employer needs		2	1	1	1
Expertise of FAS Staff	1	1	1	–	2
Customer focus	1	–	2	1	1

Overall the rating received by FAS ranged from “not useful” all the way through to “excellent”, with the median being “average”.

Employer ratings of the Local Employment Service

The respondents were also invited to rate the service they had received from LES against a number of criteria. The rating scale ranged from “excellent” through to “not useful”. Table 18 shows their response.

Table 18: Summary of employer ratings - LES

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	NOT USEFUL
Flexible approach	–	1	1	–	–
Awareness of employer needs	–	2	–	–	–
Expertise of FAS Staff	–	2	–	–	–
Customer focus	–	1	1	–	–

Overall the rating received by the local employment service, although limited by the number of respondents who had used the service, ranged from “good” to “average”, with the median being “good”.

Employer ratings of DSCFA

There was only one respondent who rated DSCFA, and these were all “not useful”

Awareness of the financial incentives when employing long-term unemployed people

The respondents were asked if they were aware of any of seven financial incentive programmes listed in the questionnaire. The results are presented in table No. 20

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	NOT USEFUL
Flexible approach	–	–	–	–	1
Awareness of employer needs	–	–	–	–	1
Expertise of FAS Staff	–	–	–	–	1
Customer focus	–	–	–	–	1

Table 20: Awareness and effectiveness of employer subsidy schemes

Incentive Scheme	Aware of	Have used	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Not Useful	Would use again
BTWA	5	2	-	1	-	2	1	1
P-T Job Incentive	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Job Initiative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Job Assist	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Job start	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Workplace	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PRSI Exemption	5	4	1	1	1	-	1	3

The back to work allowance (BTWA) and the PRSI Exemption were clearly the programmes with the highest level of awareness by the respondent employers with five out of seven reporting that they were aware of the programme. The least familiar programmes were workplace, Job Assist and Job Initiative.

Six of the respondents had actually used some of these programmes, namely the BTWA (2) and the employers PRSI exemption (4). Four of these six respondents stated that they would use the programmes again.

The respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of these programmes on a scale ranging from "excellent" through to "not useful". The only programme to receive an "excellent" rating was the PRSI exemption scheme, which along with the BTWA, also received a "good" rating. Interestingly the BTWA and the PRSI exemption were the only two programmes to receive a "not useful" rating as well. The BTWA also scored 2 'poor' ratings.

LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND THE STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The respondents were asked a range of questions concerning their knowledge and experience of local labour market services.

Use and perception of the state employment services

The respondents were asked if since they became unemployed had they used the services of six listed agencies or organisations, they were also asked to rate the agencies/organisations on a scale of "fully useful" through to "not useful". The results are presented in table No. 32.

Seven of the nine long-term unemployed men had at some stage used the services of FAS, the majority (6 out of these 7) rated FAS as either 'somewhat' (4) or "considerable" (1), or 'fully useful' (1) The remaining man thought that FAS was 'not useful'.

Eight of the respondents stated that they had at some stage used the services of the Local Employment Service. Again the majority of respondents rated the LES as either "somewhat useful" (1) or "fully useful".

Six of the respondents stated that they had at some stage used the services of Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (DSCFA). Only one man rated the DSCFA as "somewhat useful". The remaining majority (4) thought that the DSCFA was not useful.

Vocational Education Committee, was used by two of the respondents who stating that they had at some stage used the services of the VEC. The ratings given to the VEC were all negative with both men stating that it was 'not useful'.

The least used service was that of the local Partnership, which had been used by one man, who felt it to be 'somewhat useful'.

Training programmes

The respondents were asked if they were aware of nine different training programmes and where they obtained information about these training programmes. The results are presented in table No.33.

Community Training Workshops (CTW) were the most familiar training programme amongst the respondents with seven out of the nine men stating that they were aware of the programme. 'Other' was the primary source of information for four of the respondents with Fas accounting for the other two. Job Training Scheme (JTS) was received the next highest level of recognition (6), for which Fás was the primary source of information for three of the men and 'other' the source for the other two men. JTS was followed by Travellers Training Workshops (5) as the next most familiar programme, with 'other' accounting for the source of information for all five.

Enterprise Training (ET) and Specific Skills Training (SST) were the next most familiar training programme with just under half the men stating that they were aware of it, with to FÁS (4), 'other' (2), LES (1) and DSCFA (1) being the sources of information.

The least familiar training programmes were those provided by CERT (3), Teagasc (3), Bord Iascaigh Mhara (2) and Re-integration training (2) out of the nine respondents stating that they were aware of the programme.

Interestingly, the greatest source of information about all training programmes was 'other' (organisations/sources).

Awareness of education programmes

The respondents were asked if they were aware of four different education programmes and where they obtained information about these education programmes. The results are presented in table No.34.

Adult literacy programmes were the most familiar education programme amongst the respondents with eight out of the nine men stating that they were aware of the programme. The source of information was spread between 'other' (3), VEC (2), DSCFA (1), LES (1) and Fas (1).

The least familiar education programme was the third level Back to Education Allowance with only three of the men stating that they were aware of the programme.

Again 'other' sources of information predominated the men's response.

Awareness of work experience programmes

The respondents were asked if they were aware of eight different work experience programmes and where they obtained information about these programmes. The results are presented in table No.35

Community employment (CE), Family Income Supplement (FIS) and the Back to Work Allowance (BTWA) were the most familiar work experience programmes amongst the respondents with 100% recognition for CE, eight out of nine men were aware of BTWA and seven of the men were aware of FIS.

The remaining work experience programmes, with the exception of Job Start (5), scored quite low levels of awareness amongst the men. None of the men had heard of Workplace

The primary source of information for the respondents concerning these work experience programmes varied from programme to programme. For Community Employment, FAS was the primary source, for Family Income Supplement, DSCFA was the primary source and for the Back to Work Allowance the primary source was the LES.

'Other' once again accounted for the source of information, about work experience programmes, for the majority of men.

SECTION 6

PERCEPTIONS OF THE MEDIA

The perceptions of the long-term unemployed

The respondents were asked a series of five questions at the end of the structured interviews concerning their perceptions of how the media portray issues of unemployment and long-term unemployed people. Table No. 46 shows the results.

Of the seven men who responded, four felt that the media was fair, three that it was not. Just two of the men felt that it was informative, four did not, no-one thought the media accurate in their portrayal of unemployment and all thought that the public are influenced

The perceptions of employers

The employer respondents were asked the same series of five questions at the end of the structured interviews concerning their perceptions of how the media portray issues of unemployment and long-term unemployed people.

The majority (5) felt that the media was fair, one that it was not and one chose not to answer. There was a divided response to the question of whether the media is informative, with two employers agreeing and two disagreeing. The majority however chose not to answer. When asked if the media is accurate the same response was solicited.

The employer respondents were also asked if they felt themselves influenced by the media's portrayal of unemployment and unemployed people and whether they thought that there needs to be a change in how these issues are covered.

All of the employers who responded (6) felt that they weren't influenced by the media's portrayal, there was no dissenting opinion and just one none answer. When asked if there needs to be a change in the way unemployment is covered by the media, there is the same divided response, with the majority not answering the question. (see table No. 21)

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations were identified in order for long-term unemployed people's prospects to improve. These recommendations have been drawn from the findings of the research.

1. Outreach, Publicity and Networking

The research has clearly indicated an under-use of labour market services amongst the unemployed and employers in Ballyfermot. The main reason for this is lack of awareness. Renewed efforts must be made to ensure that all unemployed people living in Ballyfermot are aware of and have information about the local labour market services (FAS, Social Welfare and LES).

Many employer subsidy schemes were not used any of the employers surveyed demonstrating the need for greater information dissemination. Overall outreach, publicity and networking needs to be targeted more effectively at both long-term unemployed people and employers in Ballyfermot.

2. Education and Training

Although reasonable levels of awareness of training and education courses were found amongst the long-term unemployed sample, the main source of information for these stemmed from word of mouth. This demonstrates how easily misinformation can arise and calls for a greater level of information dissemination.

Older long-term unemployed people require particular types of support when taking up training, these must take their skills and capability levels into account. The research indicates that many training courses presently on offer are unattractive to older long-term unemployed people. Effective induction and post programme support procedures need to be incorporated in the design of education and training programmes for those excluded from the labour market. The design and delivery of "bridging courses" for FAS mainstream training is also crucial.

Personal attributes were the most important factors employers cited when recruiting for semi skilled/unskilled positions. Hence the need for equipping long-term unemployed people with non skill related attributes.

3. Job Offer Guarantee

Many of the long-term unemployed men interviewed have been so marginalised from the labour market that it is very difficult for them to re-enter employment. A commitment must be made to provide specific high quality training and a guaranteed job offer to all persons unemployed for over five years.

4. Barriers to Employment

Two of the main barriers cited by the long-term unemployed men were the low level of wages and the loss of the medical card.

4.1 Low Wages

In terms of low wages it was felt by the majority of the men that the minimum wage was too low. The proposed £4.40 rate set by the Commission should be updated through the negotiation of the new national agreement.

4.2 Health Care for Children

Fear of loss of a medical card has long been recognised as a major barrier for many of the long-term unemployed participants particularly with children in taking up work. This stems from a fear of the high cost of medical care. A response to this issue would be to provide a new benefit which would provide medical cover for the children of all insured workers – Children's Health Benefit.

5. Employers

Overall employers perceptions of the long-term unemployed were quite negative. The most positive perceptions were found amongst those employers who were working with the Employer Liaison Officer in the Local Employment Service. This demonstrates the success of this model of practice when working with employers.

Human Resource Managers or those directly responsible for recruitment need to become a target group for the production of resource materials. This would ensure that employers are aware of their responsibilities as employers and are encouraged to use best practice when recruiting so as to avoid any form of discrimination.

6. The Media

The research highlighted the fact that the majority of the long-term unemployed men felt that the media was not informative in its reporting of unemployment. However the majority of employers felt that the media was informative of the issue. A more in-depth analysis of the causes of long-term unemployment by the media would serve to explain why so many long-term unemployed people are unable to get jobs. This would also provide a clearer and more accurate picture to the public. An attempt should be made to portray more positive/success stories instead of concentrating on the negative, thus bringing about a fairer coverage.

Appendix 2

AREA PROFILE OF BALLYFERMOT IN THE CITY OF DUBLIN

Population

The 1996 census figures calculate the population in the Ballyfermot are of the Dublin County Borough as being 33,907.

The male to female ratio within the area in 1996 was 16,430 (48.5%) males to 17,477 (51.5%) females.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs provided figures for November 1998 showing the numbers of people who gave an address as Ballyfermot when signing on. The following tables reflects these figures:

Number of people unemployed and the type of payment (November 1998)

UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE	UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT	CREDITS	TOTAL UNEMPLOYED
1,118 (77.2%)	318 (22%)	11 (0.8%)	1,447

Breakdown of Gender

Male	Female	Total
1,022 (70.6%)	425 (29.4%)	1,447

Analysis of Age

GENDER	UNDER 25	25 – 30	30 – 35	35 & OVER	TOTAL
Male	170	151	130	571	1,022
Female	108	74	62	181	425

It is interesting to note that the greatest concentration of unemployed people is in the 35 years and older category with 55.8% of all unemployed men being aged over 35 years and 42.6% of all women.

DURATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIM

UNDER 15 MONTHS	15 MONTHS/3 YEARS	3 YEARS AND OVER	TOTAL
671	269	507	1,447

The largest proportion of claimants (64.3%), were signing on for under 15 months.

APPENDIX 2

TABLES - EMPLOYERS

Table 1: Position of respondent in the company

POSITION IN COMPANY	COUNT T=7
Manager	1
Managing Director	2
Director	1
Operations Manager	1
Production Manager	1
Office Manager	1

Table 2: Business sector of respondent

BUSINESS SECTOR	COUNT
Food packaging	1
Commercial vehicle repairs	1
Health food	1
Clothing & footwear	1
Food processing	1
Bakery	1
Waste disposal	1

Table 3: Numbers employed in the respondent's companies

NO.S EMPLOYED IN ENTERPRISES	COUNT
Between 1-9	-
Between 10-19	2
Between 20-49	4
More than 50	1

Table 4: The gender of those employed

NO.s EMPLOYED	MALE FULL-TIME	FEMALE FULL-TIME	MALE PART-TIME	FEMALE PART-TIME	TOTAL EMPLOYED
COUNT	182	45	7	11	245
%	74%	19%		3%	4%

Table 5 & 6: Occupational categories of employees

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	MEN T=6	% T=6	WOMEN	%
Managerial/Professional/Technical	17	9%	3	1.5%
Non - manual	29	15%	22	12%
Skilled - manual	47	25%	1	0.5%
Semi/unskilled manual	69	36%	2	1%
Total	162		28	

Table 7: New Recruits 1998

GENDER & EMPLOYMENT STATUS	COUNT T=7
Male full-time	19
Female full-time	8
Male part-time	6
Female part-time	1
Total	32

Table 8: Recruitment Method

METHOD	COUNT T=7
Person referred by someone in company	7
Person referred by someone employer knows	4
CV's on file	3
FAS	3
DSCFA	1
LES	3
Recruitment agencies	1
National Newspapers	2
Local Newspapers	1
Advertisements in shop window	1
Unsolicited applications	3
Centre for the unemployed	1

Table 9: Ratings of recruitment methods

METHOD	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	NOT USEFUL	HAVEN'T USED
Person referred by someone in company	1	3	3	–	–	–
Person referred by someone employer knows	1	–	4	–	–	2
CV's on file	–	1	2	–	1	3
FAS	1	–	3	–	–	3
DSCFA	–	–	–	–	1	6
LES	–	1	–	1	1	4
Recruitment agencies	–	1	1	–	–	5
National Newspapers	1	–	2	–	–	4
Local Newspapers	–	–	–	2	–	5
Advertisements in shop window	–	–	–	1	–	6
Unsolicited applications	–	1	–	–	3	3
Centre for the unemployed	–	–	–	1	–	6
Totals (84)	4	7	15	5	6	47

Table 10: Effectiveness of selection methods

SELECTION METHOD	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	NOT USEFUL	HAVEN'T USED
Structured interviews	1	2	2	–	–	2
Unstructured interviews	1	1	1	1	–	3
Application forms	–	1	2	1	–	3
Ability tests	–	–	–	–	–	7
Personality tests	–	–	–	–	–	7
References	–	2	2	1	–	2

Table 11: Essential Characteristics

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS	NO. OF EMPLOYERS
Evidence of reliability	4
Health/fitness	4
Awareness of health & safety procedures	3

Table 12: Desirable Characteristics

DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS	NO. OF EMPLOYERS
General work experience	6
Experience in a similar job	5
Employment record	5
Personal hygiene	5
Skills training	4
Literacy	4
Communication skills	4
Flexibility	4
References	4
Distance job seeker lives from work	4
Unemployed less than 12 months	4
Immediate availability for work	3

Table 13: Unimportant characteristics

UNIMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS	NO. OF EMPLOYERS
Presence of a friend or relative	6
Age below 25 years	5
Age over 35 years	5
Unemployment more than 12 months	5
Educational qualifications	4
Gender	4
Area where job seeker lives	4
Technical competence	4
Personal recommendation	3
Age below 35 years	3

Table 14: Most important factors

FACTORS	COUNT T=7
Attitude / willingness to work	4
Honesty / trust	3
Appearance / personality	3
Skills / ability	3
Punctuality / timekeeping	2
Common sense	2

Table 15: How would you rate long-term unemployed people

CRITERIA	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Level of skills	–	3	2
Reliability	–	2	3
Ability adjusting to work	–	1	4
Motivation	–	1	4
Level of wages demanded	1	1	4

Table 16: Contact with labour market services

LABOUR MARKET SERVICE	IN CONTACT	NOT IN CONTACT
FAS	5	2
LES	2	5
CERT	–	7
DSCFA	1	6

Table 16a: Who initiated the contact

LABOUR MARKET SERVICE	EMPLOYER	SERVICE
FAS	5	–
LES	1	1
CERT	–	–
DSCFA	1	–

Table 16b: Reasons for contact with FAS

REASON	YES	NO
You sought job seeker	4	1
To investigate your recruitment needs	–	5
Putting job seeker in contact with you	–	5
General discussion/other	1	4

Table 16c: Reason for contact with LES

REASON	YES	NO
You sought job seeker	1	1
To investigate your recruitment needs	1	1
Putting job seeker in contact with you	1	1
General discussion/other	–	2

Table 16d: Reason for contact with DSCFA

REASON	YES	NO
You sought job seeker	1	–
To investigate your recruitment needs	–	1
Putting job seeker in contact with you	–	1
General discussion/other	–	1

Table 17: Summary of employer ratings - FAS

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	NOT USEFUL
Flexible approach	–	1	3	1	–
Awareness of employer needs		2	1	1	1
Expertise of FAS Staff	1	1	1	–	2
Customer focus	1	–	2	1	1

Table 18: Summary of employer ratings - LES

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	NOT USEFUL
Flexible approach	–	1	1	–	–
Awareness of employer needs	–	2	–	–	–
Expertise of FAS Staff	–	2	–	–	–
Customer focus	–	1	1	–	–

Table 19: Summary of employer ratings - DSCFA

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	NOT USEFUL
Flexible approach	–	–	–	–	1
Awareness of employer needs	–	–	–	–	1
Expertise of FAS Staff	–	–	–	–	1
Customer focus	–	–	–	–	1

- There was no rating provided for CERT by employers, in Ballyfermot.

Table 20: Awareness and effectiveness of employer subsidy schemes

INCENTIVE SCHEME	AWARE OF	HAVE USED	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	NOT USEFUL	WOULD USE AGAIN
BTWA	5	2	–	1	–	2	1	1
P-T Job Incentive	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Job Initiative	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Job Assist	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Job Start	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Workplace	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
PRSI Exemption	5	4	1	1	1	–	1	3

Table 21: Employers and the media portrayal of long-term unemployed people

QUESTIONS	EMPLOYERS AGREEING	EMPLOYERS DISAGREEING	NO ANSWER
Is the media fair?	5	1	1
Is the media informative?	2	2	3
Is the media accurate?	2	2	3
Do you feel influenced?	–	6	1
Should there be a change?	2	2	3

Table 22: Employers – training in recruitment and selection

EMPLOYERS	YES	NO
Received formal training?	4	3
Use materials to assist?	2	5
Interested in training?	1	4

LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

Table 23: Age

AGE	NUMBER OF MEN
Under 35 years	1
Between 35 – 44	1
Between 45 – 54	7
Over 55 years	–

Table 24: Type of Social Welfare Payment

PAYMENT	NUMBER. OF MEN
UA	6
UB	-
OPFP	-
DA	-
Other	-
CE	-
IP	3

Table 25: Duration of unemployment

PERIOD	NUMBER. OF MEN
Less than 1 year	1
1 – 2 years	2
3 – 5 years	-
6 – 10 years	3
10 + years	3

Table 26: Educational Attainment

LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT	NO. OF MEN
No education	1
Primary	3
Secondary less than inter cert.	3
Inter cert.	2
Leaving cert.	–
Certificate/Diploma	–

Table 27: Returned to further study

CATEGORY	NO. OF MEN
Have returned to study	2
Have not returned to study	7

Table 28: Employment History

STATUS PRIOR TO BEING UNEMPLOYED	NO. OF MEN
Working full-time	8
Working part-time	-
Self employed	-
On a training course	1
On a temporary employment scheme	-
Outside labour force	-

Table 29a: Number of Jobs held before unemployment

NO. OF JOBS SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL	NO. OF MEN
No Job	-
One Job	-
2 Jobs	-
3 – 5 Jobs	3
6 – 10 Jobs	1
10 + Jobs	5

Table 29b: Main occupation before becoming unemployed.

OCCUPATION	COUNT
Labourer	1
Underpressor in clothing industry	1
Hotel worker / machine operative	1
General operative	1
Cinema usher / cleaner	1
Printer / mechanic	1
Roofer	1
Fitter / forklift driver	1
Factory worker / night porter	1

Table 30: How most recent job finished

REASON	NO. OF MEN
Redundancy	1
Walked out	1
Dismissed	2
Temporary Contract	-
Other	5

Table 31: Reasons for leaving last job voluntarily

REASON	NO. OF MEN
Boredom	1
Low pay offered	3
Health – sickness	2
Other	3

Table 32: Use and perceptions of state employment services

SERVICE	HAVE USED	NOT USEFUL	SOMEWHAT	CONSIDERABLY	FULLY
FAS	7	1	4	1	1
Partnership	1	–	1	–	–
LES	8	–	1	–	7
DSCFA	6	4	1	–	–
U. Centre	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
VEC	2	2	–	–	–
Other	7	–	5	–	2

Table 33: Awareness and source of awareness of training programmes

AWARE	FAS	LES	CENTRE	FOR U.	DSCFA	VEC	OTHER
SST	4	2	1	–	–	–	1
JTS	6	3	–	–	1	–	2
RT	2	1	–	–	–	–	1
ET	4	2	–	–	1	–	1
CTW	7	2	–	–	–	–	4
TTW	5	–	–	–	–	–	5
Cert	3	–	–	–	–	–	3
Teagasc	3	–	–	–	–	–	3
BIM	2	–	–	–	–	–	2

Table 34: Awareness of education programmes

AWARE	FAS	LES	CENTRE	FOR U.	DSCFA	VEC	OTHER
VTOS	5	1	–	–	1	1	2
3rd level BTEA	3	1	–	–	–	1	1
P–T & Evening	7	1	–	–	1	2	3
Adult Literacy	8	1	1	–	1	2	3

Table 35: Awareness of work programmes

	AWARE	FAS	LES	CENTRE FOR U.	DSCFA	VEC	OTHER
CE	9	3	2	–	1	–	2
J S	5	–	2	–	2	–	1
W P	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
J I	2	–	–	–	–	–	2
BTWA	8	–	3	–	2	–	1
J A	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
FIS	7	–	–	–	3	–	4
Area All	3	–	–	–	2	–	1
Other	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Table 36: Seeking work since becoming unemployed

SEEKING WORK	DURING 1st YEAR	DURING 2nd YEAR	LAST YEAR
Yes	8	4	7
No	1	5	2

Table 37: Seeking work in first year of being unemployed

	HOW MANY JOBS APPLIED FOR	CALLED FOR INTERVIEW	ATTENDED INTERVIEW
None	–	3	–
Between 1 – 5	1	4	4
Between 6 – 10	2	1	1
Between 11 – 20	4	–	–
Between 21 – 30	1	–	–

Table 38: Seeking work in second year of being unemployed

	HOW MANY JOBS APPLIED FOR	CALLED FOR INTERVIEW	ATTENDED INTERVIEW
None	–	1	–
Between 1 – 5	4	3	3
Between 6 – 10	–	–	–
Between 11 – 20	–	–	–
Between 21 – 30	–	–	–

Table 39: Seeking work over the last year

	HOW MANY JOBS APPLIED FOR	CALLED FOR INTERVIEW	ATTENDED INTERVIEW
None	2	2	–
Between 1 – 5	4	3	3
Between 6 – 10	–	–	–
Between 11 – 20	1	–	–
Between 21 – 30	–	–	–

Table 40: Work in the black economy

CRITERIA	HAD WORKED	HADN'T WORKED
Total	4	5

Table 41: Training course in job seeking

HAVE DONE A TRAINING COURSE IN JOB SEEKING	NOT AT ALL USEFUL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	CONSIDERABLY USEFUL	FULLY USEFUL
3	-	-	-	3

Table 42: CV's

CRITERIA	DO YOU HAVE A CV	IS IT USEFUL	AT LAST INTERVIEW WAS CV ASKED FOR
	5		3
Not at all		2	
Somewhat		2	
Considerably		1	
Fully		2	

Table 43: Performance at interviews

VERY DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEITHER	VERY SATISFIED
2	-	1	3

Table 44: Employers conduct at interviews

SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED
6	-

Table 45: Seeking feedback after interviews

	DID SEEK FEEDBACK	NOT AT ALL USEFUL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	CONSIDERABLY USEFUL	FULLY USEFUL
Feedback	1	1			
How useful					

Table 46: Media

	IS IT FAIR	IS IT INFORMATIVE	IS IT ACCURATE	ARE THE PUBLIC INFLUENCE
Yes	4	2	1	8
No	3	4	9	-

Table 47: Reasons for not taking up an offer of employment

	LITTLE FINANCIAL INCENTIVE	WEAK WORK INCENTIVE	LOSE SECONDARY BENEFITS	OTHER
Yes	2	4	3	-
No	2	-	1	4

Table 48: Reasons for giving up looking for work

REASON FOR GIVING UP LOOKING FOR WORK	YES	NO
Given up hope of getting a job	2	7
Depression / withdrawal	3	6
Fear of rejection	3	6
Not able to fit in	3	6
Didn't want to be hurt further	–	9
Family commitments	2	7
Sickness / health	2	7
Age	2	7
No jobs for older persons	1	8
Gap between skills & jobs	1	8
Other	1	8

Table 49: Methods used to find out about jobs

METHOD	COUNT T = 9
Local Newspapers	3
National Newspapers	4
FAS	3
LES	4
Word of mouth	5
Recruitment agencies	–
Calling in person to the company	2
Other	2

Table 50: Preparations for job interviews

	DID FIND OUT ABOUT THE COMPANY	DID PRACTICE INTERVIEW SKILLS	OTHER FORMS OF PREPARATION
Yes	3	-	2
No	3	6	4

Table 51: Ideal job and conditions

LTU	TYPE OF JOB	PAY	CONDITIONS	PROSPECTS	ADVANTAGE	DISADVANTAGE
	Painter / decorator	£200-220 nett per week	-	-	Confidence & possibly start own business	Need to be careful about health
	Factory shift work or driving	Over £200 nett per week	Shift work	Woudn't quit if happy with conditions and money	Income and being able to look after family	Low wages
	Customer relations in hotel sector	£400-500 gross per week	Usual conditions	Pay & conditions important	Doing what I do best	None
	To run local paper	Living wage	Work in - office & outside		Would suite me & my interests	None
	Local community work	£350 gross per week	-	-	-	-
	With Computers	£400 gross per week	9-5 normal conditions	Opportunity to go forward & pension	Printing is a standing up all day job	None
	Working with people in the community	-	-	-	-	-
	Forklift or any other Driving	Anything above £111 per week	-	Happy to have a job	Financial better off & self respect	None
	Gardening / painter	£200-230 nett per week	No work outside in rain with no gear	Content if wages & conditions acceptable	Kept busy and paid a fair wage	None

Table 52: Importance of secondary benefits

T=8	IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
	6	2

Table 53: Top 3 barriers to obtaining work

BARRIERS	COUNT
Age	8
Address	5
Lack of educational qualifications	4
Low pay offered	3
Lack of skills	2
Lack of experience	2
Impact of unemployment on the person	1
Other (distance from workplace)	1
No suitable jobs	-
Gender	-

Table 54: What characteristics do you think employers seek & that you have

CHARACTERISTIC	SOUGHT BY EMPLOYERS	THAT YOU HAVE
Educational Qualifications	4	2
Reliability	7	8
Experience	8	5
Youth	4	1
Specific Skills	4	3
Flexibility	4	3
Personality	6	6
Appearance	5	5
Honesty	7	7
Motivation	6	4
Competence	5	3
Own Initiative	5	5
Other (Literacy)	1	-

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (1987) Evidence from the National and Development Study, UK.

Allen M, (1998); *The Bitter Word*, Poolbeg Press Ltd., Dublin.

CSO (1996); *Census 1996 Volume 1*, Stationary Office, Dublin.

CSO (1996); *Census 1996 Volume 7*, Stationary Office, Dublin.

CSO (1996); *Small Area Population Statistics*, CSO, Dublin.

ESF, (1998); *ESF and the Long-term Unemployed*, ESF, Dublin.

NESF, (1994); *Ending Long-term Unemployment*, NESF, Dublin.

OECD, (1997); *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society*, OECD, Paris.

WRC, (1991); *Life on the Dole*, Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed, Dublin.

WRC, (1995) *Age, Unemployment and the Labour Market*, WRC, Dublin.