



IRISH NATIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED

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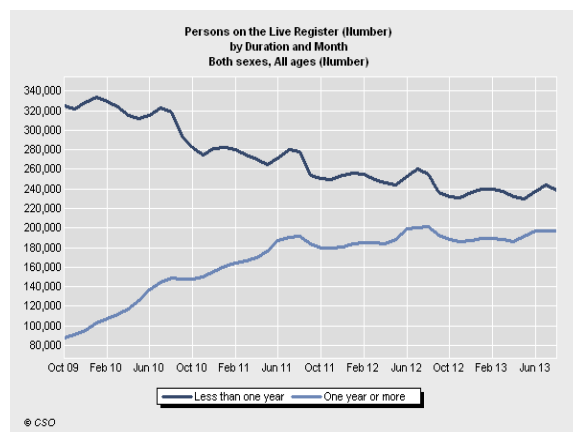
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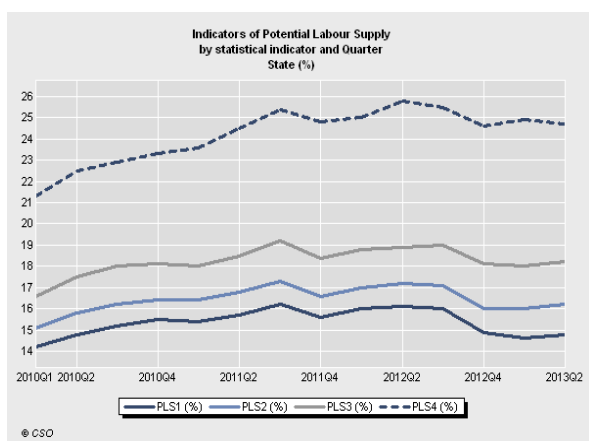
INO SUBMISSION TO ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS 2014

Recent Trends

Over the past year the Live Register has floated down to a seasonally adjusted figure of 415,300 people: the last time the register was at this level was August 2009. However, looking at the unadjusted data it is clear that much of this fall is in short-term unemployment. Of particular concern to the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed are the numbers of people on the Live Register for more than a year. As Figure 1 illustrates, this number is hovering just under 200,000 people.



The official unemployment figure comes from the Quarterly National Household Surveys which uses the tight International Labour Office definition which only classifies people as unemployed if they are actively seeking work. Over the most recent quarters long-term unemployment has fallen year-on-year to 175,000 people. This begs the question: where did these people go?



Examining the Indicator of the Potential Labour Supply (PLS) provides a broader picture which captures not only those who are 'officially' unemployed but people who are underemployed and those who have become discouraged / 'inactive', many of whom are amongst the long-term unemployed. The broadest of these indicators is PLS4 and in Q2 2013 it stood at just under 25%, a figure it has hovered around over the past eight quarters. This contrasts with the overall Standardised Unemployment Rate which now stands at 13.4%: a rate last seen in April 2010. As the Indicator of Potential Labour Supply



captures a broader range of data, it illustrates more clearly the extent of the employment challenge facing Ireland and in particular if it is to be addressed in an inclusive manner.

In the most recent National Skills Bulletin detailed data from the Quarterly National Household Survey was used to explore movements / transitions between employment, unemployment and inactivity. At one level it highlighted a significant amount of flexibility within the labour market as in 2012, 130,000 people moved from unemployment into employment, while 120,000 people went from work to being unemployed. Interestingly, 39% of the transitions from unemployment into work were people who have been long term unemployed. However, the report notes that on average over the year 74.5% of those who had been unemployed in one quarter were unemployed in the next. The scale of the employment challenge and in particular addressing it sustainably is also highlighted: *“as a significant share of transitions to and from employment, as well as within employment, are associated with relatively lower skilled jobs, the analysis suggests that the challenge for many job seekers appears to be not just in securing any employment, but in securing sustainable jobs”*. (p10)

In its recent report on Ireland the *“OECD recommends that Ireland do much more to assist the unemployed, notably long-term job-seekers. It points out a critical need for support and retraining, to ward against social exclusion and ensure that young people are prepared to work as the recovery strengthens. The local job creation report lays out new strategies to ensure that education and training programmes provide the skills needed in the labour markets of today and the future.”*

In the context of a continued recovery Secretary-General Gurría said: *“What’s needed today is a strategic agenda for more inclusive growth that promotes job creation and social equity by harnessing the power of entrepreneurship and innovation.”*

To-date Government economic and employment policy has placed a significant emphasis on export lead growth. Given that Ireland is a small open economy there is a certain rationale to this focus. However, the INOU is concerned that there is insufficient focus on re-generating domestic economic development and that addressing the unemployment crisis in an equitable and inclusive manner will not be possible without such a focus. The cold reality is that for many parts of the country and for many communities Foreign Direct Investment and Enterprise Ireland lead exporting companies will not be emerging, nor will the related job creation. If job creation is to emerge or existing jobs maintained they will come from the domestic economy getting back up off its knees. To ensure that such a development will have a positive impact on unemployed people will require concerted action to ensure that unemployed people are supported to access these jobs. Considerable inter-departmental and interagency working is required to ensure that this is a reality and one consistently delivered on across the country: it is also required as a matter of urgency.

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS 2014 PROPOSALS	LEAD ACTORS
EDUCATION & TRAINING	
To address the skills gap between unemployed people and emerging job opportunities: continue to build on initiatives like Springboard, ICT Conversion and up-skilling programme, Momentum Initiative.	Department of Education and Skills (DES); SOLAS; Higher Education Authority (HEA)
To ensure that unemployed people get access to these schemes it is important that there is good assessment of their current skills / education levels and what intervention is required to ensure they can access decent work.	Department of Social Protection (DSP); Intreo / local Social Welfare Office in partnership with HEA; SOLAS and Local Education and Training Board (LETB).
To develop a properly structured activation / career path an alternative to third level education must be offered. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore the transferability of the apprenticeship system / model that is available in Germany where people work and learn on the job. 	DES; SOLAS; LETB; FETAC training providers.
Integral to the provision of good quality Education and Training options should be the production of a single course database or universal course calendar covering the range of courses on offer which unemployed people could access.	SOLAS and HEA.
Progression should focus on the most meaningful option for the person concerned. So, for example, if a person on or seeking to access the Back to Education Allowance needs to do a FETAC level course that is the same or at a lower level than their existing qualifications they should be allowed to undertake it.	DES; SOLAS; LETB; DSP; Intreo and local Social Welfare Offices (Intreo / SWO).
Integral to delivering a quality adult education experience for learners should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A comprehensive recruitment process that strives to match the individual to the appropriate course. ▪ Good programme supports including: a built-in induction period; high quality tutors; flexibility to take into account the life circumstances of the adult participants. ▪ Post progression supports to support the learner to find paid employment or a suitable further course of study. 	DES; SOLAS; HEA; LETB; DSP; Intreo / SWO.

LOCAL COMMUNITY RESPONSES	
To look to the potential of the green economy for local socio-economic development. In particular its' potential to address social challenges, e.g. fuel poverty, while creating local sustainable solutions through retrofitting and developing local renewable energy.	Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (DECLG); Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation (DJEI); other relevant Departments / Agencies
To address potential skills gaps a new apprenticeship model should be used for opportunities in a range of areas in the green economy including retrofitting, wind turbines and related technologies.	DES; SOLAS; HEA; LETB.
To support local communities to address their local socio-economic needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the Forfás report on the potential of social enterprises; • Identify and deliver on the necessary resources. 	DJEI; DECLG; DSP; Local Development Companies (LDC); Local Enterprise Offices (LEO).
To acknowledge the role played by initiatives like Community Employment, Tús in the delivery of local public / community services, many of which are social enterprises, and build on this work to create sustainable employment.	DJEI; DECLG; DSP; LDC; LEO.
To realise that for many marginalised unemployed people that employment programmes, like CE, are the only access point to the labour market. To improve progression outcomes in the wider labour market that the work undertaken in employment programmes should be broken down by skills acquired both by training and by experiential learning. This information should then be used to support the participant to find subsequent employment through enhanced job-matching facilities.	DSP Employment Services; LDC; Local Employment Services (LES); CE Supervisors and Sponsoring organisations.
ACCESSING THE LABOUR MARKET	
To create a positive dynamic in the local economy and local labour market, the welfare to work journey should be as seamless as possible. To that end the DSP's Fast-track scheme; FIS; JobsPlus must all be pro-actively promoted and unemployed people facilitated to take-up work and maintain	DSP; Intreo / SWO; LES.

their links with the labour market.	
Ensure that when job announcements are made that Intreo and the Local Education and Training Boards work with the employers to run appropriate training courses that give unemployed people the best chance of getting these jobs.	DSP / Intreo / Local SWO; DES; SOLAS; HEA; LETB.
Improve the efficiency of job-matching. This would build up the confidence of employers that they will be able to access the employees they need through the public employment service; and it would build up the confidence of unemployed people that the service will meet their employment needs.	DSP; Intreo / SWO; LES.
Ensure that supports for small and medium sized enterprises also provide proper supports for unemployed people seeking to set-up their own businesses.	DSP; DJEI; DECLG; LEO; LDC.
Encourage and support the development of alternative enterprise models including cooperatives and social enterprises.	DJEI; DECLG; LEO; LDC.
Voluntary work can play an important role in facilitating unemployed people to maintain and develop new skills and contacts. The INOU and Volunteering Ireland are concerned that these opportunities are being denied unemployed people arising from inconsistent application of existing DSP guidelines on the ground. This issue must be addressed and in particular as leading employers have cited the importance of voluntary work on jobseekers CVs.	DSP; DJEI and other relevant bodies.



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