

Action Plan for Jobs 2016



“The INOU is a federation of unemployed people, unemployed centres, unemployed groups, community organisations and Trade Unions.

The INOU represents and defends the rights and interests of those who want decent employment and cannot obtain it. We promote and campaign for policies to achieve full employment for all.

We also campaign for an acceptable standard of living for unemployed people and their dependents. The INOU is an anti-sectarian, anti-racist, non-party political organisation which promotes equality of opportunity within society.”

INOU Mission Statement

INOU

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The INOU welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on the 2016 Action Plan for Jobs. The organisation recognises that positive developments are occurring in the labour market and welcomes the increase in the number of people in employment and the fall in unemployment, particularly the fall in long-term unemployment. Notwithstanding these positive developments, unemployed people still face significant challenges in accessing employment.

In August the Central Statistics Office published the latest Equality Module based on the Quarterly National Household Survey Q3, 2014. The equality grounds named in the Employment Equality Act and Equal Status Act are used and even though unemployment is not covered per se, the issue of unemployment was very much to the fore, as respondents were also classified by their employment status. A high rate of discrimination was reported by people who are unemployed: at 23%. A higher proportion of men highlighted discrimination when ‘looking for work’, 31%; while, a higher number of women experienced discrimination ‘in the workplace’ 31%. The issue of age featured very strongly with 46% of respondents noting that age was an issue. This is very much in keeping with the feedback the INOU receives from older, long-term unemployed people.

The most recent Quarterly National Household Survey, for Quarter 2 2015 showed that employment continues to rise, with an annual increase of 57,100 people. Looking at these figures from a regional perspective, every region saw an increase in employment but at different levels: 27% of the job growth was in the Dublin region, while the Midlands only received 4.4%. Feedback from INOU members and affiliates highlights that even within the Dublin region many people are not experiencing this employment growth.

According to the official unemployment figures, unemployment fell by 43,300 people. It should not, however, be assumed that everyone who is no longer classified as unemployed is now in employment: some people will have found employment; others are now on an activation programme; others emigrated; and other people will be classified as ‘inactive’ rather than ‘unemployed’.

Key Focus for APJ 2016:

☛ **Maximising employment opportunities**

☛ **Realising equality and inclusion in the labour market**

Challenging Context

The official unemployment rate stood at 9.8% in Q2 2015, bringing the figure down to early 2009 levels; while the long-term unemployment rate was 5.5%, similar to the rate last seen in Q1 2010.

In April the Government published their Spring Economic Statement which over the period 2015-2020 envisages employment growing to 2,155,000 people and the unemployment rate falling to 6.9%. While this represents a significant improvement in employment, it will still leave approximately 160,000 people unemployed. A 6.9% unemployment rate is also considerably higher than those seen in the early to mid-noughties, a time when the unemployment rate moved between 4% and 4.5% and the long-term unemployment rate between 1.2% and 1.4%.

To capture the employment challenge facing Ireland, the Potential Supply of Labour statistics gives a fuller picture, the widest of these indicators PSL4 includes unemployed people, people who are not actively seeking work, people who are unavailable to take-up work within two weeks (care or transport issues), and people who are underemployed. In Q2 2015, this figure stood at 18.3%, almost twice the official unemployment figure.

Two other sets of statistics illustrate the cumulative impact of unemployment. According to the most recent Survey of Income and Living Conditions in Ireland, people who were unemployed had the highest at-risk-of-poverty and consistent poverty rates in 2013: 36.7% and 23.9% in comparison to national figures of 15.2% and 8.2%. The consistent poverty rate was also considerably higher for unemployed people, at 54.9% in comparison to a national figure of 30.5%.

The Household Finance and Consumption Survey 2013 reported that though unemployed households make up 12.8% of all households, they only have 3.9% of all net wealth. The Survey also noted that median net wealth (gross wealth - debt) for households headed by an unemployed person was €7,200, while for the 'top 20% of households by income' had a median net wealth of €207,000.

Many unemployed people have yet to see or experience the recovery that is underway. The INOU believes that it is absolutely vital that the principles of equality, human rights and social inclusion are incorporated into Irish policy making and delivery so as to ensure that all share in the recovery.

Key Focus

Recently, the United Nations published 17 Sustainable Development Goals, goals that every member country should spell out how they will achieve them and incorporate them into policy making and delivery. Of particular interest to the INOU are Goals 4, 8 and 10.

- ☛ GOAL 4 strives to *“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”*
- ☛ GOAL 8 seeks to *“Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”*
- ☛ GOAL 10 aims to *“Reduce inequality within and among countries”* and as part of this goal, Target 10.2 seeks to *“empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”*. While, Target 10.3 strives to *“Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard”*

These developments fit in well with Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 which introduced *a positive duty on public bodies* reflecting a commitment in the *Government’s Programme for National Recovery 2011 to 2016*. Section 42 (1) states that *“A public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the need to —*

- a) *eliminate discrimination,*
- b) *promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and*
- c) *protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.”*

Realising equality and inclusion in the labour market will require specific commitments and strong actions that spell out how people who are jobless, including people who are long-term unemployed, parenting alone, and living with a disability, will be able to access a decent job. APJ 2016 must spell out how this will be done.

ACCESSING THE LABOUR MARKET

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS 2016 PROPOSALS	LEAD ACTORS	WHEN
<p>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; the Back to Work Family Dividend; JobsPlus must all be pro-actively promoted and unemployed people facilitated to take-up work and maintain their links with the labour market.</p>	<p>DSP; Intreo / SWO; LES.</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p>Build on the protocol between the Department of Social Protection, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Enterprise Agencies which aims to maximise recruitment from the Live Register.</p>	<p>DJEI; DSP / Intreo; DES; and now include SOLAS; HEA; LETB.</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>DSP; Intreo / SWO; LES.</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p>Ensure that supports for small and medium sized enterprises also provide proper supports for unemployed people seeking to set-up their own businesses.</p>	<p>DSP; DJEI; DECLG; LEO; LDC.</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p>Encourage and support the development of alternative enterprise models including cooperatives and social enterprises.</p>	<p>DJEI; DECLG; LEO; LDC.</p>	<p>ASAP</p>

EDUCATION & TRAINING

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS 2016 PROPOSALS	LEAD ACTORS	WHEN
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, Skillnets, Momentum Initiative.	DES; SOLAS; HEA	On-going
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.	DSP / Intreo in partnership with HEA, SOLAS and LETB.	On-going
Further develop dual and in-work education and training opportunities to address the skills gap and create alternative learning routes with strong links to decent employment.	DES; SOLAS; HEA; employer and learner representatives.	ASAP
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.	ASAP
<p>Integral to delivering a quality adult education experience for learners should include:</p> <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 and maintain employment or a suitable further course of study. 	DES; SOLAS; HEA; LETB; DSP; Intreo / SWO.	On-going

LOCAL COMMUNITY RESPONSES

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS 2016 PROPOSALS	LEAD ACTORS	WHEN
<p>To support local communities to address their local socio-economic needs deliver the necessary resources to support the development of social enterprises.</p>	<p>DJEI; DECLG; DSP; Local Development Companies (LDC); Local Enterprise Offices (LEO).</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p>To acknowledge and value 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.</p>	<p>DJEI; DECLG; DSP; LDC; LEO.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>For many marginalised unemployed people employment programmes, like CE, may be the only access point to the labour market. So to improve progression outcomes in the wider labour market 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.</p>	<p>DSP Employment Services; LDC; Local Employment Services (LES); CE Supervisors and Sponsoring organisations.</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p>Support the potential of the green economy for local socio-economic development. In particular it's potential to address social challenges, e.g. fuel poverty, while creating local sustainable solutions through retrofitting and developing local renewable energy.</p>	<p>DECLG; DJEI; other relevant Departments / Agencies</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>DES; SOLAS; HEA; LETB.</p>	<p>ASAP</p>

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Sharing in the recovery

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