



CHAPTER 3

Looking for Work

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Introduction

In this chapter we explore the range of services and supports available to help you find a job and assist you in your move from Welfare to Work.

Very often, unemployed people find that knowing how to look for work is as important as the act of looking for work itself. Knowing where to source information on employment opportunities and how to follow up on them, is equally important.

You will find that as you begin to understand how to use the range of 'jobseeking' tools and services available, you will greatly increase your chances of finding and getting the job you want.

INO Services and Supports

The INOU provides a number of resources for Jobseekers, to support them in their progression into employment.

INO JobsWatch page

Our JobsWatch page is an invaluable tool for jobseekers, providing information about the latest jobs being created and announced through local and national media in Ireland.

The JobsWatch page listing for each job announcement contains information on the number of jobs, the types of jobs, when they are to take effect and a link to the website of the company announcing the jobs. For more information – visit the INOU website www.inou.ie

Welfare Rights Information Service

Jobseekers can contact the INOU directly, by telephone or e-mail, to seek information about available supports and incentives when seeking to return to employment.

This includes information on how taking up employment will affect:

- Rents (under the Rent Supplement / Housing Assistance Payment / Local Authority Differential Rent System),
- Retention of secondary benefits (such as medical card); *and*
- Access to Working Family Payment (WFP) and Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD).
- Access to Back to Work Supports, Education and Training options.

For more information, contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088, by e-mail at welfare@inou.ie or website www.inou.ie

Intreo – Department of Social Protection

Intreo is a service from the Department of Social Protection. It is a single point of contact for all employment services and in the provision of income supports. Intreo provides individualised supports to jobseekers to assist them in getting back to work and increasing their employability, and to employers. The Intreo service is available across the Department’s network of offices.

Intreo – Services and Supports to Jobseeker’s

Intreo provides practical, tailored supports and services to assist jobseekers with their job seeking needs. It is designed to make sure that jobseekers have access to a wide range of employment and work experience opportunities.

The range of services includes:

- Employment services and income supports, available in one place.
- Expert assistance and advice on employment, training, work experience and personal development opportunities.
- A focus on individual needs to assist a jobseeker to enter the workforce.
- Access to information on job vacancies in Ireland through the Public Employment Services website www.jobsireland.ie
- Access to information on job vacancies in Europe through the European Job Mobility Portal www.eures.europa.eu
- Information on the full range of income supports provided by the Department of Social Protection, for example, Jobseekers’ payments, Back to Work and Back to Education payments, One Parent Family payments, pensions and others.
- Ongoing support with any queries in relation to Jobseekers or One-Parent Family Payment claims will continue to be provided by the team in your local Intreo Centre.

If you require further information on Intreo or assistance in dealing with Intreo, please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 or by e-mail: welfare@inou.ie

Intreo Partners – National Employment Service

The Intreo Partners National Employment Service (IPNES) is an employment support service aimed primarily at people who are long-term unemployed and who have been in the live register between twelve (12) and twenty-four (24) months. A personal advisor is assigned to every customer, the personal advisor assesses the customer’s skills, experience, challenges and work goals and will work with the customer to secure and sustain full-time paid employment. People are referred to the IPNES for a period of one (1) year and can avail of other supports and training during this period.

Customers for this service are randomly selected by DSP. Anyone who would like further information on the service should contact their local Intreo office. Visit www.gov.ie/welfare to find your local office.

Intreo Partners – Local Area Employment Service

The Intreo Partners Local Area Employment Service (IPLAES) is an employment support service aimed primarily at people who are long-term unemployed and who have been on the live register for twenty-four months and over. The LAES service assists customers in finding sustainable full time paid employment by providing intensive individual support and assistance.

Customers are referred to the IPLAES for a period of one (1) year and can avail of other supports and training during this period. Customers in receipt of other DSP payments (i.e. Carers, Disability etc.) may avail of the LAES service. It is not necessary to be in receipt of a DSP payment to avail of the LAES service.

Any person interested in availing of the LAES service should contact their local Intreo office for further details. Visit www.gov.ie/welfare to find your local office.

JobsIreland.ie

JobsIreland.ie is the Public Employment Service of the Department of Social Protection – www.jobsireland.ie connects people looking for work with potential employers. It links anyone who is looking for employment, or thinking about changing job or career direction with employers who are advertising vacancies and actively hiring.

This service includes a network of staff providing expert guidance and resources to both jobseekers and employers. They can help jobseekers to create their CV and find their ideal job, while helping employers to promote jobs and match their requirements to jobseeker profiles using the latest technology. www.jobsireland.ie gives you access to career advice and tips on CV and interview preparation to help in your job search. A well-written CV and good interview skills can greatly improve your chances of gaining employment.

It offers a free job advertising service to employers and enable jobseekers to search for jobs and to create a profile to match their skills and experience with available jobs. Visit www.jobsireland.ie for more information.

Employment Supports for People with Disabilities

Employment Supports – Disability Allowance or Blind Pension

If you are getting Disability Allowance or Blind Pension, you can work and may be able to keep all or part of your existing social welfare payment.

You can earn up to €165 a week from employment or self-employment and you can keep your full Disability Allowance or Blind Pension. If you earn over €165 a week from work, half your earnings between €165 and €375 are not included in the Disability Allowance or Blind Pension means test.

Looking for Work

Any earnings from work over €375 per week are assessed as income on a euro (€1) for euro (€1) basis, that is, your Disability Allowance or Blind Pension will be reduced by a €1 for every €1 earned from employment above €375 per week.

If you are getting Disability Allowance or Blind Pension and you intend to work you must notify the Department as soon as your employment or job starts.

Employment Supports – Partial Capacity Benefit

Partial Capacity Benefit is a payment by the Department of Social Protection for people in receipt of Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension who wish to return to work but who cannot work to their full capacity.

To qualify for Partial Capacity Benefit, you need to be currently getting either:

- Illness Benefit for a minimum of 26 weeks; *or*
- Invalidity Pension.

You can apply for Partial Capacity Benefit before you start to look for work. You will not transfer to Partial Capacity Benefit until you start work.

You may take up work only after you receive written approval from the Department of Social Protection to do so.

You can earn any amount and work as many hours as you wish. You can work in a self-employed capacity while getting Partial Capacity Benefit.

The personal rate of payment is based on:

- your work capacity based on a medical assessment DSP carry out;
- whether you were receiving Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension; *and*
- your current rate of payment.

The maximum period anyone can be on Partial Capacity Benefit is 156 weeks for those who transfer from Invalidity Pension, and 104 weeks for those who transfer from Illness Benefit. You can learn more about this payment at www.gov.ie/illnessdisabilitycaring

Employment Supports – The Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS)

The WSS provides a financial incentive to employers to employ people with disabilities.

The WSS is available to non-public sector employers who are up to date with their tax filings and payments. 'Non-public sector' includes the private sector, the community and voluntary sector and the not-for-profit sector. The subsidy is only for direct employees of an organisation. It will not be given to third parties such as employment agencies or payroll service

The Scheme is structured in three strands. The employer can benefit from one, or all, simultaneously.

- **Strand I** – is a subsidy payable to an employer for the employment of a person with a disability with a perceived productivity shortfall of at least 20%, in comparison to a peer without a disability. An employee must work a minimum of 15 hours per week up to a maximum of 39 subsidised hours per week. The rate of subsidy is €6.30 per hour, giving a total maximum annual subsidy available of €12,776 per annum based on a 39-hour week.
- **Strand II** – is based on the total number of employments supported by WSS in a company. The employer receives an additional percentage increase on the total value of WSS for a period, ranging from 10% to 50%, determined by the total number of WSS employments in that organisation
- **Strand III** – is a grant of €30,000 per annum to assist with the cost of employing an Employment Assistance Officer, available once 25 employments are supported in an organisation through WSS.

The successful job seeking applicant may be required to give up their primary Social Welfare payment if they take up employment under this scheme or have their payment reduced. They should contact the relevant payment area in the Department of Social Protection (DSP) before starting any work.

Work and Access Supports

Work and Access supports replace the Reasonable Accommodation Fund and the Disability Awareness Support Scheme. Work and Access is a set of supports to help people with a disability get a job or stay in work. The supports aim to remove or reduce barriers in the workplace for people with a disability.

Supports for Jobseekers, Employees, Self-Employed include:

- Workplace Needs Assessment, to assist in identifying the need for additional supports
- Communication Support, for interview and in work
- In-Work Support, to help you perform in your position
- Personal Reader, to assist you in work
- Work Equipment, to assist you in your job

Work and Access employer supports include:

- Workplace Needs Assessment, to assist in identifying employees need for additional supports
- Communication Support
- In-Work Support
- Personal Reader and Work Equipment
- Workplace Adaptation, to accommodate additional employee needs
- Disability Equality and Inclusion Training, to provide employers and organisations with access to training for staff, to gain a better awareness and understanding of disabilities in the workplace

Looking for Work

To be eligible for Work and Access, people with a disability must meet the following conditions:

1. You need to be over 18 and within legal working age
2. You must work in one of the following ways:
 - full-time or part-time – at least 8 hours a week or 32 hours a month
 - self-employed
 - work experience (6 months or more)
 - internship (6 months or more), or
 - apprenticeship

You can also apply if you have a job offer letter, a job start date or a letter confirming a job interview

3. You must be working or looking for work in the Republic of Ireland in any sector apart from the public sector
4. You must have a disability or long-term health condition that impacts on your ability to work

The disability or health condition must be likely to last longer than 12 months. You must:

- be able to provide professional evidence confirming your disability or health condition and stating that it is likely to last longer than 12 months, *or*
- be getting a long-term disability payment

Workplace Needs Assessment

If you are:

- a new employee or existing employee
- in employment
- self-employed

You or a person acting on your behalf, can apply for funding for a Workplace Needs Assessment. The scheme pays up to €2,500 of the eligible costs to carry out the assessment.

A Workplace Needs Assessment is used to identify the adjustments that can be made to the workplace to remove the barriers you experience or may experience in carrying out your job or returning to work. You must get a specialist to do a Workplace Needs Assessment.

How to Apply

For more information on Work and Access Supports contact your local Intreo Centre or Branch Office, e-mail the Work and Access central team at workandaccess@welfare.ie or write to Work and Access, Central Team, Finglas Intreo Centre, PO Box 13736, Freepost FDN7696, Dublin 11.

EmployAbility

If you have a disability and wish to take up paid employment or you require assistance in finding a job, the EmployAbility Service provides employment and recruitment service(s) to assist people, who have a range of disabilities and impairments, to obtain and keep a job. An Employment Personal Advisor/Job Coach at Intreo will refer you if you both agree that you would benefit from the type of service and supports provided. Engagement with the service is voluntary and there is no requirement to be in receipt of a payment from the Department of Social Protection in order to avail of the service.

EmployAbility provides a number of 'on-the-job' supports, such as a Job Coach who will assist both the employer and the person seeking employment.

The range of supports provided include:

- Individual needs assessment
- Vocational profiling and career planning
- Individual employment plan
- Job sourcing and job matching
- On-the-job support and coaching
- Advice and support to employers
- Follow-up support and mentoring to both employers and employees

The EmployAbility Service provides employment support when a customer is accessing vacancies and applying for jobs. The service matches customer's skills with the employers' needs, it provides work experience placements and it provides assistance with integrating into the workplace. The EmployAbility service provides access to support services if required when in employment. The service also provides advice on employment benefits and entitlements.

Any person interested in availing of the EmployAbility service should contact their local Intreo office for further details. Visit www.gov.ie/welfare to find your local office.

SOLAS

SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) is the Further Education and Training Authority and manages, coordinates and supports the delivery of integrated Further Education and Training by Education and Training Boards (ETB's).

SOLAS' functions include:

- monitoring delivery and providing funding based on reliable, good quality data and positive outcomes; **and**
- promoting Further Education and Training provision that is relevant to individual learner needs and national skills needs, which includes the needs of business and future skills requirements.

SOLAS works closely with the Department of Social Protection's Intreo service in placing unemployed people in education and training courses, in particular those with closer links to the labour market. For more information visit the SOLAS website – www.solas.ie

Help with getting a job

Jobs Ireland

JobsIreland is a free recruitment service for Jobseekers and Employers provided by the Department of Social Protection. In addition to searching hundreds of unique jobs on www.jobsireland.ie Jobseekers can register online, create a profile and produce a CV for active job-seeking. Once a JobsIreland.ie profile is complete Jobseekers can opt to have their job-seeking profile matched to jobs and apply for jobs.

The benefits of the JobsIreland service:

- Employers can:
 - advertise jobs for free including Paid Positions, Self-Employment positions, Apprenticeships, Community Employment Schemes, and Work Placement Experience Programmes
 - avail of optional matching of registered jobseeker profiles to their Job vacancies
 - find information on Employer Resources
 - find Information on DSP Intreo services available to Employers
 - contact the JobsIreland.ie Customer Support Team Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm by – phone: 0818 111112 / (01) 248 1389, or by e-mail: jobsireland@welfare.ie and by completing the 'Contact Us' form on www.jobsireland.ie
- Jobseeker's can:
 - edit and build a jobseeker profile
 - avail of optional matching of their registered profile to Job vacancies
 - avail of daily and weekly notifications of new matched vacancies, job search results and jobs specific to their county
 - access information on upcoming events such as job fairs / recruitment campaigns and Jobseeker Resources
 - access information on DSP Intreo services available to Jobseekers
 - contact the JobsIreland.ie Customer Support Team Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm by – phone: 0818 111112 / (01) 248 1389, or by mail: jobsireland@welfare.ie and by completing the 'Contact Us' form on www.jobsireland.ie

EURES Ireland

EURES Ireland is the European employment service and is an integrated part of the Department of Social Protection. EURES is a network for cooperation between the public employment services of Member States and the European Commission. EURES Ireland provides information, advice and recruitment/ placement (job-matching) services for the benefit of workers, employers and any citizen wishing to benefit from the principle of the free movement of persons within the European Union. This includes:

- Providing Jobseekers with advice on searching for a job in Europe
- Access to job opportunities all over Europe
- Information on living and working conditions in all EU/EEA countries
- Details of job mobility schemes

Further information: www.euresireland.ie or by email: eures@welfare.ie

Local Resource Centres

Local Resource Centres are independent organisations offering a range of services and supports to help unemployed people find work.

These centres can help you by providing free and confidential 'Welfare to Work' and welfare rights information. They can provide assistance in preparing your C.V. and cover letters, as well as filling in application forms. In addition they may be able to provide information on local job vacancies, access to the www.JobsIreland.ie, www.gov.ie/welfare and other websites, daily newspapers and other job searching facilities.

Careers Portal

www.careersportal.ie provides the most up-to-date and relevant career information and resources to those needing or providing career guidance in Ireland. There are six main communities including Jobseekers, Adult Learners, College Students / Graduates, Parents / Guardians, School Students and Guidance Professionals. The jobseeker section is interconnected across up-skilling, retraining, volunteering and return to learning opportunities, alongside a comprehensive occupations database and informative jobholder interviews. Visit the Careers Portal website: www.careersportal.ie

Local Development Companies

Local Development companies combat unemployment and the causes of unemployment in their area by developing and supporting services to unemployed people and through involvement in special programmes.

The two core programmes delivered by local development companies are the Local Community Development Programme (LCDP) and the Rural Development programme (LEADER). LDC's also deliver a number of services on behalf of the Department of Social Protection such as the Rural Social Scheme and Tús.

Other Sources of Information on Jobs

Newspapers

Local and National newspapers are all useful sources of jobs. Some newspapers are also available on the internet for free. Call into your local Centre for the Unemployed or Library where copies of the papers may be available to read.

Recruitment Agencies

You will find lists of Recruitment Agencies on the internet using search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing. You can usually submit your C.V. online through their website or by e-mail.

Voluntary Work

If you are unemployed, you can take up voluntary work while signing-on as a Jobseeker. This can be a very satisfying and rewarding way of using your time and skills to help others. Voluntary work can help you gain new skills and can in turn greatly increase your chances of getting a job. Contact Volunteer Ireland on (01) 6369446 or visit their website www.volunteer.ie for more information on the range of volunteering options available.

Jobseekers must have the permission and approval of the Department of Social Protection to engage in Voluntary Work. You cannot take up 'voluntary' paid or unpaid work with a commercial 'for profit' company or business.

Applying for Jobs

Once you have spotted the job you want, you will need to spend some time preparing your application. Contact your local Intreo Centre or LAES for help with writing covering letters, filling out application forms, updating your C.V. and preparing for interviews.

Remember employers spend time trying to find the best person for the job, so you will need to spend time telling them, as clearly as possible, that you are that person.

Read the advert a few times before you write your covering letter or decide on what to include in your C.V. It is important to contact the employer and ask for details of the job advertised (a job description if they have one) and background information on the company or organisation. Talk to people who work for the company or who do a similar job elsewhere. This will help you to focus on the details you need to stress in your C.V. and at an interview.

Jobseeker Supports and Services Guide

As part of the ongoing development of self-service aids and facilities, the DSP have developed an Employment and Training Support hub, available at www.gov.ie/findingajob or www.gov.ie/intreo. There is also an Intreo Jobseeker Supports and Services Guide available. The online hub and online guide gives advice on topics such as:

- Intreo Service and how it can help
- Get support to find a job
- Keep financial supports while working
- Get work supports if you have a disability
- Get financial supports for training and education
- Get support to start your business
- Get job searching
- Intreo Jobseeker Supports Booklets

Further information can be found on the Department of Social Protections website at www.gov.ie/welfare.

Identifying Your Skills

You should point out your skills and experience that are relevant to the job and mention anything that you have done to improve or update them. Any education or training you have done while you were unemployed or 'between jobs' will show that you are interested and motivated in improving your abilities.

Highlight your key skills, achievements or qualifications, including those gained through education or training. You might like to add positive ways in which you have changed – increased maturity, improved self-confidence, etc.

The Covering Letter

This is the letter you send with your C.V. or Application Form. Remember the cover letter is the first thing that the employer will read. It should be short (one A4 size page) and to the point. It should say where you saw the job advert, why you are applying and stressing why you are suited to the job.

Application Forms

Some employers may ask you to fill out an application form instead of sending in a C.V., in other cases you may be asked to do both. These application forms allow employers to ask you very precise and specific questions to determine if you are the right person for the job. You should always ensure that you fully complete the form as instructed.

If you are filling out an Application Form

- Read through the form carefully before you write anything.
- Photocopy, or copy down questions and answer them in rough before you fill in the form.
- Follow any instructions, e.g. if you are asked to use black ink then make sure you do.
- Make sure you answer all parts of every question. If the question does not apply to you, then mark it "Not Applicable" or "N/A". Otherwise the employer may think you simply forgot to fill in the answer.
- If you are asked to outline facts, e.g. "Give details of your work history to date", you can attach a separate sheet of paper if you run out of space on the application form.