

# INOUElection Manifesto

The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE) works at a local and national level on issues affecting unemployed people through: the ongoing provision of welfare rights information supports, often to people in crisis; regular engagement with our members at online and in-person events; the provision of a range of training programmes, both in-person and on-line; analysis of Government policies and related advocacy work; and working with a wide range of other organisations on issues of common concern. More detailed information is available in our [2023 Annual Report](#).

At the INOU's Annual Delegate Conference in May, 2024 delegates discussed the forthcoming General Election and the key issues to be addressed under the following headings:

- ☞ Ensuring Adequate Levels of Income
- ☞ Addressing Welfare to Work Barriers
- ☞ Improving Welfare to Work supports
- ☞ Providing Quality Training and Education
- ☞ Enhancing Labour Market Programmes
- ☞ Accessible and Decent Jobs
- ☞ Supportive Employment Services
- ☞ Inclusive Technological Change



## Ensure Adequate Levels of Income

The INOU is calling on all political parties and people standing in the forthcoming General Election to:

- ◆ Support the benchmarking of all social welfare rates so that they lift people above the poverty line and provide them with a Minimum Essential Standard of Living.
- ◆ Develop a Social Welfare Health Check that proactively informs people of available and appropriate social protection income and welfare-to-work supports.
- ◆ End the age segregation still evident in the Jobseeker's Allowance payment.
- ◆ Increase the capital means test on a Jobseeker's Allowance and Supplementary Welfare Allowance.
- ◆ Support people to address the initial costs of taking up employment by introducing a travel card or a voucher system if people are living in areas with few public transport options.
- ◆ Provide free or very affordable childcare, ideally through the public system.
- ◆ Support people to secure affordable and sustainable housing.
- ◆ Bring the Medical Card income guidelines up to date.
- ◆ Ensure unemployed people who are furthest from the labour market are fully supported to access and maintain a social welfare payment.



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# Improve Welfare to Work Supports

The INOU is calling on all political parties and people standing in the forthcoming General Election to:

- ◆ Develop clear pathways for unemployed people and improve customer care & service e.g. remove the request for a PPS number if the jobseeker is seeking generic information.
- ◆ Support people to develop their CVs and prepare for job interviews to ensure good outcomes from their job searching.
- ◆ Ensure improved and timelier sign-posting between and within supports and services.
- ◆ Address people's fears of moving from a welfare payment to work, ensure they are aware of the supports and services they could access, that they could retain their medical card.
- ◆ Inform people who are moving from a weekly social welfare payment to a monthly wage of potential back-to-work supports, including the Supplementary Welfare support – Payment Pending Wages.
- ◆ Improve the length of time back-to-work support payments are available for people.
- ◆ Assure people that if their move into employment does not work out, that they may be able to return to a social welfare payment.
- ◆ Support people who have been long-term unemployed to take up part-time work as a first step to a better job.



# Provide Quality Training and Education

The INOU is calling on all political parties and people standing in the forthcoming General Election to:

- ◆ Ensure unemployed people and other people distanced from the labour market are properly supported to take up meaningful education and training options.
- ◆ Ensure there is good signposting and guidance so that potential learners know to whom they should talk to in order to identify their most appropriate learning option.
- ◆ Ensure people receive the practical supports they require to participate, including accessible childcare and affordable transport.
- ◆ Language and literacy barriers to participation must be properly addressed.
- ◆ Challenges facing people who have immigrated to Ireland need to be addressed, including eligibility requirements, recognition of their prior learning and experience.
- ◆ Support outreach and development programmes to support participation and follow-up work with participants after the completion of their programme.
- ◆ Address the issues facing young people seeking to participate in apprenticeships, including the location of these opportunities and the financial supports required.
- ◆ Properly resource youth projects, community organisations and adult education.



# Enhance Labour Market Programmes

The INOU is calling on all political parties and people standing in the forthcoming General Election to:

- ◆ Recognise and fully value the work undertaken through Community Employment and Tús by improving the additional payment made on top of the social welfare payment.
- ◆ Support people to access these programmes by choice and assure them that their social welfare payments will not be undermined.
- ◆ Ensure people can access the training grant they require to undertake the course most meaningful for them and facilitate participants to undertake higher level courses to improve their chances of securing a better job.
- ◆ Build on the potential of Community Employment, Tús and other labour market programmes to support people coming from other countries, personal or communal circumstances to get involved in their local community.



## Accessible and Decent Jobs

The INOU is calling on all political parties and people standing in the forthcoming General Election to:

- ◆ Support people to undertake digital or hybrid working.
- ◆ Support people to enhance their job applications skills and outcomes.
- ◆ Support people to explore new or expanding job opportunities.
- ◆ Address the challenges facing people in low paid employment, employment with irregular / uncertain hours.
- ◆ Support people who are in low paid employment to access training and education.
- ◆ Address the hidden stigma associated with unemployment, being on a social welfare payment.
- ◆ Provide accurate and timely information on payments available when people are returning to work.
- ◆ Address barriers in the labour market facing people because of their age, ethnicity, the community / area they are from, their family status / responsibilities, that they have a disability, have addiction or mental health issues.
- ◆ Address other barriers facing people seeking employment including availability of transport, affordable childcare and housing.
- ◆ Add socio-economic status as a ground in Ireland's equality legislation.



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# Supportive Employment Services

The INOU is calling on all political parties and people standing in the forthcoming General Election to:

- ◆ Refocus employment services to ensure that the individual is at the core of these services.
- ◆ Acknowledge and track all individual achievements including part-time work, Community Employment, Tús, training and education programmes.
- ◆ Support people to address the initial costs of taking up employment by introducing a travel card or a voucher system if people are living in areas with few public transport options.
- ◆ Make it a service for all people of working age, not just those on a social welfare payment.
- ◆ Work with people who have a conviction to support them to find a decent job.
- ◆ People should be allowed the time, and be well supported to change career.
- ◆ Properly support the provision of community based employment services.



# Inclusive Technological Change

The INOU is calling on all political parties and people standing in the forthcoming General Election to:

- ◆ Improve use of technology by Intreo to ensure better access to accurate and timely information for people.
- ◆ Provide access to computers to support people to apply for jobs online.
- ◆ Further develop digital hubs to allow more people to have access to both in rural and urban areas.
- ◆ Support people to develop the skills to manage work life balance when working from home.
- ◆ Government should have set curriculum in relation to IT skills in schools, further education and training, and other education provision to ensure people are acquiring good IT skills in a rapidly changing world.
- ◆ Appoint a Minister or Junior Minister for Technology with responsibility for implementing digital inclusion policies / strategies.

