



IRISH NATIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED

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Press Release: 24th May 2017

Annual Delegate Conference theme: Supporting Unemployed People for 30 Years

The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed held its **Annual Delegate Conference** today, Wednesday 24th May, in Wynn's Hotel, Dublin and published its **Annual Report** for 2016.

In welcoming delegates to the Conference, **John Stewart, INOU Coordinator** noted the *"welcomed continued increase in job creation and on-going fall in numbers unemployed"*. But he continued *"more needs to be done to ensure the jobs recovery is being felt everywhere and that unemployed people can access these jobs"*.

John noted the particular challenges facing people who remain unemployed, the lack of awareness of the skills gaps and other challenges, such as transport, that face unemployed people when trying to access employment. *"These challenges can feel insurmountable and from our long experience of working with and for unemployed people we know that as unemployment falls, the people who remain unemployed increasingly feel the burden of their unemployment"*. John added *"that it was imperative that the Department of Social Protection should not feed into a public discourse that portrays unemployed people as being in some way untrustworthy of or cheating the system."*

Amongst the motions delegates discussed was one that urged *"the Government to re-invest in community based organisations to support their work with people experiencing social exclusion and people who are distant from the labour market."*

A motion from the INOU's **National Executive Committee** called *"on the Government to benchmark all social welfare rates at a level which is sufficient to both lift people above the poverty line and provide them with a Minimum Essential Standard of Living"*. According to the most recent Survey of Income and Living, the 2015 at-risk-of-poverty rate for unemployed people the at-risk-of-poverty rate increased by 5.5% to 43.5%. A figure that is two and a half times the national rate.

A motion from the INOU's **General Branch** called on *"the Department of Social Protection, through their website and with poster displays and leaflets in the social welfare offices, to*

highlight the importance of signing-on for credits by delivering a complete information service, where the service is centred around the client”.

2017 marks the 30th anniversary of the INOU and the theme of the conference, *Supporting Unemployed People for 30 Years*, reflects this and was explored in the **round table discussions** that took place in the second half of the morning. In particular delegates discussed the challenges facing the INOU, its affiliated organisations, individual members and how these could be addressed. Building on the conference motions delegates discussed how to further support people who remain unemployed at a time when many see Ireland returning to ‘full employment’.

The INOU also launched its **Annual Report for 2016**. The report records the work of the Welfare to Work Information/Support service which dealt with over 9,000 queries, and produced the 23rd edition of the organisation’s flagship publication ‘*Working for Work*’. The information captured and disseminated through the ‘*Jobs Watch*’ page on the website which linked in with over 370 job announcements in respect of over 40,000 jobs. The organisation of Regional Discussion Forums where in 2016 the organisation explored a range of issues including education, training and employment programmes with our affiliates and other organisations. The on-going delivery of Training Services to affiliates, individual members, a wide range of service providers and people who are long-term unemployed through our *Building Futures* programme, now in its seventh year. The organisation’s engagement with unemployed people through the General Branch, *Mapping the Journey* project, and our attendance at a broad range of Information Events/Job Fairs. The policy section looks at the overall employment / unemployment picture in 2016, and the work undertaken by the organisation itself and in partnership with others to secure a more equitable and inclusive future for people who are unemployed and others distant from the labour market.

The full annual report will be posted on the INOU’s website www.inou.ie

[CLICK HERE to view our 2016 Annual report](#)