

**50 POINT
ACTION PLAN**

**PATHWAYS
TO WORK
2013**



Update at end March 2014

Pathways to Work 2013

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Foreword

In July of last year the Government published its 2013 *Pathways to Work* strategy, which set out how we intended to drive on with significant reforms to rebuild our public employment and further education and training services.

These reforms - building on the original *Pathways to Work* strategy launched in 2012 - focus on five strands of action:

- More on-going and intensive engagement with those who are unemployed.
- Greater targeting of activation places and opportunities for those on the Live Register.
- Removing disincentives for unemployed people to take up employment and other opportunities.
- Incentivising employers to provide more services for those who are unemployed.
- Reforming institutions to deliver better services.

In *Pathways 2013*, we continued this five-strand approach and, in addition, identified fifty key actions to be implemented by the end of June 2014 to tackle long-term unemployment, in particular. One of those actions was the establishment of an external group to advise on the implementation and development of the *Pathways to Work* approach. In keeping with this, the Labour Market Council was established in October 2013, comprising leading experts from the business, research and employment sectors. Today the Council presents its interim report.

In parallel, this document presents an update on the progress against each of the 50 action points in *Pathways 2013*. We are pleased to report that that forty-six of the actions have already been completed and that a further three will be completed by the deadline of the end of June, leaving just one to carry forward into the next quarter. This performance is noteworthy not just for its high completion rate and demonstration of the Government's delivery of promised reforms, but more particularly for the impact these reforms have had on the employment prospects of people who are out of work.

For example:

- We are well on our way to meeting and beating our target of helping 75,000 long-term unemployed people return to work by the end of 2015: Over 46,000 people who were long-term unemployed in January 2012 have now returned to work.
- Overall numbers on the Live Register have fallen from 423,000 in June 2013 to 397,000 at the end of March 2014 – a fall of 6% in just nine months.
- The numbers of people who are long-term unemployed on the Live Register has fallen from 198,000 in June 2013 to 179,000 in March 2014 – a fall of 10% in just nine months.

- The rate at which people who were unemployed for more than two years are now exiting the Live Register has already exceeded 35% - up from just 26% a year ago and well on its way to reaching the target of 50% by the end of 2015.
- The overall unemployment rate is now estimated at 11.8% compared to 13.3% in June 2013 and a peak of 15.1% in February 2012. Having stood 40% higher than the Euro area average at the start of 2012, unemployment in Ireland is now slightly lower than that average.

What is particularly notable is that Ireland is bucking the trend - not only compared to other EU countries, but to past recoveries. Typically, employment growth and reductions in unemployment lag economic recovery as employers drive productivity and use options such as overtime to increase productive capacity in response to higher demand for products and services. In the 1990s, for example, there was a jobless recovery where it took five to six years of sustained economic growth before unemployment began to fall. This recovery is different in that employment growth and reductions in unemployment are leading the way as employers and jobseekers take advantage of the supports and services introduced and developed as part of the *Pathways to Work* approach. We are therefore witnessing a job-rich recovery:

- We have helped over 27,000 people on the pathway back to work via JobBridge – more than 60% of whom secured employment as a consequence of their internship.
- Over 6,000 long-term unemployed people have benefited from a Momentum training programme. A further 9,000 unemployed people commenced training and education as part of the Back to Education (BTEA) programme in 2013. On average, about 25,000 unemployed people benefit from Momentum and other BTEA programmes each year.
- JobsPlus has supported nearly 2,000 long-term unemployed people back into employment since September 2013 - nearly 60% of these people had previously been unemployed for more than two years.
- The number of places available on TÚS, Community Employment, JobBridge and Gateway programmes has been increased by 10,000 over the past two years from 33,300 to 43,300.
- 44 new Intreo offices have been opened and more are on the way providing:
 - A single, integrated, modern income support and employment service for unemployed jobseekers.
 - Over 235,000 group engagement interviews up to the end of March 2014.
 - Over 680,000 personal one-to-one employment advice interviews up to the end of March 2014.
 - Referrals of over 12,000 long-term unemployed people to training programmes during 2013.
 - Vastly reduced claim-processing times from two to three weeks to less than a week.

- A new further education and training authority – SOLAS - has been established, 16 new Education and Training Boards (ETBs) have been established to replace the 33 former VECs, and the former FÁS training centres are now being integrated into these 16 ETBs – providing for the first time in Ireland a cohesive and integrated approach to further education and training.

It is therefore of little surprise that, in its review of macro-economic imbalances in Ireland published in March 2014, the European Commission commented that labour market reforms, including the reshaping of activation policies, have played a role in contributing to the reduction in unemployment.

This, however, is not the time to pause for breath: while our reforms are proceeding well, there is more to do, not least because unemployment, although falling, remains at an unacceptably high level. People who are unemployed deserve the best services that the State can offer both to sustain them during their period of unemployment and to support them to return to the workforce as soon as possible. The development, delivery and continuous improvement of such services is our mission and we intend to publish a further updated Pathway to Work strategy document for 2014/2015 in the coming months. This document will, in response to input from the Labour Market Council, focus in particular on how we can work better with employers to target employment opportunities at unemployed jobseekers, particularly people who are long-term unemployed, and on how we can maximise the effectiveness of our interventions in the labour market.

We therefore welcome the interim report of the Labour Market Council; its insights are keenly observed and well stated and will make an important contribution to the development of our 2014/2015 strategy.

Joan Burton

Minister for Social Protection

Ruairi Quinn

Minister for Education and Skills

50 Point Action Plan - Update at end March 2014

Action	Responsible Agency	Status	Progress Update
1 Complete <i>Intreo</i> 'one-stop shop' roll-out to a total of 43 offices by year end 2013 and to all offices by year end 2014	DSP/OPW		44 <i>Intreo</i> centres now open.
2 Roll-out the <i>Intreo</i> activation and welfare decisions processes to all offices in 2013 in advance of completion of the 'one-stop shop' roll-out	DSP		Now aligned with roll-out of integrated reception and co-location of staff. Process operational in all <i>Intreo</i> offices.
3 Complete 85,000 Group Engagements (24% increase on 2012)	DSP		130,000 jobseekers attended Group Engagements during 2013.
4 Complete 185,000 initial one-to-one interviews (42% increase on 2012)	DSP		Approximately 157,000 initial interviews (demand-driven) held during 2013. A further 137,000 follow-up interviews were held, bringing the total to 294,000.
5 Profile all clients on the Live Register not just new claimants (c 420,000 profiles)	DSP		All jobseekers on Live Register now profiled.
6 Building on the process of engaging with the long-term unemployed which has already commenced, develop an <i>Intreo</i> engagement programme for clients who are long-term unemployed by Q1 2014 with a view to engaging with all clients within two years	DSP		New process for engaging with LTU developed, using profile data developed under Action 5, and ready for implementation during Q2 2014. Applies engagement process developed for newly unemployed to those already long-term unemployed, using profile data on a phased basis.

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7 Develop and commence the implementation of proposals to review, over a number of years, the capacity for work of long-term recipients of illness and disability payments	DSP		Report on movements from jobseeker to illness and disability payments prepared. There is no evidence in the data of a 'flight' from jobseeker payments to illness/disability payments. Compared to other countries in Europe such as UK, Norway and the Netherlands, the numbers of people on disability payment in Ireland is relatively low. Nevertheless DSP is currently pursuing a number of options to increase its capacity to conduct medical reviews. Once this capacity is secured it is intended to commence capacity to work reviews of long-term recipients of illness and disability payments.
8 Develop proposals for the extension of work activation interventions, such as profiling and personal engagements, to clients not on the Live Register, for example partners and spouses of unemployed people, lone parents	DSP		One parent family/jobseeker transition payment and activation services implemented from Q3 2013. Proposals to offer a similar transition path to partners and spouses of unemployed people in due course, will be developed during 2014. – The implementation of such proposals will be subject to, and phased with, the continued reduction in the number of primary claimants of live register payments.
9 Prepare a report on jobless households by September 2013 to assess the factors influencing the level of jobless households and develop a range of recommendations to allow Government to take tangible steps to assist these households to return to work.	DSP		A report on trends in Jobless households has been prepared and considered by senior officials. The report using labour force survey/Quarterly National Household Survey data (LFS/QNHS) shows, contrary to earlier analysis, that the level of jobless households was below EU average levels prior to 2007/8 and that the increase in the intervening period is directly related to the general rise in unemployment. OECD input to a workshop on Jobless households in Q1 2014 is supportive of this view. In view of the somewhat different message emerging from earlier examination of SILC data (available only up to 2011), DSP has commissioned further research from the ESRI which will help to identify if there are any underlying structural issues to be addressed. To the extent that a structural issue may give rise to a higher level of jobless households than might otherwise be the case, both SILC and QNHS data suggest that the number of adults

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			<p>and children in single parent households is a significant sub-set of the overall number of jobless households in Ireland.</p> <p>In this regard the Government has taken two tangible steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has initiated and implemented major reforms to one parent family payments, including the reduction in the age limit and the provision of activation services to this cohort, under Action 8. • NESC is to review the role of services in meeting the needs of jobless households. <p>The outcomes of these actions will be reviewed as part of PTW 2014.</p>
10 Publish a report on trends in the migration of people from jobseeker to other welfare payments and identify and take whatever actions are required to minimise such migration.	DSP		<p>A report on movements from jobseeker to illness and disability payments has been prepared and considered by senior officials and will be published shortly.</p> <p>There is no evidence of any 'flight' from Jobseeker to illness/disability payments.</p>
11 Roll-out approximately 10,000 additional places (mainly long-term unemployed) provided for in Budget 2013 to further enable access to activation opportunities in 2013. Many will be assisted to take places for the long-term unemployed in the programmes run by the Department of Education and Skills	DSP		All places rolled out.

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12 Roll-out approximately 5,000 places under the third phase of the Springboard programme in 2013	DES		Complete
13 Fill all of the available 6,500 Momentum places	DES/DSP		All places on Momentum filled. Evaluation process now underway. Intended to offer a Momentum Mk II programme in 2014.
14 Enact the legislation providing for the imminent establishment of SOLAS, and complete implementation of the framework for the future management and development of the Vocational Education and Training sector in Ireland.	DES		Complete
15 Finalise and rollout the new Local Government Social Employment Scheme (GateWay)	DSP/DCELG		GateWay scheme launched and is now operational
16 Implement the recommendations of the Indecon review of JobBridge	DSP		All recommendations have been considered and where appropriate have been or are being implemented. – Most notably the extension of the cooling off period exemption in the cases of interns entering employment with an organisation other than the host organisation and the introduction of a ‘second chance’ option by extending the cumulative duration limit to 18 months.
17 Implement the proposals, following the recent stakeholder consultation, on the findings of the DSP review of activation schemes	DSP		All recommendations have been considered and where appropriate have been, or are being, implemented. e.g. All CE places are now filled by referral from DSP case officers; lateral BTEA in place; approval of BTEA places subject to labour market relevance
18 Ensure that, as part of the activation process, a	DES/DSP		12,000 (40%) of full time training places were filled by referral of long-term unemployed clients during 2013.

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significant proportion (40%) of FÁS training places are filled from the long-term unemployed cohort on the Live Register following referral from <i>Intreo</i> Offices			
19 Prepare a report on the potential for a further concentration of available resources in the education sector on the long-term unemployed. This will be guided by the analysis provided by the Strategic Review of Further Education and Training due for completion by September 2013. There will be 51,000 places altogether in 2013 for the long-term unemployed from education and training programmes in the education sector	DES		New targets set for 2014/2015 in association with D/PER. Target is to provide 62,000 education and training places for long-term unemployed people.
20 The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) will continue to provide critical skills needs analysis to assist in the specification and targeting of further training and education, which in turn should take greater account of the importance of employer engagement.	DJEI/ DES		Ongoing
21 Publish the NESC Report on the relevance of, and progression rates from State training programmes	DES		Complete

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22 Develop and implement in stages from 2014 a Youth Guarantee for Ireland, including how the funding for the period 2014-2020 will be used	DSP		A Youth Guarantee implementation plan as prepared and approved by government. The plan was considered by the EU Commission and received favourable feedback. Legislation is now being prepared to enable the Government to implement the proposals. This will be presented to the Oireachtas for consideration as part of the Social Welfare and Pensions Bill in June 2014.
23 Implement the new Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) to replace payment of rent supplements via the welfare system to people with a long-term requirement for subsidised accommodation. HAP will be made available to any long-term recipients of the Jobseekers Assistance payment (JSA) with an established housing need. Implement initial pilot schemes early in 2014 following commencement of the relevant legislation with a nation-wide roll-out in place by end 2014	DCELG		Limerick County Council pilot in progress.
24 Procure the report of the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare (AGTSW) on working age income supports.	DSP		The AGTSW is still considering the issues and has advised that its report will be submitted in June.
25 Bring forward proposals to address the findings of the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare with regard to working age income supports	DSP/DFIN/ DCELG/ DOH		Deferred pending receipt of AGTSW report Proposals will be considered in Q3 2014

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26 Consider proposals to address the findings of the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare in relation to the Report on Child and Family Income Supports by September 2013 in the context of Budget 2014	DSP		The Government, as part of Budget 2014 retained the current universal payment approach rather than initiate any move to a dual payment structure.
27 Eliminate backlogs in processing claims of Family Income Supplement (FIS) and simplify claim processes	DSP		Claims now being cleared within 2 weeks of receipt
28 Ensure each jobseeker attending <i>Intreo</i> offices receives a 'better off in work' statement as part of their initial 'one-to-one' interview which shows, based on certain assumptions regarding income levels, what they would take home after tax and including FIS (where appropriate) on the basis of current tax and welfare rates	DSP		On-line 'Benefit of Work' calculator launched and in use in all <i>Intreo</i> Centres.
29 Develop and implement a promotional approach to increase employer awareness of FIS and encourage their promotion of the scheme to jobseekers	DSP		Promotional material on FIS provided in all <i>Intreo</i> centres. FIS information now incorporated into employer and jobseeker information packs. Briefings provided to industry groups. FIS incorporated into on-line 'benefit-of-work' calculator.

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30 Review control/sanctions process and associated penalties for people who do not engage with the employment services or refuse any reasonable offer of employment, training or work placement with a view to enhancing the incentive to take up employment opportunities	DSP/AG		Existing rules under which sanctions could be applied were reviewed by DSP. New legislation was enacted (effective 15th July 2013) which extends the form of sanctions and the range of circumstances in which such sanctions can be applied. Strengthened sanctions include a disqualification for a period of up to 9 weeks, where a person already on a reduced rate, continues to fail to engage with activation measures. Transitional arrangements were also incorporated to allow for the new disqualification provisions to be applied to persons who, prior to the commencement of the new provisions, were on a reduced rate for failure to engage.
31 Engage with the 8,000 lone parents whose entitlement to the One Parent Family Payment is ceasing in July 2013	DSP		Those lone parents who lost entitlement to the One Parent Family Payment (OPFP) in July were engaged with extensively over the course of 2013. As part of this process a new JobSeeker Transition payment scheme was introduced. – Under this scheme former OPFP recipients are offered access to and the support of the Department of Social Protections employment/activation services. There will continue to be on-going engagement with other recipients of the One Parent Family Payment in advance of their entitlement ceasing on foot of the reforms to the One Parent Family Payment.
32 Implement the after-school childcare pilot to provide affordable childcare for unemployed people returning to work	DCYA/DSP		On-going. Pilot established on schedule.
33 Develop and implement the JobsPlus recruitment incentive. Review take-up and develop process systems and promotional capability as required to encourage and support significant take-up of the	DSP/DJEI/ Revenue		1,800 jobs supported as of end March. 60% of which are filled by people who were previously over two years unemployed.

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new initiative amongst employers			
34 Conduct and evaluate an initial pilot on social clauses in procurement of public works.	DPER		Social Clauses are being trialled under the Devolved Schools Programme being managed by the National Development Finance Agency on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. A clause has been included in the contracts, which requires that 10% of the person weeks worked on the contract be undertaken by individuals recruited from the ranks of the long-term unemployed. The contractor's compliance with this clause will be carefully monitored in accordance with the terms set out in the contract and where non-compliance is discovered financial sanctions will be applied where appropriate.
35 Design and commence the development/ procurement of a new employer vacancy/job matching system	DSP		RFT agreed and ready for issue. Implementation due for completion in Q4 2014
36 The new Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) will work with <i>Intreo</i> and develop agreed protocols to ensure that LEO clients are encouraged to take potential employees from the Live Register. LEOs will ensure that their client companies (whether locally or nationally) are made fully aware of the advantages of taking potential employees off the Live Register and of incentives to do so.	DJEI		Protocols have been developed and agreed and are now in operation.

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37 Protocols will be established between the Enterprise Development Agencies (EI, IDA, LEOs, etc) and DSP to ensure optimum working arrangements at local level to share information, cooperate on awareness and promotion activities, match enterprise needs for existing and new projects, engage on conversion and training needs, ensure companies can avail of <i>Intreo</i> placement services and agree monitoring and reporting arrangements for the overall levels of recruitment from the Live Register by Agency-assisted companies.	DJEI/DSP		Protocols signed and in operation
38 LEOs will carry all DSP material as a first-stop shop for micro enterprises and promote all Government schemes aimed at securing employment for persons on the Live Register to client companies	DJEI		The existing network of CEBs around the Country carried and promoted material provided by DSP. Upon the dissolution of the CEBs the LEOs are continuing this work. The EI Client Skills Unit will work with central excellence unit in EI to promote Government Schemes.
39 The detailed knowledge often available to the IDA regarding the precise	DJEI		IDA Ireland has, with the agreement of clients, provided DSP with detailed job specifications in relation to several FDI projects. It has then used the skills data provided by DSP in response to

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<p>nature of the various categories of roles envisaged by multi-national clients over a project recruitment timescale (usually over a 3-5 years period) will, to the extent permitted by the client company, be shared with <i>Intreo</i> to facilitate matching of job requirements with candidates from the Live Register</p>			<p>market different locations to clients. IDA Ireland has also invited DSP to make a presentation to its regional management teams, is using DSP/<i>Intreo</i> brochures etc, as part of its marketing to clients where appropriate, and is establishing an email alert system for DSP/<i>Intreo</i> in relation to new project announcements.</p>
<p>40 Enterprise Ireland's (EI) Client Skills Unit will become a core contact point for DSP / <i>Intreo</i> to assist with the promotion of Government schemes aimed at securing employment to persons on the Live Register to EI client companies. The Client Skills Unit will promote all schemes of relevance including the JobBridge Programme, the ICT Graduate Skills Conversion Programme, Springboard and Momentum. EI will proactively sell to its clients the capacity of the <i>Intreo</i> service to source, filter and supply required skills from the Live Register. DSP/<i>Intreo</i> will provide material for this purpose</p>	<p>DJEI</p>		<p>Client Skills Unit has been established in Enterprise Ireland and is identified as core contact point for DSP in draft EI/DSP Protocol. Client Skills Unit has commenced promotion through presentation to staff on DSP services and promotion of schemes on EI website</p>

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41 The Client Skills Unit will be a source of knowledge on EI client skills needs and will proactively share EI clients' skills needs with providers of schemes for the unemployed such as the <i>Intreo</i> service. Where client companies opt to do so, Enterprise Ireland will ensure <i>Intreo</i> will have access to information on vacancies, and will be informed of same	DJEI		Client Skills Unit established in EI. Processes to share information are provided for in protocols and sharing of information on vacancies has commenced.
42 Double number of caseworkers on activation duties to increase capacity to engage with Live Register clients, in particular long-term unemployed people	DSP/DPER		300 additional case workers reassigned from other duties in Q3 and Q4 2013
43 Finalise proposals for contracting additional capacity for employment services for long-term unemployed people to include the provision of professional employment services for unemployed people in selecting training/education programmes	DSP		JobPath RFT issued. Responses currently being evaluated.
44 Examine the potential for streamlining collection and verification mechanisms for means test information collected by different Departments/ Agencies for various purposes and schemes, with a view to	DPER, DSP and other relevant Depts/ Agencies		DSP has developed a system to capture and store customer's means data and to calculate entitlements to all 14 DSP means tested payments and for means tested allowances on other schemes. This system facilitates the reuse of means test data and reduces duplication of means testing effort. In addition DSP is developing a set of 'web services' to facilitate the sharing of means and other information

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sharing and re-using such information as appropriate			<p>with public service agencies. An initial implementation of a Means sharing service is now in live test with South Dublin County Council since March 2014. The service allows authenticated users (SDCC staff in the first instance) to check information details on an individual basis using the PPS Number as the unique identifier. The results of the pilot will be evaluated (usefulness of the information, impact on organisations including DSP, technology, etc.) before going into production and making available to other agencies.</p> <p>In addition, this development is being expanded to support SUSI with the processing of higher education grants in 2014. DSP has developed a webservice that feeds directly into SUSI's internal Student Grant Application System (GAS). This service provides customer, claim and payment information directly from DSP source systems. This information provides all of the DSP information needed to process grant applications at this time, and therefore removes the need for sourcing that information clerically.</p>
45 Increase use of Local Employment Services and Local Development Companies to case manage clients	DSP/DCELG		60% increase in referrals agreed for 2014.
46 Complete establishment of ETBs and SOLAS, transfer at least 6 training centres from SOLAS to ETBs in 2013 with the remainder to follow in 2014	DES/Solas		Complete. Remaining training centres to transfer to ETBS in 2014.
47 Complete annual review of activation policy in order to set priorities for 2014 by end-2013 taking particular account of the issue of jobless households	DSP		Will be published as introductory chapter to PTW 2014.

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48 Publish progress reports on progress against all of the actions in this document, including the quantitative targets set out in section 2 and under each of the Strands on quarterly basis	DSP		Updates published and available at www.welfare.ie
49 Review control/enforcement practice and procedures to ensure that they are optimised and reflect current priorities	DSP		Review completed within DSP.
50 Establish a Pathways to Work Industry Group to advise on the implementation of the priority actions and delivery of the key performance indicators (KPIs).	DSP		Labour Market council Established in Q3 2013. Membership composed of: Martin Murphy MD HP Ireland Siobhan Talbot CEO Glanbia Tony Keohane Chairman Tesco Heather Reynolds CEO Eishtec Prof. John Martin (ex OECD) Prof. Philip O'Connell Geary Institute UCD Alan Gray Indecon Marie Sherlock SIPTU Brid O'Brien INOU Tony Donohoe IBEC Kevin Empey Towers Watson

Summary: 44 Actions complete or on schedule for completion by target date

5 Actions on schedule for completion by end June 2014

1 Action delayed to Q3 2014.

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