



NEWS RELEASE

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Hanafin launches new study that aims to identify and target support for those at risk of long-term unemployment

“Accurate and relevant profiling for people who sign on the Live Register can lead to early, targeted interventions for those most likely to become long-term unemployed” said Mary Hanafin T.D., Minister for Social and Family Affairs today (4th September 2009). The Minister was speaking at the launch of a new ESRI report which quantifies the relative impact of a range of factors which can lead people to become long term unemployed.

“Prevention of long-term unemployment must be our priority and profiling facilitates referral for intervention very early in the claim cycle” said Minister Hanafin. **“The profiling model proposed in this report by the ESRI could facilitate early, targeted interventions for those who need them most.”**

Many people joining the Live Register currently have high skill levels and a long work history, and according to this model, early intervention is less necessary in this category of jobseeker. The real target of resources has to be those who have the highest risk of becoming long-term unemployed due to a combination of factors which can include low education levels, poor literacy or numeracy, advanced age and a history of unemployment spells in recent years.”

Minister Hanafin said that earlier this year legislative provision for capturing profile data and for its use in selecting claimants for intervention was made in the Social Welfare Pensions Act. **“We are currently examining the remaining steps, such as capturing the information at initial claim stage which could ultimately lead to the introduction of the system nationally and changes to IT systems.”**

Minister Hanafin said that the Government is responding with increased activation and training opportunities. **“FÁS together with the Local Employment Services have put in place measures this year to double the capacity to cater for the rise in referrals from the Department of Social and Family Affairs. This means the annual referral capacity has increased to 147,000 people in 2009.”**

There is a range of supports in place to encourage and facilitate people on social welfare payments to take up work and training options, through



the back to work and back to education allowances. Both of these schemes have been modified in recent months in order to respond effectively to the growing numbers on the Live Register.”

“The Department also has locally based facilitators who can provide information on options available to those on the Live Register. These measures and others represent a significant step in meeting the huge challenge of supporting those who are losing their jobs.”

In the 12 month period ending July 2009 almost 148,900 people left the Live Register because they secured employment with a further 21,200 leaving it to take up education opportunities or training schemes. **“This is a positive trend that shows there are still jobs available and that the Government activation measures are assisting the unemployed to develop their skills and secure employment”** said the Minister.

Minister Hanafin paid tribute to the authors of the study Philip O’Connell, Seamus McGuinness, Eilish Kelly and John Walsh, in co-operation with officials in the Department who tracked 60,000 claimants on the Live Register over an 18 month period. **“This comprehensive study, which also looks at international practice in the area of early intervention and profiling models, is going to prove hugely beneficial as we continue to target scarce resources at those who most need supports.”**

ENDS

Copies of the report are available on www.esri.ie