



**An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection**

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Minister Joan Burton to introduce National Internship Scheme in July

Burton calls on public, private and community sectors to provide quality opportunities for jobseekers

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, has today (*Tuesday 10th May 2011*) announced a new National Internship Scheme for 5,000 people who are currently on the live register. The Scheme will provide work experience opportunities for jobseekers in the private, public or community and voluntary sectors.

The 5,000 places are part of 20,900 new and additional places in training, education and work experience programmes announced as part of the Government's Jobs Initiative. They give effect to commitments contained in The Programme for Government to give priority to getting unemployed people back into work.

Participants will receive €50 in addition to their existing social welfare payment and they will retain all of their secondary benefits. The Scheme will not displace existing workers.

Speaking today, Minister Burton said "the National Internship Scheme will provide 5,000 people who are currently on the live register with valuable, and meaningful, employment experience when it is launched on July 1st."

"The Scheme will ensure that people can enhance their current skills and develop new ones. It will provide a real alternative to people who find themselves without work. It will also give young people the opportunity to gain valuable experience as they move between study and the beginning of their working lives.

"Internships are a recognised method, in a number of countries, for giving young people their first step into the labour market. For example in Brussels and the US, there have very successful internship schemes which give young people a real start in their careers", Minister Burton said.

"We have heard repeated requests for initiatives, such as the National Internship Scheme, to be introduced from various sectors, in particular the private sector. My Department is meeting the cost of the National Internship Scheme so this is an opportunity for the private sector to play their role in a depressed jobs market without cost."

"Indeed, I am calling on employers and organisations across the private, public and community and voluntary sectors to actively participate in the National Internship Scheme and offer quality worthwhile internship opportunities. The onus is on all of us, and I am pledging my commitment today, to work together to ensure that the National Internship Scheme is a success."

The increase in training and education places for the unemployed are part of a renewed, pro-active, joined-up labour activation strategy. The other three pillars of this strategy are increased incentives



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for the unemployed to progress into training or education; more regular face-to-face engagement with those on the live register; and increased incentives for employers to create jobs.

ENDS

Tables showing existing and new opportunities for jobseekers and a question and answer sheet follow.

Existing Employment Support, Work Placement, Training and Education Programmes and places available / numbers currently availing of them

Programme/Scheme	Administered by	Number
Rural Social Scheme	D/Social Protection	2,600
Community Services Programme	D/Social Protection	2,700
Back to Work Schemes	D/Social Protection	10,627
Back to Education Allowance	D/Social Protection	25,000
Tús	D/Social Protection	5,000 (at full capacity)
Employer Job PRSI Incentive Scheme	D/Social Protection	958 employers awarded exemptions in respect of 1,551 employees (June 10 – April 11)
Community Employment Programme	FÁS	23,300
Work Placement Programme	FÁS	7,500

Some of these figures refer to the numbers of people currently availing of the schemes and they are demand led so there is no limit to the number of people that can avail of them.

New and additional Internship, Training and Education Places and number of places to be made available under the jobs initiative

Programme/Scheme	Administered by	Number of additional places under Jobs Initiative
National Internship Scheme	D/Social Protection/FÁS	5,000
Specific skills training (short-term)	FÁS	5,000
Specific skills training (long-term)	FÁS	1,000
Back to Education Initiative	D/Education & Skills	3,000
Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)	D/Education & Skills	1,000
Springboard (3 rd level)	D/Education & Skills	5,900
Total		20,900



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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. How much will a participant get on the National Internship Scheme?

People taking up an internship under the new National Internship Scheme will get €50 per week in addition to their existing social welfare payment.

Example of the weekly rate of payment for a jobseeker who is currently receiving the maximum rate of Jobseeker's Benefit

Personal rate (includes €50 top-up payment)		€238.00
Maximum Rate of Increase for a Qualified Adult, where applicable		€124.80
Each qualified child (See note)	Full rate	€29.80
	Half-rate	€14.90
Potential total weekly payment for a married jobseeker with two children		€422.40

Note: A participant will be paid an increase of €29.80 pw for each qualified child if they qualify for an increase for a qualified adult or if they are parenting alone. If they do not qualify for an increase for a qualified adult, they may receive a half-rate qualified child increase.

2. Will participants keep their secondary benefits (e.g. medical card, rent supplement, mortgage interest supplement, fuel allowance, etc) while on the National Internship Scheme?

Yes, participants will keep any additional benefits that they were receiving immediately prior to taking up an internship.

3. When will the National Internship Scheme begin? How long will the Scheme last and for how long can a person participate in it?

It is expected that the scheme will be launched on 1st July this year. The Scheme will run for two years so applications for internships will continue to be accepted until June 2013. The duration of individual internship positions will be from six months to a maximum of nine months.

4. Who will be eligible to participate in the National Internship Scheme?

The National Internship Scheme will be available to individuals who are on the Live Register and have been in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance/Benefit or signing on for credits for at least 3 months.

5. Are there any conditions for the employers or organisations (which will be known as host organisations) which will make places available?

- A host organisation must have a minimum of 1 full time employee who is employed for 25 hours or more per week (i.e. on payroll and subject to tax and PRSI).
- The internship will not be provided to displace an existing employee. The scheme administrator reserves the right to review cases where it is reported that this is the case.
- The host organisation's Public/Employers Liability insurance and Motor Insurance, if applicable, will cover any internships on the National Internship Scheme.



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- The host organisation must be fully compliant with current workplace health and safety and all other legal requirements.
- The host organisation must be a legal entity.
- If Garda Vetting applies to the internship, the host organisation must ensure that the vetting process is applied.
- The maximum number of internships a host organisation can offer at any one time is dependent on their number of full time employees:

Number of Full Time Employees	Number of Internships
1-10 employees	1 internship place
11-20 employees	2 internship places
21-30 employees	3 internship places
30 + employees	20% of the workforce to a maximum of 200 internships whichever is the smaller*

- Local branch offices of national organisations will be regarded as an individual host organisation for the purpose of the National Internship Scheme.
- An intern may be on the programme from six months to a maximum of nine months working in the host organisation.

6. Will the introduction of the National Internship Scheme affect the operation of the existing Work Placement Programme?

The Work Placement Programme, which is administered by FÁS and provides 9 months work experience for graduates and other unemployed people, will remain unchanged.

7. What is the cost of the National Internship Scheme?

The cost of the National Internship Scheme is €3m in 2011 and €13m in a full year.

8. What will happen with the Skills Development and Internship Programme?

The Skills Development and Internship Programme will now be replaced by the National Internship Scheme.

9. In relation to the Tús scheme, who can participate on this scheme?

Participants will, in the first instance, be identified by the Department of Social Protection by satisfying the following conditions:

- A person who has been continuously unemployed for at least 12 months and 'signing on' on a full-time basis, and
- In receipt of a jobseekers payment from the Department of Social Protection for at least 12 months, and
- Currently in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance.



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10. What will the rates of pay for participants on Tús be?

Personal rate (includes €20 top-up payment)		€208.00
Maximum Rate of Increase for a Qualified Adult, where applicable		€124.80
Each qualified child (See note)	Full rate	€29.80
	Half-rate	€14.90

- Participants will retain the existing rate payable on their Jobseeker's Allowance in respect of a qualified adult.
- Participants can get an increase of €29.80 for each qualified child if they qualify for an increase for a qualified adult or if they are parenting alone. If the participant does not qualify for an increase for a qualified adult, they may get a half-rate qualified child increase.
- Where a person has been in receipt of a rate of Jobseeker's Allowance applicable to persons aged under 25 and he or she participates on Tús, the full normal rate of payment applicable to Tús applies without any reduction for persons aged under 25.
- Where a person is under 25 and has completed a term on Tús, they will revert to the age related rate of Jobseeker's Allowance, €100.00 or €150.00, if they had previously been in receipt of that rate.

11. What type of work will be undertaken?

All of the work undertaken while participating on Tús will be beneficial to the local community and the types of projects carried out are likely to include:

- Energy conservation work in homes and community buildings
- Personal services and social care of all age groups and persons with disabilities
- Caretaking, securing, supervising of community buildings and spaces
- Renovation of community and sporting facilities, including the regeneration and enhancement of community, recreation and sporting spaces
- Work in support of cultural and heritage activities
- Community administration and community event management
- Coaching for sporting activities
- Repair of equipment for developing countries – Farm Tools, bicycles, computers, sewing machines, health equipment etc.

12. Will it be possible to apply to participate on Tús?

Given the nature of Tús, contact will be made by the Department of Social Protection to those on the Live Register that satisfy the criteria.

13. How long will a Tús placement last?

Participation will be for a continuous period of one year (52 weeks).

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