



**Hanafin set to tackle worrying increase in
under-25 year olds signing on Live Register**

Thousands could benefit with back to education allowance scheme

Thousands of men and women between the ages of 18 – 25, who are signing on the Live Register, are to be targeted in an effort to encourage them to gain additional skills and qualifications under the Back to Education Allowance Scheme.

Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin TD, today (*13th July 2008*) said that Department officials across the country are launching a specially focussed programme over the summer months to contact young people who may have been signing on the Live Register for more than 6 months.

Minister Hanafin said **“the end of June Live Register shows an increase in the number of under-25 year olds signing on, with over 48,000 now looking for full time work. Worryingly the number of under-25 year olds on the Live Register has increased by 42% in the past year and this is something I want to see urgently addressed.”**



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Recent CSO figures show that over 14,500 people on the Live Register under the age of 25 have been on the Live Register for more than six months, with half of them signing on for between 1 and 3 years.

“This year there is a budget of €71million available for participants on the Back to Education Allowance scheme” said Minister Hanafin. **“This scheme enables participants to receive a weekly rate of payment equivalent to their relevant social welfare payment while they are back in either second or third level education. This payment is not means tested. There is also an additional €500 paid to participants at the start of the academic year.**

Young people today have so many full time study opportunities available to them - if they didn't complete second level education first time around or are looking to gain a recognised university or third level qualification. Now is the time for people to start planning and applying for an education course starting in September.

It is not a trend the Government wants to see continuing, where more and more young people start depending on welfare payments as their only income. Officials across the country will spend the summer months identifying young people in their regions who would be eligible to go into an appropriate education or training schemes in the Autumn, in order to up-skill and enable them to improve their future chances in the jobs market.”



Department of Social and Family Affairs

In the last academic year, almost 9,000 men and women availed of the BTEA, with over 2,000 under 25 year olds participating in educational programmes across the country while receiving a payment under the Back to Education Allowance Scheme.

ENDS

Live register at 18/04/08 by Age and Duration – published by CSO

Age	<3m	3-6mths	6-12mths	1-2 yrs	2-3yrs	>3yrs	Totals
<20	4399	1974	1863	1003	0	0	9239
20-24	14377	5827	5128	3092	1764	1657	31845
25-34	25297	9854	9074	4925	2319	4518	55987
35-44	17166	6620	7079	4413	2151	5354	42783
45-54	12822	4412	4748	3393	1946	6262	33583
55-59	5062	1814	1989	1352	655	2007	12879
60-64	3857	1572	1899	1126	431	1187	10072
Total	82980	32073	31780	19304	9266	20985	196388



BTEA scheme qualifying conditions

In order to qualify for participation in the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)

Scheme, a person must be, immediately prior to commencing the first year of an approved course of study:

- *at least 21 years of age (24 for an approved postgraduate course),*
- *aged between 18-20 years for recipients of Jobseekers Benefit/ Allowance or One Parent Family Payment and who have been out of formal education for at least 2 years,*
- *at least 18 years of age for recipients of Disability Allowance, Blind Pension, Invalidity Pension or Incapacity Supplement,*
- *attending an approved full-time day course of study at a recognised second or third level institute of education,*
- *in receipt of one of the following social welfare payment for 6 months (156 days) for participation in the Second Level Option , 12 months (312 days) for participation in the Third Level Option or 9 months (234 days) for NEAP participants:*

- *Jobseekers Benefit*
- *Jobseekers Allowance*
- *Farm Assist*
- *One Parent Family Payment*
- *Deserted Wife's Allowance*
- *Widows/Widowers Non Contributory Pension*
- *Widows/Widowers Contributory Pension*
- *Prisoners Wife's Allowance*
- *Disability Allowance*



Department of Social and Family Affairs

- *Blind Pension*
- *Invalidity Pension*
- *Incapacity Supplement*
- *Carer's Allowance*
- *Illness Benefit (in receipt of for at least 2 years or more from September 2007).*

(Periods spent on the Vocational Training Opportunities (VTOS) Scheme, FÁS/Failte Ireland training courses, FIT, Community Employment Scheme, Social Economy Programme, Rural Social Scheme, Back to Work Scheme, FÁS Job Initiative or Job Assist can count towards the 6 months/12months/9 months qualifying period)

Full details of eligibility for the scheme is available on www.welfare.ie or on <http://www.welfare.ie/publications/sw70.html>