



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

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**Minister Burton proposes a new return to work
scheme**

Joan Burton TD, Minister for Social Protection, today (Thursday 13 October) said she would be proposing a new return to work scheme in the forthcoming budget.

Speaking at the OECD Local Economic and Employment Development Conference in Dublin Castle, Minister Burton said scope exists to restructure our current employment programmes, such as community employment and Tús to open up opportunities for young people who have not benefited from third level education or lack work experience.

Minister Burton also said there may be much to learn from the German system of apprenticeships, where a quarter of employers provide formal apprenticeship schemes and nearly two-thirds of schoolchildren undertake some form of apprenticeship.

Minister Burton highlighted research which shows that youth unemployment continues to impact negatively on an individual up to two decades later in a number of ways, including unemployment, health status, wages and job satisfaction in contrast to unemployment when in one's early thirties.



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The researchers concluded that there are “permanent scars” from youth unemployment in that even a short spell of unemployment when young continues to have a harmful impact in later life.

Minister Burton said that while “activation” was the key labour market policy for this Government, “we must not see it as a cure to all our ills when it comes to unemployment.”

She said other measures were helpful in tackling youth unemployment including expansion of education and training places; giving subsidies to companies to employ young unemployed, based on additional net hires in order to avoid displacement of older workers; and the creation of job guarantee schemes where for example public sector or local government bodies would be allowed to employ people for a year or two and pay them the equivalent of the benefits they would have received on unemployment benefits plus a small premium.

“In effect this would be a form of subsidised training,” she said.

The Minister also signalled she was keen to harness the deep knowledge of private sector companies on the needs of the labour market.



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“In this regard, I have been particularly impressed by the range and breadth of the many proposals that the private sector has presented to me on tackling unemployment and key deficiencies in the labour market since becoming Minister,” she said.

“Indeed the re-structuring of my Department into a fundamentally different entity embracing the integration of the Community Welfare Service and FÁS Employment and Community Services provides the opportunity to develop a deeper relationship with employers across all of the work areas of the “new” Department. Key areas for engagement will include developing services with and in support of employers in the work placement, job-matching and in-work support areas and the development of more employer- as-client and partner services,” the Minister concluded.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

The OECD is co-hosting the conference *Building Quality Jobs in the Recovery*, with the Irish Departments of Environment, Community and Local Government; Social Protection; Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; Children and Youth Affairs with the support of Pobal.

Further Information:

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