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Minister launches National Youth Council Position Paper on Youth Unemployment

Government pledges to tackle the challenge of youth unemployment 'head on'

Joan Burton, Minister for Social Protection, today (Thursday 31st March 2011) launched the position paper published by the National Youth Council of Ireland *Creating a Future for Young Jobseekers*. Welcoming the paper, Minister Burton said: "This document contains a considerable amount of information on youth unemployment and proposals for tackling this challenge; I intend to study this report in great detail."

"*Creating a Future for Young Jobseekers* reiterates a well-known fact. The effects of unemployment go way beyond the economic or financial for the individual and for society. Unemployment has a negative effect on a person's physical and mental well-being. As the report points out the longer young people are unemployed and not engaged in training, education or work experience, the more difficult it is for them to return to work. We have pledged to tackle this challenge head-on in the Programme for Government."

The commitments in the Programme for Government include:

- resourcing a Jobs Fund for additional places in training, work experience and educational opportunities;
- supporting employers in the creation new jobs in a practical way;
- accelerating infrastructure projects and
- developing a new graduate and apprentice internship scheme, work placement programmes and further education opportunities for our young jobseekers."

Minister Burton continued: "The report contains a number of comments in relation to my own Department and I will be examining these proposals with particular interest. Some work is already underway to integrate services for jobseekers and to improve access to information, jobseeker payments and opportunities for training, education and work experience."

This work includes:

- The transfer of the Employment and Community Divisions of FÁS to the Department of Social Protection to provide a more effective and streamlined response to the needs of jobseekers by integrating the income support provided through the social welfare system with supports for activation and preparation for re-entry to employment.



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- The development of customer profiling and case management systems within the Department of Social protection which will allow for better targeting of appropriate interventions for young jobseekers.
- The closing date for new applications to the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive scheme was extended to the end of this year. This scheme exempts the employer from paying their share of PRSI for 12 months, saving employers money and shifting the balance in favour of job creation;
- The Skills Development and Internship Programme which provides participants with a 12 month placement with host organisations during which they undertake a significant education and training component.
- The Work Placement Programme brings employers and the unemployed together for a work experience placement for up to nine months and enables jobseekers to gain valuable experience in a workplace setting.
- Schemes, such as the Rural Social Scheme, the Community Services Programme and Tús offer community-based work opportunities for jobseekers
- The Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme, provide on-the-job training for apprentices in the public and private sectors.

Minister Burton concluded by thanking the National Youth Council of Ireland and the authors, Marie-Claire McAleer and James Doorley, for the work put into *Creating a Future for Young Jobseekers* which, she said, would be a most valuable resource for the Government.

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