



## **1,000 more Jobseekers to benefit from JobBridge**

- **Expansion based on success in the first 10 months of the scheme.**

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD today announced 1,000 extra places for JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme

Commenting on the successes of the scheme to-date, the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD and Mr Martin Murphy Managing Director of HP Ireland and Chair of the Steering Group on the National Internship Scheme said that JobBridge had exceeded their expectations since it went live on 1<sup>st</sup> July last year.

**“Such has been the level of demand for the scheme, I am delighted to be announcing proposals to increase the number of places available in JobBridge and to widen the eligibility criteria.”** said Minister Burton **“The number of available places will be increased to 6,000 with immediate effect. The eligibility criteria will also be extended to include those in receipt of One Parent Family Payment and Disability Allowance. These changes will take effect from 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012.”**

The Minister added: **“JobBridge was one of the pillars of the Government’s first Jobs Initiative and it set out to help those seeking employment to gain valuable experience while enhancing their prospects of securing employment. It is one element of the Department of Social Protection’s wider activation programme and a good example of how we engage with Jobseekers”**

**“The scheme has made significant progress to date. In just ten months since the scheme was launched 6,840 internships have started. The initial target provided for a maximum of 5,000 places at any point in time. At 4<sup>th</sup> May 2012, 4,670 participants were on JobBridge placements and 1,876 posts were being advertised on the scheme’s website.”**

Martin Murphy said that there had been strong take-up of the scheme from private sector employers with two thirds (67%) of interns placed with private companies. One fifth of placements are in public sector bodies with the Community & Voluntary sector accounting for the remaining participants.

**“I have received very positive feedback on JobBridge from business people across the spectrum and the National Internship Scheme is now hardwired into the range of opportunities open to those who want to get back into the workplace. Companies and organisations of all sizes have embraced JobBridge with smaller companies of less than 50 employees accounting for 57% of placements. Larger companies (over 250 employees) have also participated strongly with almost a quarter (24%) of placements in these firms.”**

**“JobBridge is delivering real value to all involved. For interns, it offers a real chance to equip themselves with new skills, often getting them into the workplace with the opportunity to secure long term employment. ”**

It is clear from the data that JobBridge has been particularly attractive to the 20-25 and 26-35 age groups. The former represents 35% while the latter represents 41% of all placements.

Take-up of JobBridge was particularly strong in the Dublin region with two in five of all placements. The Southwest/Southeast region accounted for 23%, as did the West/Midwest/Midlands region with the Northwest/Northeast making up the balance (13%).

Preliminary data from the interns who ended their placements in recent months indicates that some 797 interns, on the immediate completion of their internship, have gone into employment with either their JobBridge Host Organisation or another company. It is important to note that this data does not take account of an intern who may have secured employment in the subsequent weeks or months after completing their internship. A picture of the career paths of JobBridge interns will become clearer following the independent evaluation of the scheme which will be undertaken by Indecon International Economic Consultants.

Since 1st January 2012, companies who employ interns can avail of the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme which exempts employers from liability to pay their share of PRSI for certain employees. This will provide an additional boost to JobBridge.

Minister Burton concluded: **“I have commissioned a full independent evaluation of the JobBridge Scheme. However, the initial data suggests that it has been very successful in meeting the objectives we initially set and it is making a real contribution to helping unemployed people re-engage with the workplace.”**

Minister Burton also added: **“A variety of measures have been introduced to protect the intern and to ensure the integrity of the JobBridge Scheme. In this regard, my Department is involved in the continuous monitoring of internships; in order to ensure that the placement provides appropriate training and development experience; and that appropriate mentoring and support is provided to the intern. It is worth noting that participation in the Scheme is voluntary and an intern may contact the JobBridge team at any stage of their Internship for advice and support. ”**

**PRESS RELEASE ENDS**

### Notes for Editors:

Interns on the National Internship Scheme are awarded an extra €50 in addition to their Jobseeker's payment. The top up payment will cost €13 million in a full year.

### **JobBridge Statistical Data - as at 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012**

#### **Age Profile of Participants**

<b>Age Band</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>&lt;18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.03%</b>
<b>18-20</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>1.70%</b>
<b>20-25</b>	<b>2,413</b>	<b>35.28%</b>
<b>26-35</b>	<b>2,807</b>	<b>41.04%</b>
<b>36-45</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>14.27%</b>
<b>46-55</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>6.26%</b>
<b>56-65</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>1.43%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6,840</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

#### **Placements by Company Size**

<b>Employees</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>0 - 49</b>	<b>3,915</b>	<b>57.24%</b>
<b>250 - +</b>	<b>1,618</b>	<b>23.65%</b>
<b>50 - 249</b>	<b>1,123</b>	<b>16.42%</b>
<b>Undefined</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>2.69%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6,840</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### **Placements by Company Sector**

<b>Company Type</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Private</b>	<b>4,569</b>	<b>66.80%</b>
<b>Public</b>	<b>1,448</b>	<b>21.17%</b>
<b>Community/Voluntary</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>8.22%</b>
<b>Undefined</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>3.81%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6,840</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Key Messages

- **JobBridge is working**
- In excess of 6,800 interns have commenced placements in first ten months , exceeding expectations
- Strong take up by private, public and voluntary/community organisations 67:21:11
- Strong take up across all company sizes (under 50 employees-57%; over 250- 24%)
- Strong take up by the 20-25 (35% of placements) and 26-35 (41% of placements) age groups
- Minister to announce increasing places and widening eligibility
- Very early indications of positive progression rates - too early to judge, but similar to research into European schemes
- An independent evaluation of the Scheme is currently being undertaken by Indecon International Economic Consultants.
- New PRSI Incentive Scheme will encourage retention of interns

## Questions and Answers

### Q1. What is the current uptake on JobBridge?

The Scheme has made significant progress to-date. In just nine months since the Scheme was launched 6,842 internships have started. The initial target provided for a maximum of 5,000 places at any point in time. At 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012, 4,670 participants were on JobBridge placements and 1,876 posts were being advertised on the Scheme's website.

### Q.2 Can you provide a Regional Breakdown of this data?

#### (a) Regional Starts to Date

Regions	JobBridge	Total	% of Total
Dublin	Dublin	2,790	40.78%
West/ Mid-West/ Midlands Region	Midlands	445	6.50%
	Mid-West	567	8.29%
	West	560	8.18%
North West/ North East Region	North East	460	6.72%
	North West	404	5.90%
South West/ South East Region	South East	739	10.80%
	South West	877	12.83%
	<b>Starts to date (01/07/2011 to 03/05/2012)</b>	<b>6,842</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### (b) Current Vacancies/Posts by Region

#### JobBridge, National Internship Scheme – Open Vacancies/Posts as at 03.05.12

Region	Vacancies	Posts
City Centre	258	293
Dublin South	198	239
Fingal	120	127
Midlands	150	180
Mid-West	118	137
North-East	107	119
North-West	65	77
South-East	223	262
South-West	205	253
West	165	189
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,609</b>	<b>1,876</b>

**Q.3 How do you react to the criticism that JobBridge is a Job to Nowhere, with employers just using it as a way of hiring cheap labour?**

I don't accept that criticism. We got this scheme from announcement to launch in less than eight weeks and facilitated over 6,800 jobseekers commencing internship placements within the first ten months of operation. The take up has been across all sectors and all company sizes. In anybody's book that is a success.

Preliminary data from the interns who ended their placements in recent months indicates that some 797 interns, on the immediate completion of their internship, have gone into employment with either their JobBridge Host Organisation or another company. It is important to note that this data does not take account of an intern who may have secured employment in the subsequent weeks or months after completing their internship.

Of course with any scheme there were teething problems, but we are satisfied that the vast majority of internships comply fully with the terms of the scheme. It would be disappointing if a focus of a few isolated cases was used to detract from the scheme or discourage potential interns.

**Q.4 But what about people who complain that the rules are too rigid and they don't qualify**

It is important to make the point that, within the resources available, the scheme has been put in place to help those who have been on the Live Register for at least three months. It is important to keep those on the Live Register close to the labour market and prevent the drift into long-term unemployment. There are also other state schemes available and a number of private firms operate internship schemes.

Based on the success of the scheme to date the Minister is delighted to be announcing plans to expand the Scheme from 5,000 to 6,000 available places with immediate effect. The eligibility criteria to participate on the Scheme will also be widened to include those in receipt of One Parent Family Payments and Disability Allowance. This will take effect from 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

**Q.5 Why is the Scheme limited to those on the Live Register ?**

The overall objective of labour market policy is to ensure a pathway to appropriate employment, training and education opportunities for those on the Live Register so that as employment opportunities become available they are taken up by those on the Live Register.

Given the scale of the unemployment crisis, it is imperative to keep those on the Live Register close to the labour market and prevent the drift into long-term unemployment. This will ensure that those availing of activation measures such as the National Internship Scheme will gain work experience and so be in a better position to avail of employment opportunities as the economy improves.

For these reasons, the eligibility for the scheme is confined to those on the Live Register and in receipt of unemployment payments or signing for credits for 3 months. In so designing

the scheme, the policy objective is to prioritise scarce resources on those on the Live Register so as to increase their chances of leaving it and ensure a reduction in Exchequer costs over time.

My Department continues to monitor and review all aspects of this Programme including Eligibility on an ongoing basis. As a result of this process, the Scheme will be opened up to include those in receipt of One Parent Family Payments and Disability Allowance. This will take effect from 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

**Q.6 Are you satisfied with the quality of the internships on offer?**

The primary focus of JobBridge is to help people on the Live Register to gain experience and improve their skills. That theme is as relevant to a low skilled person as a graduate. It would be wrong to be elitist about JobBridge and say that it is only for very highly qualified individuals

A variety of measures have been introduced to protect the intern and to ensure the integrity of the JobBridge Scheme. In order for an application from a Host Organisation to be approved the host organisation must meet a number of criteria. These criteria are to ensure that the internship does not displace an existing position; that it provides appropriate training and development experience; and that appropriate mentoring and support is provided to the Intern.

Additionally in order for an internship to commence a Standard Agreement must be signed and agreed to by both the Intern and the Host Organisation. This Agreement clearly states the terms of the internship; including the expected working hours, which can range from 30 – 40 hours (maximum) per week and the specific learning outcomes the intern will gain over the course of their internship.

To ensure that both the host organisation and intern are abiding by the spirit and the rules of the scheme, my Department are involved in the continuous monitoring of internships. This involves the regular review of monthly compliance reports and the conducting of random monitoring site visits to facilitate discussions with both parties to the Internship.

It is worth noting that participation in the Scheme is voluntary and an intern may contact the JobBridge Team at any stage of their Internship for advice and support. Consequently, any individual, who suspects that an internship may be in breach of the scheme's criteria, including cases of suspected displacement and quality, may contact the JobBridge team. All such matters are fully investigated.

**Q.7 Why are there low skilled positions advertised on the JobBridge website?**

The JobBridge scheme is open to all individuals irrespective of their skill levels. Low skilled individuals have a right to access an activation measure that is specifically designed to improve their skills, enhance their experience and improve their chances of securing employment in the future.

There are internship opportunities currently available for individuals who may be low skilled. However, these are only approved if they can show that the intern will receive a

broad and practical work experience that will involve significant learning outcomes for the intern. My Department continually monitors the opportunities that are advertised on the JobBridge website. To date the Department has removed over 200 opportunities as they were deemed not to meet the quality requirements

It should be noted that a significant number of applications are refused initially by the JobBridge team as they are deemed not to meet the quality requirements.

**Q.8 Are you satisfied with the number of people moving from JobBridge into employment?**

Progression rates into employment will be addressed more comprehensively in the independent evaluation of the Scheme which is being undertaken by Indecon International Economic Consultants.

Preliminary data from the interns who ended their placements in recent months indicates that 797 interns, on the immediate completion of their internship, have gone into employment with either their JobBridge Host Organisation or another company, It is important to note that this data does not take account of an intern who may have secured employment in the subsequent weeks or months after completing their internship.

Studies indicate this is very much on a par with internships in European countries but I think we should wait a few more months before we look again at the post internship employment record.

From 1 January 2012, companies employing interns may avail of the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme which exempts employers from liability to pay their share of PRSI for certain employees. This will provide an additional boost to JobBridge.

**Q.9 With 450,000 people unemployed, surely we need a lot more than a scheme with just 5,000 places on it.**

Of course, JobBridge is not the panacea to the problem of unemployment. But it is an important initiative and has the potential to be transformative for those who take up the opportunity. The feedback to date from both interns and host organisations has been very positive and for these reasons, I am increasing the number of available places from 5,000 to 6,000 with immediate effect.

The Government have also made major announcements on policies like the Pathways to Work and the Action Plan on Jobs which are designed to tackle underlying issues.

**ENDS**