



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection



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A NEW AND BETTER SERVICE

INTREO – THE NEW EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICE LAUNCHED

Today, (Monday 15th October 2012), An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD and Joan Burton TD, Minister for Social Protection officially launched [Intreo](#) – the new integrated employment and support service provided by the Department of Social Protection. **Intreo** provides individualised supports to jobseekers to assist them in getting back to work and increasing their employability.

There are a number of key elements which make up the [Intreo](#) service including:

- Activation measures including client profiling, early Group Engagement and one-to-one meetings focused on customised employment supports and monitoring of client's progress.
- Integrated decision-making process leading to quicker decisions.
- Integrated reception providing a one-stop shop incorporating all strands of the Department's employment and income support services.
- A 'social contract' between the service and its clients.
- Enhanced employer engagement at national and local level maximising access to job opportunities and potential employees.

Intreo signals a new approach to engagement with people who are unemployed. It transforms the nature and level of engagement between employment services and people on the Live Register with the objective of helping people on the pathway back to employment. The aim is that the first day a client enters an Intreo Centre and engages with the service, that day is the start of the journey back to work.

Speaking at the launch, Taoiseach Enda Kenny stated that: **"Intreo is an important step in transforming the way income and employment supports are provided. It is a key element of the Government's response to the employment crisis and supports the objectives set out in the Government's Action Plan for Jobs and the Pathways to Work initiative. It links the payment of income supports to the task of supporting people in their pursuit of employment and improving their life chances."**

The type of support provided by Intreo will be customised to each person's skills, experience and qualifications. A tailored progression plan will be devised and agreed between the client and their Case Officer. The service will support jobseekers in their own efforts to find work and to undertake training and development programmes to maximise their access to opportunities. As part of their interaction with the service, each jobseeker is expected to engage fully with the services offered by the Department under an agreed "social contract". This "social contract" demonstrates a move from

a passive approach to supporting jobseekers and compares favourably with best international practice.

Minister Joan Burton recognised the important role of employers in getting Ireland back to work and the support that they require to assist them to grow their workforce. She said: ***“Our priority is to ensure that employment opportunities go to people currently on the Live Register. This can only be achieved in conjunction with the business community and with the full support of employers. The Department will work closely with employers to support them with their employment needs and provide access to the financial supports that are available to help them to grow their workforce.”***

The launch of Intreo today represents the first stage in a multi-annual programme of activity. The service being launched is now available in Sligo, Arklow, Tallaght and Kings Inn/Parnell Street. Other areas in which the service will become available before the end of the year, include Ballymun, Buncrana, Dundalk, Coolock, Finglas and Killarney. The Intreo service will be rolled out to all areas of the country by the end of 2014.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Mandate to establish Intreo Employment and Support Services

The establishment of the new service is a necessary response to the scale and nature of the employment challenges that Ireland as an economy now faces. There has been an unprecedented rise in unemployment which has far-reaching implications for workers, the economy and Irish society.

As a consequence, the mandate for the establishment of this service was provided in the Programme for Government with the aim of not only providing benefits where required, but supporting people in their pursuit of employment and related opportunities. This marks an important move from transaction based services to the active case management of clients, who will now have a personal progression plan, which will be monitored and with which they will be expected to engage.

The plan to develop a new service model was published under the heading of the National Employment and Entitlements Service in August 2011 and the service model itself was published with the Pathways to Work Initiative in February 2012. Since the initial publication of the plan, the Department has been working towards putting the resources, systems and procedures in place to make the plan an operational reality.

A major aspect of the development of the new service was the transfer of circa 1,700 staff from the Community Welfare Service and FAS to join with the existing Department of Social Protection staff, which provided the Department with the human resources, skills, expertise and experience to implement the service. This was completed by January 2012.

Intreo: An integral part of the Government’s Response to the Employment Crisis

The development and launch of Intreo is a significant part of the Government’s response to the jobs crisis. The Government’s response is twofold: Firstly the ***Action Plan for Jobs*** is a plan with 270 identified actions to help improve competitiveness, promote investment and incentivise employment. This plan, which is being led by Minister Bruton, is a whole of Government initiative and

the Department of Social Protection plays its part on a number of these actions - for example, by extending the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive scheme from 12 to 18 months and by reviewing and developing the JobBridge internship programme.

The new Intreo service is a key part of the **Pathways to Work initiative**, the second element in the Government's twintrack approach to the unemployment crisis. It is focussed on supporting those who are unemployed, or become unemployed, to stay connected to the workforce and to find employment. The idea is that, when jobs become vacant and as new jobs are created, those people on the Live Register should be well positioned to apply for and secure these opportunities. Put simply - **no-one who loses their job should be allowed to drift with no support into long term unemployment**. This is the core of the **Pathways to Work** policy. This launch today of the **Intreo** service is evidence of the progress being made.

Intreo: Key elements

The Intreo service consists of five main elements

- i. An integrated '**one-stop-shop**' **reception service** to simplify customer access.
- ii. A **single decisions process** to reduce bureaucracy and speed up decisions/claim processing.
- iii. An **integrated activation/employment service** process to ensure that all jobseekers can have early access to employment services. Their first day claiming a jobseeker payment is their first day of the journey back to work.
- iv. A **Social Contract** to ensure that all parties understand that with rights [to income support] come responsibilities [to engage].
- v. A greater focus on **employer engagement** to ensure not only that we can build the links necessary to help people off the Live Register and into employment but also that our services are responsive to the needs of employers.

Progress to Date and Timeline

- The roll-out of the new service requires significant logistical, process, system and staff changes in a live operating environment.
- So far the full Pathways to Work/Intreo Process has been rolled out in Sligo, Tallaght, Kings Inn/Parnell St (Dublin) and Arklow.
- It is currently being rolled out to Buncrana, Ballymun, Finglas, Coolock, Killarney and Dundalk.
- It will be rolled out to all offices by the end of 2014.
- Sligo is today (15th October, 2012) the first office to apply the Social Contract/Record of Mutual Commitments and to adopt the new service name.
- The process of customer profiling and Group Engagement is being rolled out to all offices this year in advance of the roll-out of all service features.
- Experience in the first four 'full' offices has been very positive.
- The current average waiting days for an appointment with a deciding officer for an application for Jobseeker's Benefit or Allowance is 1 – 2 days – **down 56%** on the pre-Intreo process.

- The average time to award Jobseeker's Allowance claims has improved from three weeks to about four days at present (**77% reduction** in waiting time).
- The number of jobseeker claimants requiring an interim Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment has **dropped by 70%**.
- The time taken to enter the activation process has reduced from three months to about two weeks (an **84% reduction** in waiting times).
- Attendance at activation meetings/group engagements is **up from c 60% to over 95%**.

Intreo: Detail on key elements of the new service

The new 'Intreo' process consists of five main elements

An integrated 'one-stop-shop' reception service

- This replaces the three previously separate services from FÁS, Department of Social Protection and the Community Welfare Service (HSE).
- In practice this means that the client receives complete information on a more timely basis, in one location and all follow-on appointments can be scheduled at the same time.

A single decisions process

- Previously clients submitting claims for social welfare payments might have to wait some time to have their claim awarded as details of their employment status and income were investigated.
- While awaiting this payment, clients were entitled, by submitting a separate claim to the Community Welfare Service, to an emergency Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment.
- The new process significantly reduces the time taken to decide a claim (down to 1 day in most cases) and those clients who might still require a supplementary payment can have this decision made as part of the single process rather than having to submit a separate claim.
- As part of the decisions process a personal profile (known as PEX) is captured for each individual and this profile informs the approach taken at the next stage in the process – activation.

An integrated activation/employment service process

- Previously clients had to wait at least three months before an appointment could be made with an employment services officer and in some cases this appointment had to be triggered by the client themselves.
- Now, under the new process, all clients must attend a Group Engagement session – typically within a week or two of registering for jobseekers payments. Depending on their personal profile, they are subsequently scheduled for follow-on one-to-one meetings with an experienced employment services officer.
- The Group Engagement session is designed to give clients basic information on their entitlements and the services that are available to them in order to help them return to work. Each client is given a fact sheet in preparation for and in advance of the one-to-one meeting.
- At the one-to-one meeting the employment services officer/case worker will go into greater detail as to the employment and training supports available and help the client to prepare a Personal Progression Plan (PPP).
- Follow-up meetings are then scheduled to monitor progress against the plan and to adjust it as circumstances dictate. Clients may also be contacted in the periods between one-to-one meetings to check if the client is following the actions agreed under the PPP.

- Ultimately clients, who despite the assistance of their Case Officer, cannot make progress on the pathway into employment/further education, may be directed to, and required to take up a place on a State employment or training scheme.

Social Contract – Rights and Responsibilities

- This “contract” underpins the Intreo approach.
- It is a record of the commitments being made by the Intreo service and also of the commitments expected of clients who avail of that service. In other words a record of mutual commitments.
- The commitments expected of clients are that they will:
 - Co-operate with the Intreo service in developing a Personal Progression Plan.
 - Use this plan strive to secure employment.
 - Attend all meetings requested by the Department.
 - Provide all information requested by the Department.
- Clients who register for the service will be expected to sign and honour this Record of Mutual Commitments.
- Failure to honour this commitment can lead to a reduction in, and ultimately a cessation of, payments.

Employer Engagement

- Ultimately the success of the Intreo approach will be determined by the progression of clients back into employment.
- The Department already offers a suite of services that can assist employers in recruiting staff from the register of those who are unemployed. These include:
 - Job advertising and job matching services (jobsireland.ie)
 - An internship scheme - JobBridge
 - Financial supports for recruiting long-term unemployed people – the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive scheme and the Revenue Job Assist scheme
 - In-work supports to employees – Part-time Job Incentive scheme and Family Income Supplement
 - WorkAbility services, including wage subsidies and grants, for employing people with a disability.
- The success of JobBridge shows that if employers are well informed of the services available they will take them up and use them.
- The Department is launching a promotional campaign to inform the business community of the range of services available to them – commencing with an employer road-show over the next two months which starts this Friday (19th October) in Limerick and moving on to Sligo, Galway, Athlone, Waterford, Cork and Dublin.
- In parallel the Department is appointing employer relations managers in each of its regional divisions and their role, on an on-going basis, will be to promote the take-up of these services among the business community.

Background Note about Sligo Intreo Centre

- Address: Government Offices, Cranmore Road, Sligo.
- Areas of Sligo Covered: Carney, Drumcliffe, Ballinfull, Grange, Cliffoney, Mullaghmore, Ballintrillick, Drumfin, Riverstown, Dromard, Soeey, Beltra, Collooney, Coolaney, Ballymote,

Rosses Point, Strandhill, Ballintogher, Moneygold, Ballisodare, Ballygawley, Ballinacarrow, Hazelwood, Templeboy, Glencar, Rathcormack, Skreen, Sligo town.

- There is a current claim-load of 6,659.
- 4,374 of these are on the Live Register.
- A number of new initiatives were introduced in the Sligo office over the past few years – e.g. an appointments system, computer enhancements, Public Services Card – all of which paved the way for the re-structuring of the service.
- Since the new service stressing activation went into operation in Sligo on 3 July 2012, a total of 522 people have been scheduled for Group Engagement.
- A total of 106 of these exited the Live Register before the Group Engagement for a variety of reasons including taking up employment or further education.
- 18 people did not turn up for Group Engagement and sanctions were applied.
- The remaining 398 attended for group engagement and of these, 371 have attended for one to one interviews. A total of 350 Personal Progression Plans have been agreed.
- Of the people who attended 1:2:1 interviews, 234 have received follow-up contact and 33 have review meetings scheduled.
- Of the 350 who have had a Personal Progression Plan agreed, a total of 69 of these who attended for 1:2:1 interviews have progressed on to other things:
 - 26 have gone to work
 - 22 into further education
 - 9 on to FAS training/VEC courses
 - 2 to Community Employment
 - 2 into internships
 - 1 to self-employment
 - 3 payment transferred
 - 3 gone abroad
 - 1 gone onto another Department of Social Protection payment.

ENDS

Useful Links

- [Intreo - Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Pathways to Work/Intreo Fact Sheet](#) (PDF; 403KB)
- [Jobseeker's Claim Form Part B \(Profiling Questions\)](#)(PDF; 46KB)
- [Supports for Jobseeker's](#) (PDF; 238KB)
- [Record of Mutual Commitments](#) (PDF; 257KB)
- [Pathways to Work Supporting Jobseeker's - Presentation](#) (PDF; 394KB)
- [Intreo - A new name and a better service \(Leaflet\)](#) (PDF; 611KB)
- [Intreo - Employment Services and Supports for Employers \(Leaflet\)](#) (PDF 975KB)