

# Pathways to Work

2016 - 2020



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## List of abbreviations and terms

<b>Action Plan for Jobs</b>	The Action Plan for Jobs is a whole-of-Government initiative under which Government Departments and Agencies work to support job creation
<b>BITC</b>	Business in the Community
<b>BTEA</b>	Back to Education Allowance
<b>CES</b>	Comprehensive Employment Strategy, focusing on actions to facilitate employment opportunities for those with a disability
<b>CIB</b>	Citizens Information Board
<b>CIF</b>	Construction Industry Federation
<b>CIPD</b>	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
<b>CSO</b>	Central Statistics Office
<b>DES</b>	Department of Education and Skills
<b>DFI</b>	Disability Federation of Ireland
<b>DJEI</b>	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
<b>DPER</b>	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
<b>DSP</b>	Department of Social Protection
<b>EGFSN</b>	Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
<b>EI</b>	Enterprise Ireland
<b>ESRI</b>	Economic and Social Research Institute
<b>ETB</b>	Education and Training Boards
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EURES</b>	European Employment Service
<b>FET</b>	Further Education and Training
<b>FIF</b>	Feeding Ireland's Future
<b>FIT</b>	FIT is an industry-led initiative which works in close collaboration with Government Departments, Solas, Education and Training Boards, National training agencies, Local development organisations and a host of community based organisations to provide a range of courses.
<b>HAP</b>	Housing Assistance Payment
<b>HEA</b>	Higher Education Authority
<b>IBEC</b>	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
<b>IDA</b>	The Industrial Development Authority of Ireland
<b>IHF</b>	Irish Hotels Federation
<b>INOUE</b>	Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed
<b>Intreo</b>	The Department of Social Protection's single point of contact for all employment and income supports.

<b>ISME</b>	The Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association
<b>JobPath</b>	A payment-by-results contracted service whereby long-term jobseekers receive intensive individual support to help them address barriers to employment and to assist them in finding jobs
<b>Jobs Clubs</b>	A service to assist jobseekers to enter or re-enter employment through the provision of individualised supports, a drop-in service and formal workshops
<b>JobsPlus</b>	An incentive paid by the Department of Social Protection to employers to encourage them to offer employment opportunities to the long-term unemployed
<b>Labour Force</b>	The total number of people employed and seeking employment
<b>Labour Market Council</b>	A group of industry and policy experts that advises the Minister on the implementation of the Pathways to Work strategy, monitors progress and puts forward proposals on labour market policy
<b>LEO</b>	Local Enterprise Offices
<b>LES</b>	Local Employment Services, working with Intreo to deliver services and supports to the unemployed
<b>Live Register</b>	This administrative record gives an unofficial measure of unemployment by counting those in receipt of jobseekers' and related welfare payments.
<b>LTU</b>	Long-term unemployed
<b>MHI</b>	Mental Health Ireland
<b>NDA</b>	National Disability Authority
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OFF</b>	One parent family payment
<b>PEX</b>	A score based on the probability of a jobseeker exiting the Live Register, based on labour market characteristics, which determines the type of interaction between the jobseeker and the Intreo office
<b>PLSS</b>	Programme Learner and Support System, which will provide comprehensive data on education and training participants, course content, and related information.
<b>QNHS</b>	A survey carried out by the CSO every three months, which generates the official measure of unemployment in Ireland
<b>SOLAS</b>	Responsible for funding, planning and co-ordinating the further education and training sector in Ireland
<b>The Wheel</b>	Representative network for the community and voluntary sector in Ireland.

# Pathways to Work

## 1. Introduction

The Government is driving a strong economic recovery and the number of people in work will shortly exceed two million. Ireland has made significant progress since the nadir of the jobs crisis, when unemployment peaked at over 15%. The Pathways to Work (PtW) strategy 2012 - 2015 has played a key role in this progress. The goal of Pathways is simple: to ensure that as many jobs as possible go to people on the Live Register. The strategy has been successful in contributing to a reduction of circa 38% in the number of people unemployed during that period. The overall rate of unemployment has now fallen to 8.8%. However that remains too high, and more work must be done. In particular, the number of people on the Live Register for more than 12 months, at approximately 150,000, means that long-term unemployment continues to have a scarring effect on the lives of individuals and families and presents a significant challenge to our society and our economy.

The Government is determined to address this challenge and has set out its stall in the Action Plan for Jobs 2016, which seeks to generate the jobs that will deliver full employment. It outlines a series of actions to secure the gains already made and deliver the Government target to have 2.1 million people in employment by 2018, and to achieve the ambitious longer term goal of 2.18 million people at work by 2020 as set out in the Government's Enterprise 2025 strategy. However, experience from other recoveries tells us that job creation of itself is not sufficient to generate full employment. Even at the peak of our Celtic Tiger boom about 150,000 people were in receipt of jobseeker payments. A further 200,000 or so people in the prime of what should have been their working lives (25 – 60) were in receipt of other welfare payments, such as the one-parent family payment (OFP) and disability payments, and were, in effect, excluded from the labour market.

Mindful of this experience, and determined to ensure that nobody should be left behind by our economic recovery, the Government mandated that a new Pathways strategy be developed to cover the five year period to the end of 2020. As part of the process of developing this strategy, the Government engaged in a comprehensive round of consultations with stakeholders and front-line workers engaged in the delivery of employment services to unemployed people. This new strategy reflects the views and ideas gathered during this process as well as taking account of inputs from across all of Government and from agencies such as the OECD and advisory bodies such as the Labour Market Council.

It is clear from all of these inputs that the strategy for 2016 to 2020 should reflect a shift in focus from 'activation in a time of recession' to 'activation in a time of recovery and growth' and in this regard should have two main objectives.

- First, to continue and consolidate the progress made to date with an initial focus on working with unemployed jobseekers, in particular people who are long-term unemployed.
- Second, to extend the approach of activation to other people who, although not classified as unemployed jobseekers, have the potential and the desire to play a more active role in the labour force.

This approach, outlined below and reflected in the detailed actions in each strand, is at the heart of *Pathways to Work 2016 – 2020*. Together with *Enterprise 2025*, the *Comprehensive Employment Strategy for people with disabilities* (both published in 2015) and the *Further Education and Training Strategy* published in 2014, the new *National Skills Strategy* to be published early this year and the new *Action Plan for Jobs*, Pathways to Work will ensure that Ireland's workforce is not just fully employed but is equipped to respond flexibly to the demands of a growing economy.

## 2. Labour Market Context

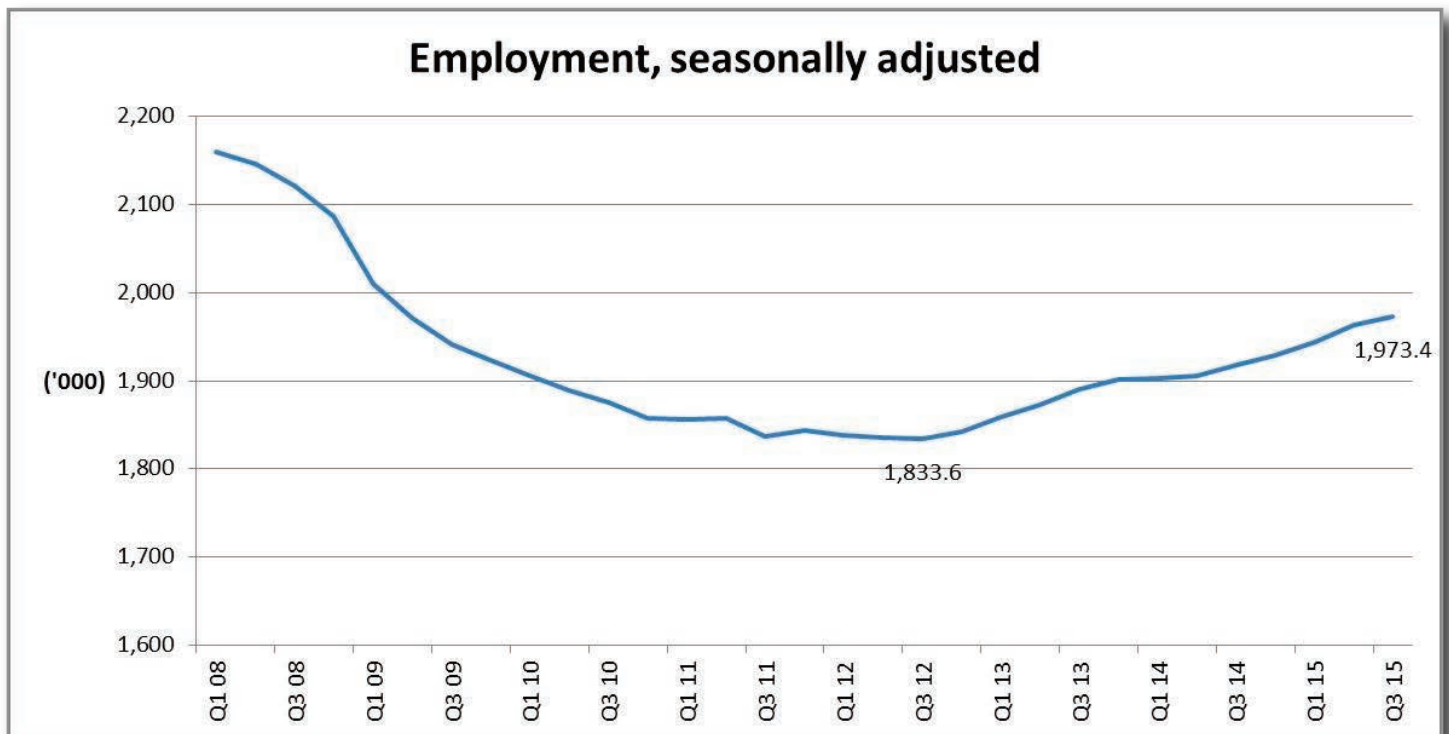
### Macroeconomic Context

When Pathways to Work 2015 was published in late 2014, the recovery from the economic crisis of 2007-2012 was already well under way. Since then, the recovery has strengthened further. GDP grew by 5.2% in 2014, and is expected to grow by over 5% on average over the two years 2015 and 2016. To date, growth has been driven largely by exports and investment, but domestic consumption demand is now playing an increased role.

### Employment Trends

Having fallen by over 330,000 from a peak of 2.16 million in early 2008, employment has been growing again since mid-2012. By the third quarter of 2015, the level of employment (seasonally adjusted) had reached 1.97 million – up by 140,000 from the lowest level reached in 2012.

Figure 1: Employment Trends (Q1 2008 – Q3 2015)



Source: CSO

The employment rate, <sup>1</sup> having reached 70% at the peak of the employment boom, fell as low as 58% in early 2012; by Q3 2015 it had recovered to 63.8%.

The recovery in employment has been entirely in full-time employment. Part-time employment has been stable over the last three years.

<sup>1</sup> The employment rate measures the percentage of the population aged 15-64 who are in employment.

The number of involuntary part-timers – those who would prefer to work longer hours – which had increased substantially in the recession has fallen by over 41,000. About a quarter of all part-time workers are now involuntary, down from a third in 2012.

Job losses during the recession were heavily concentrated in the construction, manufacturing and retailing sectors. Together, these industries accounted for 260,000 of the overall fall in employment of 330,000 between 2008 and 2012.

The employment recovery was initially led by a relatively narrow group of sectors – agriculture, accommodation and food service activities, and professional services<sup>2</sup>. During 2014 and 2015, employment growth extended more widely in sectoral terms, most notably into construction and manufacturing.

In terms of **occupations**, the largest employment decrease during the downturn was for workers in craft and “elementary” occupations, which was to be expected given that a large number of such persons were employed in the construction sector.

The occupational pattern of the recovery in employment since 2012 reflects the sectoral trends already referred to. Of the overall increase of about 140,000 in employment between 2012 and 2015, about 50,000 related to skilled manual trade occupations, and a further 20,000 were in elementary manual jobs.

In terms of employment, **men** fared considerably worse than **women** during the recession. There were 246,000 fewer males in employment in Q3 of 2012 than at the height of the boom and 87,000 fewer females. Over 60% of the fall in male employment was in construction and a further 20% in manufacturing. The recovery has favoured men somewhat, with an increase in employment of 96,000 from Q3 2012 to Q3 2015, as compared with an increase of 46,000 for women.

Employment of **non-Irish nationals** fell by over a fifth from 347,000 to 270,000 during the 2008-2012 downturn. The magnitude of the fall was largely due to the fact that non-Irish nationals had been predominantly employed in the sectors most adversely affected by the jobs downturn, namely hotel & restaurants, manufacturing, wholesale & retail, and construction. More recently, employment of non-Irish nationals showed an increase of 32,000 between Q3 2012 and Q3 2015.

The **regional** impact of the jobs downturn over the period 2008– 2012 and the subsequent recovery can be seen from the figure below. The Border region was the worst affected, with the number of people with jobs down 20%. The smallest decline was for people living in the Mid-East (down 10%) - many of whom commute to work in Dublin. People living in Dublin itself experienced a decline of 13%, in line with the national decline.

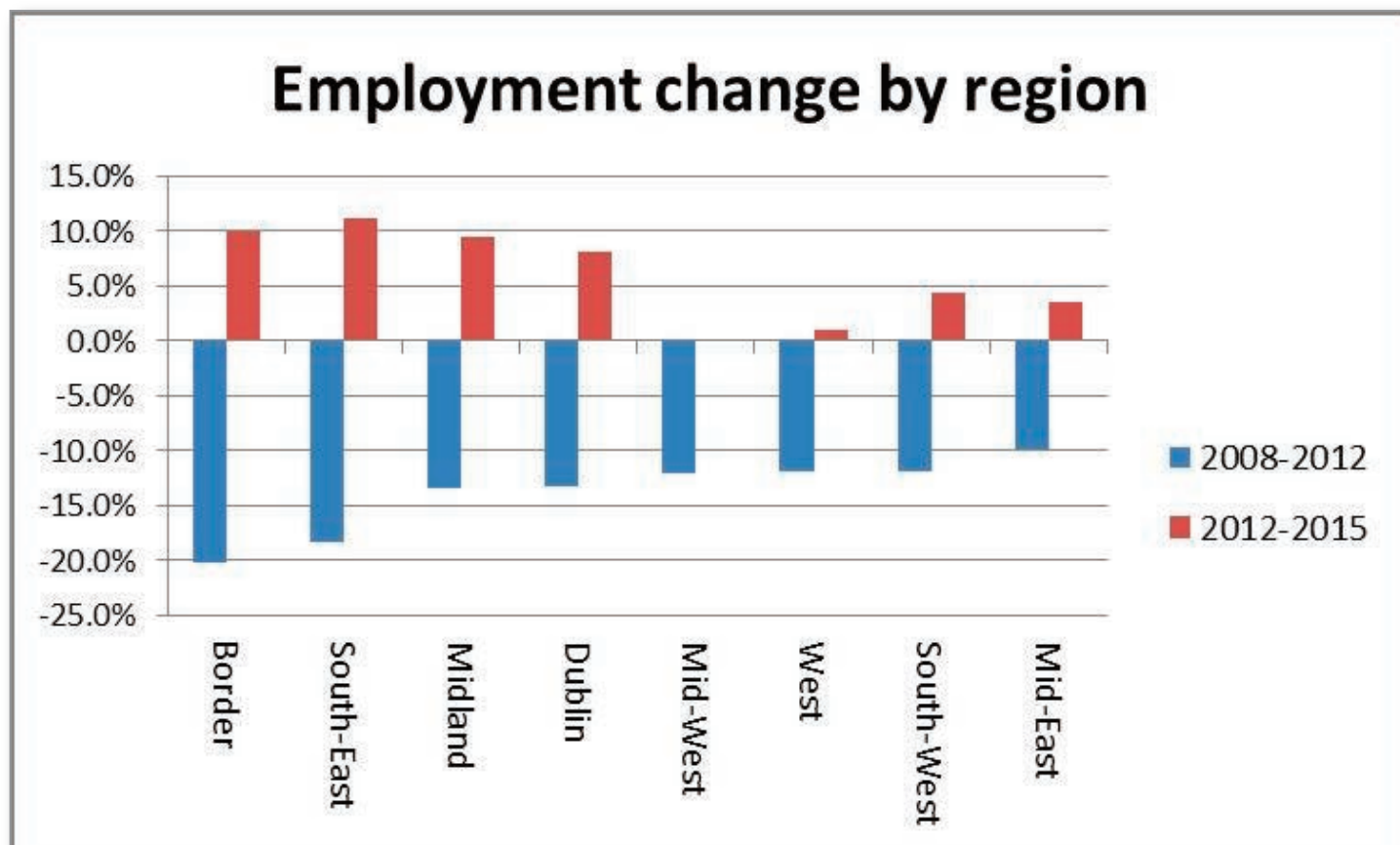
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<sup>2</sup> These are, predominantly, legal, accounting and engineering/architecture services.



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Figure 2: Employment Change by Region



Source: CSO

Figure 2 also indicates that, to date, the recovery in employment has tended to be most rapid in the regions worst affected by the downturn.

At the pre-crisis employment peak in 2007 there were 340,000 **young people** (aged under 25) in employment. However, by 2012 the number of young people employed had fallen by over half to 156,000. This reflected a fall in both the number of young adults in the population and in the employment rate for young people:

- The number of young adults in the population fell by more than 110,000 over this period, largely due to cohort effects (relating back to smaller numbers of births in the early 1990s) but also reflecting increased emigration and reduced inflows of young foreign workers.
- The employment rate for young people fell by a quarter, from 51% in 2007 to 28% in 2012, as young people who might have entered employment in more favourable times remained longer in education.

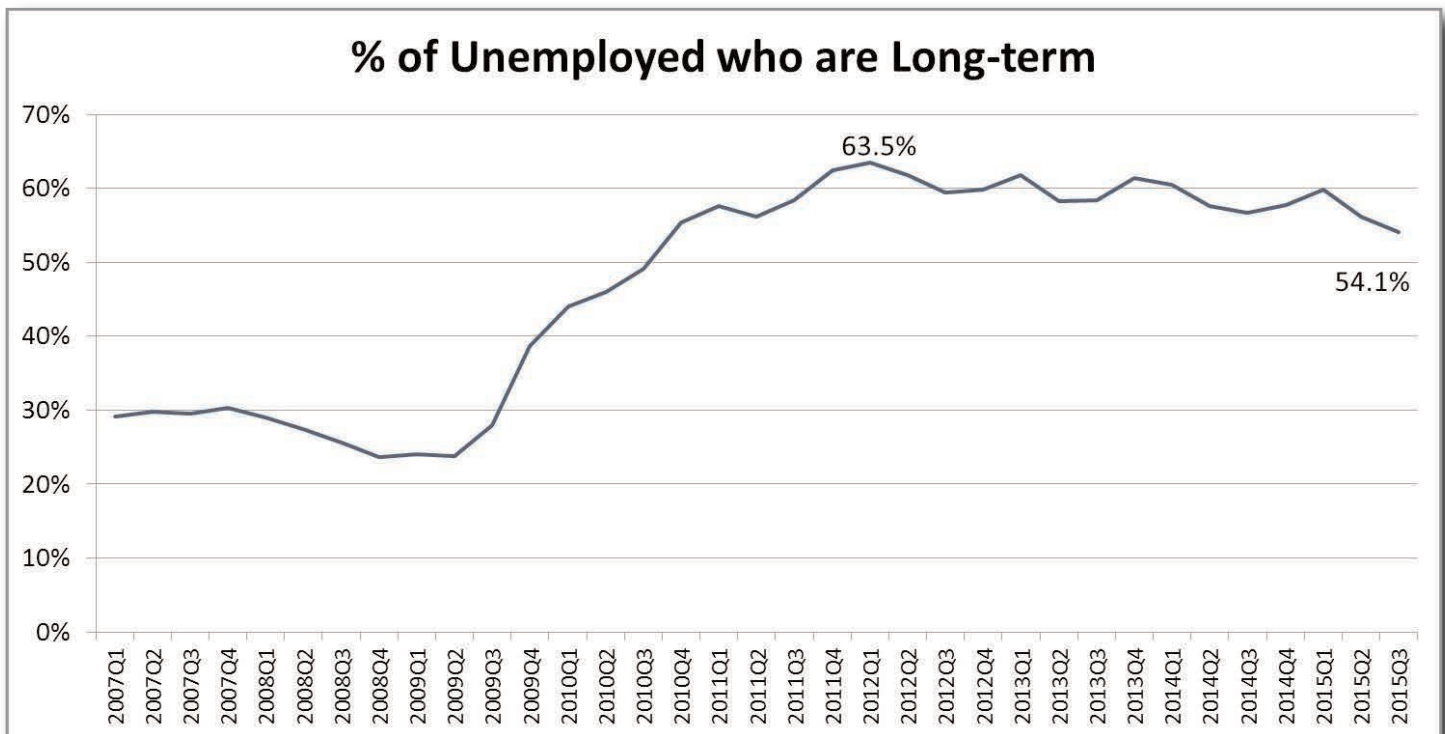
The employment rate for young people has stabilised at about 28% since 2012. With the young adult population continuing to decline, albeit more slowly than before, this has seen the actual number of young people in employment fall slightly, to an average of 150,000 over the last year. Within this total, over the last year the number of young Irish people in employment has risen by more than 4%; the number of young foreign workers in the country has continued to fall.

## Unemployment

Unemployment almost tripled from 107,000 in the second half of 2007 to 320,000 (seasonally adjusted) in early 2012, with the unemployment rate rising to a peak of over 15%. With the continuing recovery in the labour market, the unemployment rate had fallen to 8.8% by December 2015.

Initially, the large-scale job-losses in the recession led to an increase in short-term unemployment, so that the share of the long-term unemployed in total unemployment fell from 30% in 2007 to about 24% in early 2009. Thereafter, long-term unemployment rose steadily, to reach 204,000 (64% of all unemployment) in early 2012. To date, the recovery has seen long-term unemployment fall to 110,000 (54% of the total) as of Q3 2015. Relative to the labour force, the long-term unemployment rate, having risen from 1.4% in 2007 to a peak of 9.5% in early 2012, had fallen to 5% by Q3 2015.

**Figure 3: Percentage of Unemployed who are Long-term**



Source: CSO

# Pathways to Work

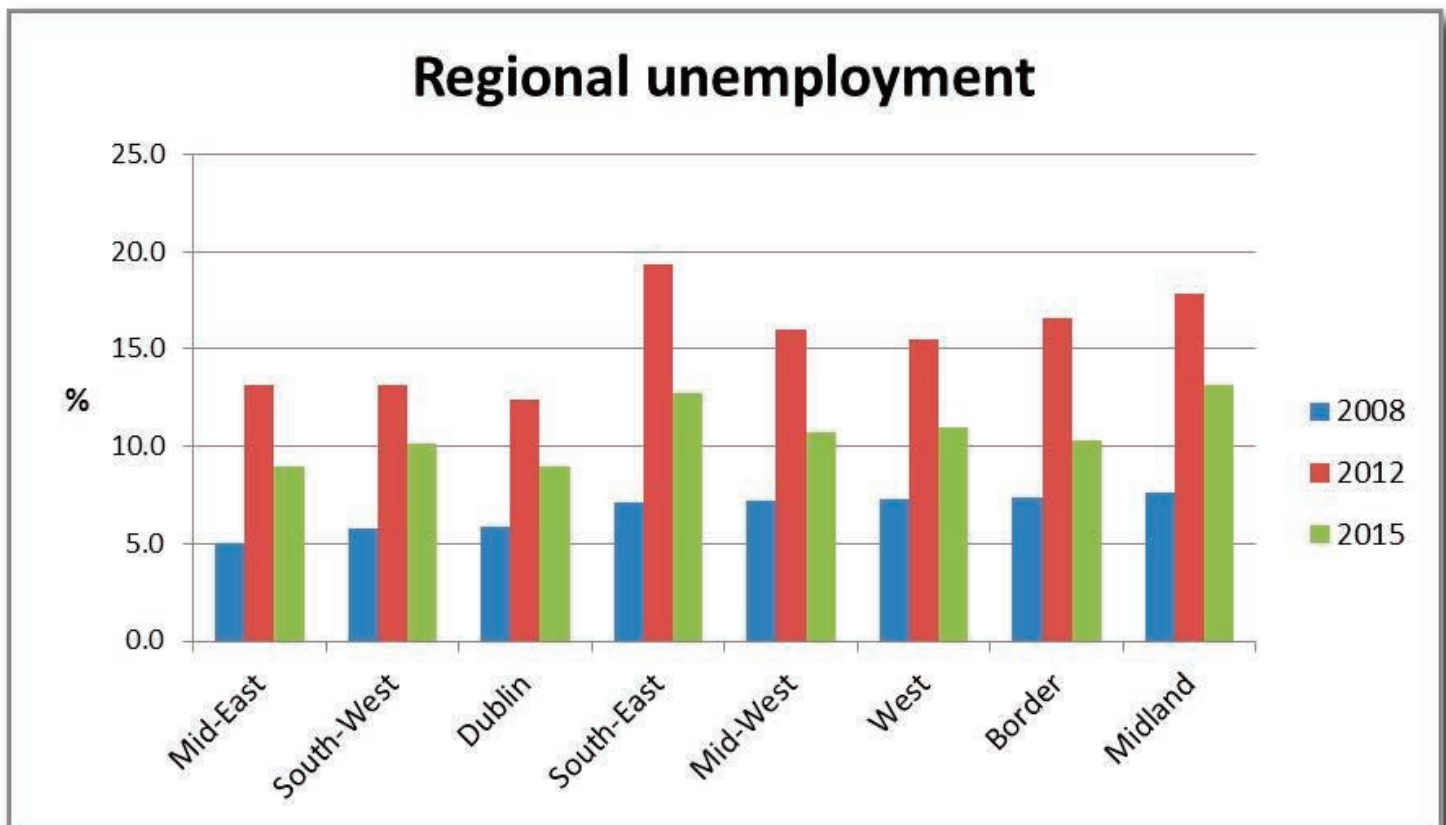
Over the course of the recession, the male unemployment rate rose from 5% to a peak of 18.2% in 2012, and had fallen back to 10% by December 2015; the corresponding rate for women also rose, albeit at a slower pace, from 4% to a peak of over 11%, and was 7.3% in December 2015.

The youth unemployment rate rose relatively rapidly in the recession, from 9% on average in 2007 to over 30% in 2012. It has fallen in line with the overall recovery, to an average of 24% in 2014 (and to 19.2% by December 2015).

Movements in the youth unemployment rate reflected both the rise in the numbers unemployed in the recession and the sharp fall in the size of the population and labour force in the younger age-groups. Despite their higher unemployment rates, the absolute number of young unemployed continues to be much less than that of unemployed prime-age workers because the latter are a much larger proportion of the workforce; for example, there were 41,000 young unemployed aged 15–24 on average in the first three quarters of 2015, but 57,000 aged 25–34 and 87,000 aged 35–54.

Regional differences in unemployment rates widened over the course of the recession, but have narrowed again as unemployment has fallen. In 2008 some 2.6 percentage points separated the lowest rate (in the Mid-East Region) from the region with the highest rates (Midlands). By 2012, the low-to-high gap had widened to 7 percentage points (between Dublin and the South-East); in 2015 the gap had narrowed to 4.2 percentage points (between Dublin and the Midlands).

**Figure 4: Regional Unemployment (2008, 2012, 2015)**



Source: CSO

## Live Register

The Live Register, a measure of recipients of jobseekers' and related welfare payments, has reflected the large increase and subsequent decrease in unemployment. The seasonally adjusted Live Register rose from 174,000 in December 2007 to a peak of close to 450,000 in late 2011; at the most recent count (December 2015) this had fallen to 328,600.

Long-term claimants now account for 45% of the Live Register, having increased from 90,000 in 2009 to a peak of over 200,000 in 2012 before falling back to 146,200 in December 2015.

There are a significant number of part-time and casual workers who are signing on the Live Register who are not unemployed; this group reached a peak of 90,000 in early 2013, and has fallen to 66,000 as of December 2015. The share of Live Registrants accounted for by part-time workers increased significantly during the recession rising from 11% in mid-2008 to 21% in 2012; this share has ranged between 19% and 21%, as the Live Register has fallen over the last three years. Overall, the number of people on partial jobseekers' payments has reflected the large increase and subsequent decrease in the number of part-time 'underemployed' over the course of the downturn, referred to earlier. (There are, additionally, a further 1,000 people on systematic short-time working arrangements who are not on the Live Register; the size of this group reached almost 19,000 in the initial phase of the recession in early 2009).

## Labour force

There were 2.19 million persons in the labour force in Q3 2015, representing a decrease of 114,000 on the level in Q3 2008.

A decline in the participation rate over the course of the recession from 64% in 2007 to 60% in 2012 kept the unemployment count from rising even further than it did.<sup>3</sup> Had the labour force participation rate remained unchanged at its 2007 level the unemployment rate would have been closer to 20% in mid-2012. The participation rate fell principally because of the number of younger people remaining in or returning to education. There was also some increase in the number of discouraged workers who are no longer in the labour force; this trend particularly affected men aged 60-64 years. The overall participation rate has been relatively stable at about 60% since 2012 – an on-going fall in participation among the young being offset by a recovery in participation among older males. Participation is now above its pre-recession peak in all age groups over 35 years.

Net outward migration flows also contributed to the reduction in the labour force over the course of the recession. Between April 2009 and April 2015 the CSO estimate that there was net outward migration of approximately 170,000 for the 15+ age group. Net outward migration for Irish nationals was approximately 145,000 for this period (this is a total figure as the CSO does not publish migration flows by nationality by age).

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<sup>3</sup> This is the participation rate for all persons aged 15 and over. For those at ages 15-64 the rate fell from 73% to 69%.

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There was also net out-migration of about 40,000 among other EU nationals, while the net *inflow* of persons from outside the EU was about 30,000. The pace of out-migration appears to have peaked in 2012-2013 for both Irish and non-Irish nationals, with a reduction in the outflows in 2014 and 2015.

For younger people, the impact of emigration compounded an underlying decline in the young adult population due to trends in births in the 1980s and 1990s. Combined with the decline in participation this has meant that the number of young people in the labour force has fallen by more than 180,000 since 2007, and they now make up just 9.3% of the labour force.

## Outlook

The recovery in the economy and the labour market to date has been more rapid than was generally expected at the depth of the recession in 2011-12.<sup>4</sup>

Updated economic forecasts suggest that this improvement will continue. Employment is expected to grow by 87,000 between 2015 and 2017.<sup>5</sup> Assuming an increase of about 53,000 in the labour force over this period, the unemployment rate would fall to below 8%. The expected trend in the unemployment rate would see the actual numbers unemployed fall from an average of about 200,000 in 2015 to 172,000 in 2017. With a continuing decline in the share of all unemployment that is long term the numbers of long term unemployed should fall from an average of about 120,000 in 2015 towards 90,000 on average in 2017.

Based on recent relationships between unemployment and the Live Register, these trends would see an average Live Register figure of 250,000 in 2017 (as compared with about 340,000 in 2014). The numbers on the Live Register for a year or more are likely to average about 110,000 in 2017.

In addition to the impact of rising employment, opportunities for jobseekers will continue to arise as a result of job turnover as firms look to replace workers who leave due to retirement, maternity leave etc. Inflows to employment are thus likely to average at least 280,000 annually over the next few years.

The occupational pattern of these emerging opportunities will continue to reflect sectoral developments in employment as the economy moves back to a “normal” structure after the boom-bust cycle of recent years. Because movement back towards “normality” will involve an increased role for domestic demand and for construction, this will imply that some of the largest increases in employment in the recovery should continue to come in the building, clerical and sales occupations that were most affected by the recession. This should reinforce the predominance of these types of occupation in inflows to employment.

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<sup>4</sup> In a DSP review completed in 2012, the then consensus forecasts were quoted as follows:- employment growth 2012-2015, 40,000 (likely out-turn >130,000); unemployment rate in 2015, 13% (likely out-turn 9.5%); actual numbers unemployed in 2015, 270,000 (likely out-turn approximately 200,000); number of long-term unemployed in 2015, 170,000 (likely out-turn <120,000).

<sup>5</sup> Updated forecasts are from Budget 2016 - Economic and Fiscal Outlook, Department of Finance

## Summary

After a prolonged and steep decline from 2008 to 2012, employment has now been growing again for three years. Unemployment has fallen substantially from a peak of over 15% to below 9%, and continues to fall. To date the fall in unemployment has been due in part to a reduction in the labour force arising from migration and falling participation.

Current forecasts are for employment to continue to grow over the next few years, with this growth favouring the sectors and occupations that were worst hit in the downturn. It seems likely that the recent fall in the size of the labour force will be reversed as out-migration diminishes and participation recovers. Even so, the unemployment rate should fall below 8% by 2017, with long-term unemployment also continuing to fall.

Even in the downturn, there has been a continuing flow of job opportunities arising in the economy. This flow has already recovered substantially from the depressed levels seen in 2009, and can be expected to continue at these higher levels. A large proportion of the opportunities that arise each year are in the kinds of jobs for which most of the unemployed are reasonably qualified – routine service jobs and skilled and unskilled manual jobs.

Ensuring that as many as possible of these jobs are taken up by unemployed people – particularly those from the Live Register – continues to be a major overarching objective of the activation policies set out in *Pathways to Work 2016-2020*.

## 3. Role of Labour Market Activation 2016 – 2020

During a time of **recession** the focus of activation policies is to help unemployed people stay in contact with the active labour market, maintain and update the currency of their work skills, and engage in meaningful occupational activity in the absence of paid open-labour market work. In addition, activation encompasses working with employers both to support them in creating employment opportunities and to ensure that such employment opportunities as are created are made available to people who are unemployed and, in particular, to those who are long-term unemployed.

The primary purpose of this activity is to

- help unemployed people compete for such job vacancies as arise and so reduce their individual duration of unemployment
- bias employer recruitment activity towards people who are unemployed *and* on the Live Register
- ensure that the labour market operates efficiently as the economy recovers, i.e. that employers are not constrained in offering employment opportunities, and that those people who are unemployed are ready, willing and capable of taking up employment and thus contributing to economic recovery.

During a time of **economic recovery** and prosperity, as the labour supply tightens, the primary purpose of activation policies is to

- minimise frictional unemployment, that is, help to minimise individual durations of joblessness and to ensure that vacancies can be filled as quickly as possible; and
- increase active labour market participation by people of a working age (including people with disabilities and lone parents) so as to help ensure a supply of labour at competitive rates and to minimise welfare dependency.

Accordingly, in addition to focusing on people who are registered as unemployed, activation during a period of economic growth and recovery may seek to encourage other 'non-active' cohorts to participate in the labour market. This may be by means of supportive services (training, job search assistance, financial incentives etc.), by means of increased conditionality in relation to welfare entitlement or by a combination of both.

In addition to these economic imperatives the type of services and supports provided as part of a 'labour market activation regime' are also an important enabler of *social/active inclusion*. In this sense the provision of job-search assistance, training options, and employment incentives is not designed solely to address labour market issues per se but is also informed by recognition of the role which occupational activity and financial independence plays in improving the quality of life of people with disadvantage(s) or with a restricted ability to take up employment without State assistance.

Ireland has been through a period when the primary, indeed overwhelming, focus of activation policy was informed by the deep recession of the period 2008 – 2013. Accordingly the policy, institutional and process changes introduced were designed to remedy identified deficiencies in the public employment and welfare services and to help unemployed jobseekers, those in receipt of a jobseeker payment and on the Live Register, find work.

Developments in the economy and in the labour market indicate that these changes have been having an impact: total unemployment has fallen from over 15% to about 8.8%, long-term unemployment has fallen from 205,000 (9.5%) to 109,800 (5%), youth unemployment has fallen from over 80,000 (33% at peak) to 37,000 (19.5%) and the proportion of adults living in jobless households has fallen from 16% to below 13%. Similarly the CSO measure of people who are 'seeking work but not immediately available' or who are 'available for but not seeking work' (known as the potential additional labour force) has fallen by 42% from 60,000 at its peak to just under 35,000.

Given this progress, and taking account of inputs during the consultative process, it is now appropriate to consider how activation approaches developed during a time of recession should be adapted for a time of recovery and indeed, during the course of this programme period, to activation as a tool of social/active inclusion in a period of prosperity.

Although we can identify the 'direction of travel', challenges still remain. We are not yet in a position of labour shortage. There are still a lot of people unemployed, many of whom have been unemployed a long time – three years or more. Youth unemployment, although much lower than before, is still far too high. In addition, the very significant organisation and process changes implemented over the past four years (arguably the most wide ranging and significant in the Irish public service during that time) need to be stabilised, consolidated and built upon. In this regard, the focus to date on process and service volumes needs to be augmented by a similar focus on service quality and outcomes over the next four years if the process changes implemented are to be sustained and deliver value, even as the operating environment changes from recession to recovery.

Accordingly, a two-pronged approach is proposed in this Pathways to Work strategy.

**Consolidation:** Consolidating the recent reforms to the Public Employment and Welfare Services and improving service provision to optimise outcomes for its clients. This means ensuring that the long-term and youth unemployed cohorts continue to be prioritised and adequately supported in the provision of activation services and also that the implementation and delivery of activation services is high quality, effective, efficient and sustainable.



Development: Gradually expanding access to activation services, as resources allow, to other non-employed people of working age. As employment increases, labour supply will become more constrained. It is therefore prudent to extend activation measures to cohorts that traditionally have not been seen as a client group for pro-active/outward looking employment services. Together with other initiatives such as the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for people with disabilities, the extension of activation measures will also contribute to increasing employment across working age households and promote the principles of active inclusion.

## **Consolidating Progress and Improving Quality of Activation Services**

The reform process within DSP has, to date, focused on process and organisation changes (e.g. Intreo), service/product innovation (e.g. client profiling, JobBridge and JobsPlus) and increasing case officer capacity (through redeployment of staff within DSP and through JobPath). This major reform programme was implemented at pace in response to the economic crisis. As a consequence, the work has been completed partly in advance of supporting IT, staff development, programme evaluation and employer relations development.

Consequently, an ongoing programme of change is required and significant work continues in relation to the development and implementation of

- new IT systems
- a programme of quantitative and qualitative studies to evaluate the impact of the changes made to date and to inform future policy
- a more professional approach to engaging with employers
- staff training and development in order to improve the quality of the service offered to both jobseekers and employers.

All of this work will need to continue if the progress made in recent years is to be maintained and built upon.

However, while these changes allowed DSP to increase the frequency of its engagement with some client cohorts and improve the consistency of the engagement process, feedback from staff, jobseekers, employers, and the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE) indicates that the quality of engagement between individual case officers and clients (including employers) is not as effective, or as consistent, as it could be.

Over the period from 2016 to 2020, the projected ongoing reduction in the level of unemployment offers an opportunity to improve the quality and consistency of service provision while enabling the supporting systems/staff development and employer relations changes to 'catch-up' with the organisation and process changes.

In order to **consolidate** the changes made to date the Department of Social Protection (DSP) proposes that over the course of the next four years it will:

- complete the establishment of a professional account management capability with employers.
- design, develop and implement an accredited professional development programme for its Case Officers.
- design, develop and implement a quality management approach to improve the quality of the service offered to all of its working age clients.
- complete the development and implementation of IT systems to
  - offer online services to jobseekers and employers
  - support staff to provide an efficient and effective service to their clients and
  - support the end-to-end reporting of performance across all elements of service provision.
- undertake a rolling programme of evaluation studies, including customer satisfaction surveys, and incorporate the lessons learnt into future process and policy changes.

These actions will serve to improve the quality of the service provided by Intreo to all clients – both those prioritised for support now and those prioritised in the future as the focus of activation shifts over the course of the period to 2020 from recession, to recovery, to active inclusion.

### **Expanding Scope and Coverage – Active Inclusion**

While the consolidation of progress already made is of critical importance, it is equally important to ‘stocktake’ both to ensure that the direction of change continues to be valid and to progressively adapt/extend the approach as appropriate taking account of economic and societal developments and feedback from stakeholders.

Accordingly, DSP conducted a survey of key external stakeholders to inform just such a stocktake. Feedback from the survey indicates a broad acceptance that activation policy should, in the immediate future, continue to focus on the provision of services to people who are registered unemployed.

In addition, notwithstanding that young unemployed people and long-term unemployed people continue to be ranked as highest priority, some respondents pointed out a need to include a broader cohort of working age non-employed adults in the activation space. This would include, for example (and in rough order of priority based on responses received):

- qualified adult dependants of DSP clients,
- part-time workers,
- people who are unemployed but are not in receipt of a welfare payment,
- people with a disability,
- ‘homemakers’,
- students,
- carers, when their caring responsibilities are complete.

# Pathways to Work

The extension of the Jobseeker Transition (JST) model developed for one-parent family recipients for at least some cohorts was also suggested as an approach that might be useful in activating these clients.

The identification by some respondents of the scope to expand the remit of State activation services resonates with

- the changing economic landscape;
- the Government targets to reduce unemployment to 6% or below by the end of 2020 and grow employment to circa 2.2 million people (which will require an increased level of labour market participation); and with
- a growing recognition, as evidenced in the recently published *Comprehensive Employment Strategy for people with disabilities*, of the need to prioritise 'active inclusion' as a policy objective during the economic recovery.

Accordingly this new strategy, *Pathways to Work 2016–2020*, includes specific actions to increase labour market participation and employment progression of people who are not currently active in the labour market and to apply the concept of active inclusion as a guiding principle – particularly in the period from 2018 – 2020.

## 4. Pathways to Work – Action Plan for 2016-2020

This section outlines the specific actions to be prioritised under the Pathways to Work Strategy for the years 2016 to 2020. It follows the same five-strand structure used in earlier Pathways strategies with actions grouped under the headings of: -

**Strand 1: Enhanced engagement with unemployed people of working age**

**Strand 2: Increase the employment focus of activation programmes and opportunities**

**Strand 3: Making work pay – Incentivise the take-up of opportunities**

**Strand 4: Incentivise employers to offer jobs and opportunities to unemployed people**

**Strand 5: Build organisation capability to deliver high quality services to unemployed people**

In addition, reflecting significant changes underway in the education sector and recognising the importance of education and training in developing the existing workforce and in giving unemployed people the skills, knowledge and competencies required for employment, a new strand is added -

**Strand 6: Building the workforce**

The ambition, vision and rationale for each of these strands and the associated actions are set out in the remainder of this document. Recalling the twin themes of this new strategy – consolidation and expansion of activation services – each action is also designated as part of the Consolidation [Q] or Expansion [E] themes, or as part of both [Q/E].

## Strand 1: Enhanced engagement with unemployed people of working age

### *Ambition:*

To improve the quality of the engagement between unemployed jobseekers and Intreo with a particular focus on helping long-term unemployed people into employment while also developing pathways through which all other unemployed people of working age can benefit from activation services and schemes.

### *Vision:*

Intreo, the Irish public employment services, should set the benchmark by which other public employment services are measured, not only with regard to the design and implementation of its businesses processes but also

- the quality of the clients' experience;
- its interaction with other agencies such as the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs);
- its relationship with employers;
- the resulting employment outcomes.

In addition, the activation service of Intreo will be extended beyond jobseekers to other working age groups. By the end of 2020 Intreo will be a pro-active public employment service for all citizens.

### *Rationale:*

The State has made significant progress in reforming labour market activation over the last several years. This is evidenced by the fact that of the 15 actions recommended in the 2013 OECD country review of Ireland, 14 were acknowledged in the 2015 review as being implemented or largely implemented (e.g. focus on schemes such as JobBridge which are empirically proven to work, redeployment of staff to case work, JobPath, reforms to OFP, etc.). Despite the progress made, client and staff feedback shows that the quality of the service offered is not consistent across all of Intreo and could be improved.

Although significantly reduced, long-term unemployment is still too high. It is notable that most long-term unemployed people are men over 35 years of age. The quality of the one-to-one case officer/client relationship, the responsiveness of the FET sector to Intreo client requirements, and the readiness of employers to give this cohort of jobseekers an opportunity to re-enter the workforce will all be key to improving employment outcomes for long-term unemployed people.

Looking past the immediate challenge it is also clear that as the economy recovers and employment increases, labour supply will become more constrained. It is therefore essential that activation plays its role in increasing the rate of labour market participation generally and providing access to the labour market for 'non-active' cohorts – including people with disabilities, carers, and lone parents.

### Case Study: Illuminata Media and the Youth Guarantee

“The Department of Social Protection/Intreo did a great job.”

As part of the Youth Guarantee and in association with the European Union Employment Service (EURES) the Department of Social Protection launched the ‘Experience Your Europe’ (EYE) programme.

Illuminata is a Dutch, next generation media company, specialising in online video, which is setting up a branch in Ireland. With the help of DSP and EURES, they wished to recruit 5 highly motivated trainees to undergo intensive training and then be placed in specific full-time roles in their Irish branch of the company.

Candidates from 18-24 years were selected from the live register for consideration.

Jennifer Feaster, Illuminata Media CEO says “The Department of Social Protection/Intreo did a great job in selecting the candidates, preparing them for interviews and co-ordinating this whole process so quickly”.

The five candidates finally selected after the interview stage travelled to Amsterdam, where they spent five weeks last summer in paid training with their sponsor. The hard work has been rewarded with three participants immediately landing fulltime jobs in the Dublin office and two more who will be offered positions after further training with the firm.

“We learnt so much from our training, with many speakers coming in from all different areas of the media,” says Lauren Noone one of the candidates. Her colleague Sarah Mullen also praises her EYE experience – “I’m now YouTube certified. It’s a great addition to my CV to make it stand out and now I have a job I really like.”

We must also recognise that employment and active inclusion in the labour market is the key determinant of individual and household welfare and that, in providing income support to a household, the welfare system must consider the potential labour market contribution of all working age adults in that household. Although policy responses to household joblessness and social exclusion must, by their nature, be multi-faceted the Intreo public employment service must play its role by extending its activation approach to all working age adults with a capacity to work.

The twin goals outlined – enhancing the quality of engagement with unemployed people and extending activation to other people with a capacity to work – are the focus of the following actions.

# Pathways to Work

## Actions:

1. Increase the frequency and quality of engagement with registered Jobseekers **[Q]**
  - 1.1 Increase from Q2 2016 the frequency of 1-2-1 engagement between Case Officers and unemployed people to at least one engagement per month for people already long-term unemployed or assessed at being at high risk of becoming long-term unemployed and at least once every two months for other jobseekers.
  - 1.2 Set targets from 2016 for employment progression (e.g. number of clients placed into work each month) and publish performance at an Intreo centre level.
  - 1.3 Implement from Q1 2016 outcome focused, extended and intensive engagement processes in Local Employment Service providers.
2. Expand pro-active engagement to other people of working age who are unemployed but not in receipt of a jobseeker payment. **[E]**
  - 2.1 Review by 2017 the Jobseeker Transition (JST) activation model and consider whether changes should be made to the structure and operation of the scheme both to improve its effectiveness in supporting lone parents to transition to employment and/or to extend it as an option for other categories of welfare recipient.
  - 2.2 Expand pro-active engagement to people who are working part-time but are in receipt of a welfare payment.
  - 2.3 Develop a pro-active engagement approach to support qualified adult dependants of job-seeker claimants in securing employment. For example, promote the registration of qualified spouses/partners as jobseekers in their own right.
  - 2.4 Promote the availability of existing services to 'voluntary engagers'/'walk-in' clients, including immigrants, who are not on the Live Register but wish to avail of employment services.
  - 2.5 Utilise inter-governmental public employment services such as EURES, and build relationships with public employment services in other countries to offer employment services to Irish emigrants seeking to return to work in Ireland.
  - 2.6 Offer Intreo clients access to the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme sponsored by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and to the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning.
  - 2.7 Incorporate, as appropriate, time spent as an adult recipient or beneficiary of other full-time welfare payments (e.g. as a one-parent family payment recipient, or as a qualified adult dependent of a primary claimant) when assessing eligibility for access to employment supports.
3. Extend and intensify the pro-active engagement approach for people with a disability. **[E]**
  - 3.1 Review the range of income supports (including in-work supports) for people with disabilities to ensure payments are aligned between schemes and, if appropriate, amend the payment structure to ensure that it supports a return to work for people who wish to do so.
  - 3.2 Expand the use of Intreo Centres to engage with people with disabilities and increase the number of Intreo staff trained in the provision of employment supports to people with disabilities.

- 3.3 Complete a review of the EmployAbility Service to increase utilisation of the service by people with disabilities and improve the level of employment placements.
- 3.4 Complete an analysis of existing databases of people in receipt of disability payments who may have a capacity to work and an interest in employment with a view to offering such people an opportunity to engage with the Intreo and/or the EmployAbility service.
- 3.5 Consider options to help recipients of Carer's Allowance to access activation services as they cease their caring role.



## **Strand 2: Increase the employment focus of activation programmes and opportunities.**

### *Ambition:*

To ensure targeted, responsive, locally and regionally adapted, and labour market-relevant opportunities in the areas of work-focused and work-based placements, education, and training are provided to jobseekers and, over time, to other 'non-active' cohorts.

### *Vision:*

For people who cannot access employment opportunities within a reasonable period of time, the State will provide a suite of employment, education and training programmes that are relevant to labour market needs, that are attractive to working age adults and that promote and assist in progression to paid, open labour market employment. People who are referred to such programmes will be supported while on the programmes in acquiring the experience, skills, confidence and motivation necessary to progress to open labour market employment.

### *Rationale:*

Activation policies vary between countries; however, according to the OECD, international evidence shows that job search and assistance is the most effective means of supporting recently unemployed people back into employment. Notwithstanding this evidence, the level of unemployment and the personal circumstances unique to each individual jobseeker mean that it is not possible for all jobseekers to secure and sustain work on the basis of job search assistance alone. For example, basic literacy, numeracy and 'soft' skills development have been identified as barriers to employment for some people, and a lack of structured work experience and work-related 'soft skills' also limits the employment opportunities for many young and long-term unemployed people. Many other jobseekers require assistance with gaining specific occupational skills relevant to the workplace.

Employment and education programmes play an important role therefore in enhancing individual employability. In particular, subsidised or incentivised employment schemes involving the private sector, work-focused public employment schemes and short-course specific skills training in a range of settings, or a mix of these approaches, have been shown to be effective. For other jobseekers, longer programmes such as an apprenticeship may be more appropriate.

Given that training and education make up a large proportion of activation measures in Ireland, a key objective of Pathways to Work 2016-2020 is to ensure employment programmes are work-focused while also ensuring an appropriate supply of labour market relevant, locally/regionally adaptive training and education. The significant reform programme underway in the Further Education and Training sector will be key to delivering this vision. In addition the following actions will be taken during the course of the programme.

### Case study: Diageo Ireland's Learning for Life programme

"Finding meaningful and sustainable solutions to youth unemployment."

The Diageo Ireland "Learning for Life" programme is continuing to equip young people with skills to access opportunities in the hospitality industry and with strong transferable work skills.

It offers young jobseekers a specially designed programme which includes training in HACCP, Bar and Food Skills, Personal Effectiveness and Communications, and Barista training followed by a 4 week work experience in a partner organisation in the tourism and hospitality industry. Many of the previous participants were successful in obtaining a three-month post programme placement, 70% of whom have retained full-time positions or returned to education.

Speaking about the programme Oliver Loomes, Country Director at Diageo Ireland, said "The programme is all about empowering young people and finding meaningful and sustainable solutions to youth unemployment. Participants will be equipped with skills they need to get a job in the hospitality and tourism industry and will then get the opportunity to embark on work experience in a partner organisation in the area. Diageo's iconic brand is at the heart of what is offered in the tourist driven Irish pub and hospitality sector and Learning for Life also comes as part of our commitment to support the hospitality sector."

The programme commenced in 2014 and is due to be expanded throughout Ireland in 2016. The 2016 programme partners are Diageo Ireland, the Guinness Storehouse, the Department of Social Protection, Placement Partners, and Education and Training Boards.

#### Actions:

4. Continue to implement the actions set out in the Youth Guarantee implementation plan and in addition: **[Q]**
  - 4.1 Increase the relative share of workplace-based interventions (Gateway, TÚS, Positive to Work etc.) for youth unemployed.
  - 4.2 Restructure by Q1 2016 the First Steps programme for young unemployed people to improve take-up by offering a higher level of support to jobseekers and employers.
  - 4.3 Ensure the frequency of engagement with all young unemployed people is a minimum of one case officer meeting per month.
  - 4.4 Implement the Defence Forces Skills for Life employment support programme.

# Pathways to Work

5. Review and revise the operation of the BTEA scheme to address the issues raised in the ESRI evaluation of the scheme and to improve employment progression outcomes. **[Q]**
  - 5.1 Implement in 2016 the recommendations of the Labour Market Council with regard to the operation of the BTEA scheme.
  - 5.2 Require, from autumn 2016, participants on multi-year programmes to meet at least once per year with their case officer and demonstrate progress on their chosen programme.
  - 5.3 Conduct, by mid-2016, a qualitative assessment of the BTEA scheme to determine reasons for comparatively low employment progression.
  - 5.4 Work with the education sector to increase the work experience/employment content of FET programmes and develop approaches to reduce the lock-in effect of FET participation (e.g. increase share of short duration or part-time programmes).
6. Focus Intreo referrals to employment and training/education programmes on securing paid employment outcomes for people who are most in need of support. **[Q/E]**
  - 6.1 Consider the extension to other programmes (e.g. LES/Jobs Clubs) of 'payment by outcomes' approaches as used in, or similar to those used in, Momentum and JobPath. **[Q]**
  - 6.2 Review the possibility of adapting the JobsPlus scheme to incentivise employers to recruit people unemployed more than three years. **[Q]**

### **Strand 3: Making work pay – Incentivise the take-up of opportunities.**

#### *Ambition:*

To ensure that unemployed people have a financial incentive to work and that the tax, welfare and employment policies and services of the State act to encourage the take-up of work.

#### *Vision:*

In Ireland, for anyone who is able to work, it should pay to be in work. There is a strong financial incentive, underpinned by work friendly welfare, employment and taxation policies, for unemployed people to take up employment opportunities.

#### *Rationale:*

One of the key functions of income support payments to people of working age is to act as a safety net in periods of unemployment. The payments also facilitate people devoting time to job search and, as part of the activation process, upskilling or retraining. It is important, however, that they do not become a barrier or disincentive to take up work – either because the payments are too high or because the in-work earnings, after tax, are too low.

The evidence in Ireland is that the welfare and taxation systems are strongly progressive in terms of their distributional impacts and do not present any significant level of disincentive to work. For example the ESRI, using its SWITCH model, has measured income support and analysed the financial incentive to work. The most recent analysis finds that four in five unemployed people have a replacement rate of 70% or less – in other words, they are receiving €70 or less in benefits for every €100 they could earn in employment. And, overwhelmingly, even those with a higher replacement rate still favoured work over welfare.

Nevertheless, it is important not to be complacent and, in particular, to take what steps we can to improve the financial benefit of working for those people and families faced with a high replacement rate.

Meanwhile, there is also a need to consider appropriate and well-functioning in-work supports to ensure progression to higher earnings as well as increased hours. Finally, to improve the quality and financial return of work and raise the living standards of individuals and households, these supports must be coupled with good employment conditions, an adequate minimum wage and appropriate tax policies.

## Case Study: Exitex and JobsPlus

"There were no drawbacks and it was as easy as it sounded."

When Exitex, a leading developer and supplier of weather proofing products, had some job openings in late 2013, it approached the Department of Social Protection (DSP) for some assistance. It all seemed too good to be true. "We thought it all sounded a bit too simple compared to the other employment schemes that we had availed of before," said Hannah Grey, HR director. "However, we soon realised there were no drawbacks and it was as easy as it sounded. Since then, it's been our main protocol for filling all job openings." Through the JobsPlus scheme, Exitex have since taken on ten employees, with most of them being unemployed for two years or more. For Hannah, JobsPlus can not only be used as a pool of potential job candidates, but the fact that it is subsidised is also a big incentive for use. "At the start it meant we could take people on without a major risk as we didn't know whether things would pick up or not". "We would recommend this initiative, and the support we've had from the DSP Intreo Office in Dundalk has been fantastic. We were one of the first companies in the area to use the scheme and the Department of Social Protection were so helpful. We would explain the job we had available and they would send CVs of people they felt were suitable to match the criteria."

The following actions are designed to this end.

### *Actions:*

7. Ensure that 'work pays' when people who are unemployed (including people with disabilities, carers and lone parents) transition from welfare to employment. **[Q/E]**
  - 7.1 Consider the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission and take action as appropriate to ensure that the statutory minimum wage is adjusted incrementally and in a sustainable way, to assist as many low-paid workers as possible without creating significant adverse consequences for employment or competitiveness. **[Q]**
  - 7.2 Consider and publish a response, by the end of Q1 2016, to the DJEI/University of Limerick study of the prevalence of low hour contracts in the Irish economy. **[Q]**
  - 7.3 Review and evaluate the range of in-work supports that are available to welfare recipients in term of their effectiveness in supporting the move from welfare to work. The evaluation will examine the Family Income Supplement, income disregards on jobseeker schemes, the Back to Work Family Dividend and other welfare supports which provide in-work support. **[Q]/[E]**
  - 7.4 Continue the roll-out of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), thereby removing the link between unemployment status and access to housing supports for those in receipt of rent assistance payments. **[Q]**
  - 7.5 Review and report by mid-2016 on the impact of the reduced jobseeker payment rates for jobseekers aged 18 – 25. **[Q]**

- 7.6 Develop a ready reckoner illustrating the financial benefits of employment for people with disabilities. **[E]**
- 7.7 Review and report on the findings of the “make work pay” group established as part of the DSP commitments in the CES. **[Q]/[E]**
- 7.8 Increase access to quality and affordable childcare for parents transitioning to employment. **[Q]/[E]**
- 8. Improve the application of the principle of rights and responsibilities in all engagements with jobseekers **[Q]**.
  - 8.1 Improve communication of rights and responsibilities in activation documents and Group Information sessions.
  - 8.2 Apply a requirement for Jobseekers to register with JobsIreland.ie when requested by their Case Officers.
- 9. Build awareness among jobseeker and other working age cohorts of available supports through increasing promotion and communication activity. **[Q/E]**
  - 9.1 Increase use of on-line/social media channels as a means of communicating with jobseekers.
  - 9.2 Partner with third-sector organisations (trade unions, INOU, CIB, IBEC, ISME, CIPD, the Wheel, NDA, DFI, MHI, etc.) to promote awareness of programmes and schemes.

## **Strand 4: Incentivising employers to offer jobs and opportunities to unemployed people.**

### *Ambition:*

To assist employers in recruiting unemployed working age clients of DSP and to incentivise employers to offer good quality and sustainable opportunities to unemployed people.

### *Vision:*

Employers will perceive the Intreo public employment service as a valued partner in their recruitment processes and will be positively disposed to offer employment opportunities to unemployed people. Those providing employer supports in other agencies (e.g. Local Enterprise Offices) will be well informed of DSP employer supports, and vice versa, to maximise the effectiveness of employer engagement activities for recruiting unemployed people, for sharing knowledge and expertise, and for learning from innovative approaches and projects.

### *Rationale:*

The ultimate objective of all of the actions in this programme is to get people into work. This cannot be done without employers – while the State, through Intreo, Solas and other agencies can provide the ‘Pathway’ we need employers to provide the ‘Work’. Throughout Europe it is now recognised that effective Public Employment Services need to be employer-centric.

This means that we must ensure that –

- jobseekers are prepared for and informed of the work opportunities that are, and will, become available;
- we help employers to overcome any reticence they may have in recruiting people with a ‘gap’ on their CV or other barriers to employment (such as a disability);
- it is easy for employers to expand their workforces;
- we provide a comprehensive range of recruitment services and supports to employers so that they in turn can provide good quality work opportunities;
- employers are aware of the services and supports that are available and know who to contact for further information;
- all State agencies working with employers do so in a collaborative manner to improve the overall service experience of employers so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

**Case Study: Omega Surveying Services Ltd.**

“JobBridge and JobsPlus worked for me. Let DSP Intreo advise you!”

Kevin Hollingsworth, a self-employed surveyor grew his business with support from Yvonne Elebert (an Intreo Case Officer in Coolock) and moved from being a self-employed person, working alone, to setting up a limited company.

With Yvonne’s help Kevin took on Christopher Duffy, a graduate surveyor with no experience, on a 9 month JobBridge internship. Subsequently Kevin decided to cut the internship short and employ Christopher on a full time basis using the JobsPlus scheme.

Kevin said “It is a big step to employ someone full time and that first step was facilitated by JobBridge. It gave me the confidence to grow my business. I am delighted with JobBridge and the service I received from DSP”.

Christopher is very happy with the outcome “While I had lots of experience in the construction industry I had none as a surveyor. As the job was in Dublin and I live in Monaghan it was a big decision but I needed a starting point and it all worked out in the end.”

Kevin has since employed a second graduate surveyor from the Live Register and has plans for even further expansion of his business.

These goals are the focus of the following actions.

*Actions:*

10. Facilitate and advance recruitment levels of DSP clients to Enterprise Agency assisted companies. **[Q]**
  - 10.1 Promote employer support services and schemes (e.g. JobsPlus, JobMatching, The Wage Subsidy Scheme) via EI and the IDA. **[Q]**
  - 10.2 Provide responsive job-matching services on request to EI and IDA-assisted employers. **[Q]**
  - 10.3 Participate in Regional Implementation Boards of the Action Plan for Jobs. **[Q]**
  - 10.4 Operate the joint governance structure overseeing the implementation of the protocol between DSP and DJEI agencies. **[Q]**
11. Complete by end 2016 the establishment of a professional account management capability with employers. **[Q/E]**
  - 11.1 Complete the recruitment and training programme for account managers.
  - 11.2 Agree and establish account management standards and co-ordination mechanisms with JobPath and LES providers.



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- 11.3 Consider and, if appropriate, develop a plan to introduce an IT system to support employer engagement – using CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software interoperable with other DSP IT systems and databases and standardise this across all those delivering activation services (LES, JobPath).
- 11.4 Establish a channel management approach to working with recruitment agencies with a view to helping recruitment agencies place jobseekers and other cohorts prioritised under PTW into employment.
- 11.5 Develop performance metrics to set targets and monitor and report on employer engagement activities.
12. Continue to develop the national jobs week each year with a view to doubling employer participation over the course of the plan period and incorporating a national recruitment conference as part of the programme. **[Q/E]**
13. Implement the new JobsIreland online recruitment service during 2016 and increase vacancies posted from c 100,000 per year to 200,000 per year over the course of this programme period (to end 2020). **[Q/E]**
14. Develop a methodology with the CSO for monitoring movements of new employees from the Live Register or other welfare status to IDA/enterprise supported agencies and other employers. **[Q]**
15. Develop and implement an engagement strategy between Intreo and employer representative groups (e.g. IBEC, CIF, IHF) and other employer bodies (e.g. BITC, FIF). **[Q/E]**
16. Continue to engage employers in offering training related work-placements to unemployed people of working age through Skillnets and other similar organisations including FIT. **[Q/E]**
17. Participate together with employers in the Regional Skills Fora being established by DES to improve labour market relevance of further education and training provision. **[Q]**
18. Identify the skills needs of employers, including through the use of labour market data and studies, to inform the development and delivery of programmes that will upskill and re-skill unemployed people to meet the requirements of the enterprise sector. **[Q]**
19. Strengthen the mechanisms and metrics for ensuring delivery on the skills needs identified at sectoral and occupational level and develop further the dissemination of labour market and skills data to higher education and further education and training institutions to respond to identified shortages. **[Q]**
20. Maximise the application of a social clause, subject to EU and national guidelines, in public procurement. **[Q/E]**

## **Strand 5: Build organisation capability to deliver enhanced services to people who are unemployed**

### *Ambition:*

To ensure that the resources of the State are organised and deployed to maximum effect in the delivery of high quality income, employment, and further education and training services to jobseekers and employers. To ensure that design, delivery and implementation of these services is informed by robust research and evaluation.

### *Vision:*

High quality, high performing, integrated employment and further education and training services delivered by a professional and motivated workforce. Overseen and advised by the Labour Market Council, the design of these services will be informed by research conducted in accordance with best international practice, and their operation will be monitored according to the highest standards of performance measurement and transparency.

### *Rationale:*

The delivery of a comprehensive range of employment and further education and training services is of necessity provided by thousands of staff across a range of State agencies and other organisations contracted by the State in the private and community and voluntary sectors. Moreover, the range of services provided today is complex, and to those not intimately familiar with it, a daunting and confusing menu of options some of which are mutually exclusive, others of which are mutually dependent. This range of options has evolved over a long period of time in response to particular requirements and, although complex, it has the benefit of being flexible and can be presented in a straightforward manner to clients. To do this, it must be managed and delivered in an integrated manner by professional staff, organised and co-ordinated in a coherent manner, and subject to continuous review and development informed by client feedback and evidence as to what is, and is not, working. In this regard it is important to invest in developing the capability of staff to engage with long-term unemployed people and other disadvantaged cohorts. Similarly, the FET sector must adjust its offerings to address the requirements of these cohorts while the supports and incentives offered to employers must also reflect the challenge faced by these cohorts in competing for employment opportunities.

Employment service priorities delivery must also be informed by regular feedback and expert interpretation of evaluation study findings to ensure the policy priorities remain relevant in an evolving labour market context. In this regard the Labour Market Council will continue to play an important role and will continue to oversee the implementation and evolution of the Government's Pathways to Work strategy.

The actions under this strand are designed to equip and support both the individuals within the service and the service as a whole with the skills, competencies, and information to work to the best effect in the interest of jobseekers and employers.

## Case Study: JenaValve - State Agencies Working Together

"Working together locally to match skills training with employers' needs."

In September 2014 IDA Ireland launched a new training programme in collaboration with Intreo/DSP and St Angela's College in Sligo, to train 20 unemployed persons to be high technology stitching technologists for a new client, JenaValve.

JenaValve is a German medical technology business that manufacture artificial heart valves from animal tissue. With the support of the IDA and Intreo it has opened a new facility in Sligo. The course in specialised stitching arose from a fine stitching module on St. Angela College's Home Economics course.

Subsequently all candidates successfully completed the course and were employed by JenaValve. In addition, the JenaValve project has given rise to significant interest from other multinational companies in the same sector. IDA Ireland is seeking to capitalise on this and it may result in further investments with the same skill requirement in the future.

### Actions:

21. Improve the quality of service provision. **[Q]**
  - 21.1 Design, develop and implement by Q3 2016 an accredited professional development programme for Intreo Case Officers.
  - 21.2 Design, develop and implement, over the course of the programme period, a quality management approach to improve the quality of the service offered to Intreo clients.
  - 21.3 Commission and publish regular customer satisfaction surveys.
  - 21.4 Refine the range of published statistics relating to Intreo centre performance.
  - 21.5 Maintain the physical Intreo Centre environment to best practice standards.
22. Complete the development and implementation of IT systems. **[Q/E]**
  - 22.1 Deliver, by mid 2016, an enhanced range of online services to jobseekers and employers (MyWelfare.ie and JobsIreland.ie).
  - 22.2 Complete the development and implementation of a new end-to-end case management system integrated with DSP's core welfare systems.
  - 22.3 Develop and implement the new Programme Learner and Support System (PLSS) in the FET sector and build and operate interfaces between DSP and FET systems to ensure referrals are managed and tracked appropriately.
23. Use evidence to inform the development, implementation and reform of activation services and programmes. **[Q]**
  - 23.1 Deliver over the lifetime of this strategy a rolling programme of impact evaluation studies with the support of the Labour Market Council.

- 23.2 Establish in 2016 a cross-departmental working group between DSP, DES, SOLAS, DJEI, HEA, CSO and Revenue to expand the scope and application of the jobseeker Jobseekers Longitudinal Dataset (JLD).
- 23.3 Promote research activity on the JLD among academic institutions.
- 23.4 Publish, under the guidance of LMC, an annual review of Pathways to Work progress and priorities.
- 24. Promote exchange of best practice between service providers. **[Q/E]**
  - 24.1 Organise and run an annual service providers conference for all service providers in the public employment services sector.
  - 24.2 Publish from Q3 2016 performance statistics relating to the cost and performance of contracted providers including JobPath, LES/JobClubs.
  - 24.3 Refine the contract model with LES to apply learnings from Intreo and JobPath roll-out.
  - 24.4 Undertake a review by end 2016 of the operation of LES and JobClubs to assess performance and value for money.

## Strand 6: Building Workforce Skills

### *Ambition:*

To ensure the strategic reforms underway in the education and training sectors are closely aligned with the needs of employers, workers and jobseekers.

### *Vision:*

To maintain and develop the high level of educational attainment in Ireland, to lead in the continuous development of the labour force and to ensure that jobseekers are provided with the right opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to find and sustain employment.

### *Rationale:*

There has been a large scale and comprehensive reform programme at all levels of the education and training system in Ireland since the publication of the original Pathways to Work framework in 2012. This has included substantial reforms in curriculum, assessment, and teacher training, in structural reforms in further education and training, in the development of a new apprenticeship programme and in a greater focus on institutional performance and labour market links in higher education. On a range of key international education indicators, Ireland performs very well and most of our young people are strongly positioned to move into employment and contribute to economic growth. For example, Ireland is already well ahead of European targets for 2020 on early school leaving, tertiary education attainment, early childhood education and post primary achievement in reading and science. Nonetheless, performance is weaker for the broader adult population and engagement with lifelong learning in Ireland is low by European standards.

In addition, as the profile of unemployed people becomes more concentrated in the lower skilled and harder to reach cohorts and as activation initiatives are broadened to include other groups, it will become increasingly important to build strong interagency links between the Intreo service and the education sector in order ensure the best outcomes for jobseekers.

Accordingly, as well as having a strong role in framing and delivering actions and initiatives set out in Pathways to Work 2016-2020 and the annual Action Plan for Jobs, the further and higher education and training sectors are focused on delivering a range of reforms and actions in their respective sectoral strategies. As the economy improves, the FET sector will face new challenges and will need to be responsible and flexible in meeting changing needs.

### The Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy (May 2014)

The Strategy contains over 50 individual actions that are tracked through a detailed implementation plan developed by SOLAS. These are arranged around the five key goals of building skills for the economy, supporting active inclusion, raising the quality of FET provision, improving how provision is planned and funded and improving the overall standing of FET in Ireland.

### Higher Education Reform

In Higher Education, a major reform programme is underway to improve the quality of the experience of students, to improve the outcomes from the system and to enhance accountability and efficient use of resources. This includes the implementation of a Systems Performance Framework which sets out for the first time national objectives in seven key areas, including human capital development. These objectives underpin a new strategic dialogue process between the Higher Education Authority and the higher education institutions, the agreement of performance compacts and the introduction of performance funding.

### Apprenticeships

The content of existing apprenticeships is being modernised, with new curricula being rolled out in five of the most popular trades and a curriculum review underway in the remaining trades. A new Apprenticeship Council has been established that is prioritising the development of 25 new apprenticeships in areas such as ICT, financial services, transport and tourism and hospitality, to be put in place during 2016.

In addition to these existing work-streams the Department of Education and Skills is also in the process of developing a new **National Skills Strategy** for the period to 2025 that it intends to publish in early 2016. The new strategy will set out a framework for how Ireland can continue to develop relevant skills and ensure that our supply of skills is activated and effectively used. The strategy should aim to identify and align the needs of industry with the skills of potential employees. The development of the new Strategy will cover aspects of both the further education and training and the higher education sectors, meaning that there must be strategic and operational alignment between both sectors.

## **Case Studies: Springboard - Supporting New Careers**

“Definitely worth the time. Go for it! Go Springboard.”

“I was having trouble finding a job online where I felt confident with my current skill set in comparison to the requirements outlined. I had many interviews over the summer and always had the feeling that I wasn't able for the job and received many 'we will call you' type responses. I then heard of Springboard through one of the job sites and found out about the courses they provide. I recently had graduated from Multimedia in CIT and found out they had a course in Cloud and Mobile Software Development which sounded like an exciting step forward for me. The course was amazing. We were given lectures, projects and exams just like any other course and our lecturers were always there to help. Fast forward 9 months and I've been approached by companies already just after finishing as opposed to me contacting them. This course was the huge turnaround from struggling to find a job to struggling to keep count of offers! Definitely worth the time. Go for it! Go Springboard.”

### **Joe Winfield – CIT, Higher Diploma in Science in Cloud and Mobile Software Development**

"Jump start your career in a new direction with Springboard."

Ian, who graduated from the University of Limerick with an MA in Entrepreneurship, previously worked for a traffic data collection company until losing his job. After graduating from Springboard he started his own software company, Idaso, in 2013. He now employs five people in Mullingar and has a further thirteen developers in Hungary whom he intends to relocate to Ireland in the future. "Springboard courses provide an excellent and easily accessible means to jumpstart your career in a new direction".

### **Ian Kerr, UL, MA in Entrepreneurship and owner of Idaso**

These frameworks will build on existing structures, including the newly created Regional Skills Fora. In determining the correct balance of resources and effort between training and upskilling for different target groups, the new structures will need strong engagement at national and regional level from the education and training sector and the Department of Social Protection.

The introduction of a performance funding model for the FET sector will be critical to ensuring that resources are allocated effectively, targeting optimal outcomes and increasing efficiency. It will also assist in building and delivering a culture of evaluation and performance in the sector. Better integration of the evaluation framework into all programmes will ultimately lead to more effective and efficient planning of FET provision.

It is also important that wider sources of data are used to support effective planning and decision making, including projections for future demands.

The following actions, which have particular relevance to the PTW agenda, are designed to reflect the large reform agenda underway in the education sector and to ensure that strong linkages are built between the education sector, employers and other agencies such as Intreo, Enterprise Ireland, the EGFSN and LEOs in order to ensure that these reforms serve the needs of the labour market effectively.

*Actions:*

25. Review and evaluate performance of existing FET provision **[Q]**
  - 25.1 Complete evaluations of the current rounds of Springboard and Momentum.
  - 25.2 Complete the review of the Post Leaving Certificate Programme in early 2016.
  - 25.3 Undertake reviews of FET programmes in accordance with the schedule set out in the FET Strategy 2014-19.
  - 25.4 Seek to incorporate the JLD into FET programme reviews and examine the potential to enhance the JLD through the inclusion of data on participation in education and training programmes and overall educational attainment.
  - 25.5 Complete an examination of the barriers to participation in FET programmes.
26. Target provision to meet needs of jobseekers and employers. **[Q]/[E]**
  - 26.1 Develop the new apprenticeship programmes system on an on-going basis to cover the broad range of identified skills needed for the economy to ensure the system is resourced to adapt to the changing needs of the workplace and employers over the coming decade. **[Q]**
  - 26.2 Roll out further rounds of Springboard and Momentum taking account of evaluation outcomes and analysis of need. **[Q]**
  - 26.3 Agree annual targets with Intreo for participation of priority cohorts (long term unemployed jobseekers, people with disabilities, young unemployed people etc.) in education and training programmes. **[Q/E]**
  - 26.4 Review conditionality of income support for Springboard participants to facilitate flexibility and innovation in the programme and review the waiting period for intensive ICT conversion courses. **[Q]**
  - 26.5 Examine supports required to facilitate greater participation by people with disabilities, single parents, and qualified adults, and individuals in need of greater support in education and training. **[E]**



# Pathways to Work

27. Ensure that FET sector and Intreo employment services deliver and operate services in an aligned manner. **[Q]**
  - 27.1 Produce annual FET Service Plans, with engagement from the Department of Social Protection and Intreo offices. **[Q]**
  - 27.2 Complete the development and rollout of the Programme Learner and Support System (PLSS) including application interfaces with Intreo systems. **[Q]**
  - 27.3 Complete the review of inter-agency protocols between Intreo offices and DES/ETBs and disseminate the results. **[Q]**
  - 27.4 Establish standing local arrangements to monitor the operation of the inter-agency protocols. **[Q]**
  - 27.5 Ensure DSP participation in the Regional Skills Fora. **[Q]**

## 5. Pathways to Work - Governance and Targets

Performance under Pathways to Work will be managed and monitored by the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs and also by the Labour Market Council.

As with the existing Pathways strategy these bodies will track performance against key milestones and metrics.

The milestones will be based on the delivery of the 86 individual actions set out under the six strands above allocated against responsible bodies and for delivery by due dates as set out in Table 2 below.

In addition a set of 10 metrics have been developed to measure inputs, outputs and outcomes. The metrics to be used in 2016 are set out in Table 1 and will act as indicators of progress in addressing the challenges and delivering on the vision outlined in Sections One to Five above. Performance against these metrics will be published on a quarterly basis on the Department of Social Protection website and the metrics themselves will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to reflect the key challenges and issues being addressed under this strategy each year.

# Pathways to Work

**Table 1: Pathways To Work Measures/Metrics and 2016 Targets**

Measure/Metric	2016 Target Performance
Move 50,000 long term unemployed at the start of 2016 into employment by the end of 2020	20,000
Reduce the persistence rate (the rate at which short term unemployed people become long term unemployed) by 25% from 27% to 20% by the end of 2018	24%
Increase the exit rate of people on the Live Register for two years or more by 30% (to 52%) by the end of 2018	44%
Fully implement the JobPath programme and refer at least 60,000 long term unemployed people to JobPath in 2016	60,000 referrals to JobPath
Double the number of employers signed up to the Employment and Youth Activation Charter	300 new employers
Reduce the ratio between youth and overall unemployment from 2.2:1 to less than 2:1 by the end of 2017 (EU average = 2.2:1)	2.1:1
Increase the engagement frequency for one-to-one meetings for Low PEX and LTU clients from 6 meetings per year to 12 meetings per year	12
Target an aggregate progression to employment rate across activation programmes of 40% (measured 6 months after completion of programme)	40%
Complete the rollout of HAP and support an additional 10,000 households on the scheme by the end of 2016	Y/E 2015 + 10,000 (DSP/DCELG)
Progressively increase the statutory target of employing people with a disability in the public sector from 3% towards 6% by 2024	4%

Table 2: Actions, Owners, and Due Dates

Action No.	Action	Owner	Due Date
1.	Increase the frequency and quality of engagement with registered Jobseekers. [Q]		
1.1	Increase the frequency of 1-2-1 engagement between Case Officers and unemployed people to at least one engagement per month for people already long-term unemployed or assessed at being at high risk of becoming long-term unemployed and at least once every two months for other jobseekers.	DSP	Q1 2016
1.2	Set targets from 2016 for employment progression (e.g. number of clients placed into work each month) and publish performance at an Intreo centre level.	DSP	Q4 2016
1.3	Implement outcome focused, extended and intensive engagement processes in Local Employment Service providers.	DSP	Q1 2016
2.	Expand pro-active engagement to other people of working age who are unemployed but not in receipt of a jobseeker payment. [E]		
2.1	Review by 2017 the Jobseeker Transition Activation (JST) model and consider whether changes should be made to the structure and operation of the scheme both to improve its effectiveness in supporting lone parents to transition to employment and/or to extend it as an option for other categories of welfare recipient.	DSP	Q1 2017
2.2	Expand pro-active engagement to people who are working part-time but are in receipt of a welfare payment.	DSP	Q1 2017
2.3	Develop a pro-active engagement approach to support qualified adult dependants of job-seeker claimants in securing employment. For example, promote the registration of qualified spouses/ partners as jobseekers in their own right.	DSP	Q2 2017
2.4	Promote the availability of services to 'voluntary engagers'/'walk-in' clients, including immigrants, not on the Live Register, but wishing to avail of employment and activation services.	DSP	Ongoing
2.5	Utilise inter-governmental public employment services such as EURES, and build relationships with public employment services in other countries to offer employment services to Irish emigrants working abroad.	DSP	Ongoing

# Pathways to Work

Action No.	Action	Owner	Due Date
2.6	Offer Intreo clients access to the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme sponsored by the Department of Environment Community and Local Government and the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning.	DSP/DCELG	Q1 2016
2.7.	Incorporate, as appropriate, time spent as an adult recipient or beneficiary of other full-time welfare payments (e.g. as a one-parent family payment recipient, or as a qualified adult dependent of a primary claimant) when assessing eligibility for access to employment supports. [E]	DSP	Q2 2016
3.	Extend and intensify the pro-active engagement approach for people with a disability. [E]		
3.1	Review the range of income supports (including in-work supports) for people with disabilities to ensure payments are aligned between schemes and, if appropriate, amend the payment structure to ensure that it supports a return to work for people who wish to do so.	DSP	Q2 2017
3.2	Expand the use of Intreo Centres to engage with people with disabilities and increase the number of Intreo staff trained in the provision of employment supports to people with disabilities.	DSP	Q2 2016
3.3	Complete a review of the EmployAbility Service to increase utilisation of the service by people with disabilities and improve the level of employment placements.	DSP	Q2 2016
3.4	Complete an analysis of existing databases of people in receipt of disability payments who may have a capacity to work and an interest in employment with a view to offering such people an opportunity to engage with the Intreo and/or the EmployAbility service.	DSP	Q1 2016
3.5	Consider options to allow recipients of Carer's Allowance to access activation services as they cease their caring role.	DSP	Q2 2017
4.	Continue to implement the actions set out in the Youth Guarantee Implementation plan and in addition: [Q]		

Action No.	Action	Owner	Due Date
4.1	Increase the relative share of workplace-based interventions (Gateway, TÚS, Positive to Work etc.) for youth unemployed.	DSP	Ongoing
4.2	Restructure the First Steps programme for young unemployed people to improve the take-up by offering a higher level of support to jobseekers and employers.	DSP	Q1 2016
4.3	Ensure the frequency of engagement with all young unemployed people is a minimum of one case officer meeting per month.	DSP	Ongoing
4.4	Implement the Defence Forces Skills for Life employment support programme.	DOD	Q3 2016
5.	Review and revise the operation of the BTEA scheme to address the issues raised in the ESRI evaluation of the scheme and to improve employment progression outcomes. [Q]		
5.1	Implement the recommendations of the Labour Market Council with regard to the operation of the BTEA scheme.	DSP/DES	Q2 2016
5.2	Require participants of multi-year programmes to meet on an ongoing basis with their case officer and demonstrate progress on their chosen programme.	DSP	Q3 2016
5.3	Conduct a qualitative assessment of the BTEA scheme to determine reasons for comparatively low employment progression.	DSP/DES	Q2 2016
5.4	Work with the education sector to increase the work experience/employment content of FET programmes and to develop approaches to reduce the lock-in effect of FET participation (e.g. increase share of short duration or part-time programmes).	DSP/DES	Ongoing
6.	Focus Intreo referrals to employment and training/education programmes on securing paid employment outcomes for people who are most in need of support. [Q]/[E]		
6.1	Consider the extension to other programmes (e.g. LES/Jobs Clubs) of 'payment by outcomes' approaches as used, or similar to those used, in Momentum and JobPath. [Q]	DSP/DES	Q4 2016
6.2	Review the possibility of adapting the JobsPlus scheme to incentivise employers to recruit people unemployed more than three years. [Q]	DSP/DPER	Q3 2016

# Pathways to Work

Action No.	Action	Owner	Due Date
7.	Ensure that 'work pays' when people who are unemployed transition from welfare to employment. [Q]/[E]		
7.1	Consider the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission and take action as appropriate to ensure that the statutory minimum wage is adjusted incrementally and in a sustainable way, to assist as many low-paid workers as possible without creating significant adverse consequences for employment or competitiveness. [Q]	DJEI	Ongoing
7.2	Consider and publish a response to the DJEI/University of Limerick study of the prevalence of low hour contracts in the Irish economy. [Q]	DJEI	Q1 2016
7.3	Review and evaluate the range of in-work supports that are available to welfare recipients in terms of their effectiveness in supporting the move from welfare to work. The review will examine the Family Income Supplement, income disregards on jobseeker schemes, the Back to Work Family Dividend and other welfare supports which provide in-work support. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q4 2016
7.4	Continue the roll-out of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), thereby removing the link between unemployment status and access to housing supports for those in receipt of rent assistance payments. [Q]	DCELG/DSP	Q2 2016
7.5	Review and report on the impact of the reduced jobseeker payment rates for jobseekers aged 18 – 25. [Q]	DSP	Q2 2016
7.6	Develop a ready reckoner illustrating the financial benefits of employment for people with disabilities. [E]	DSP	Q4 2016
7.7	Review and report on the findings of the "make work pay" group established as part of the DSP commitments in the CES. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q4 2016
7.8	Increase access to quality and affordable childcare for parents transitioning to employment. [Q]/[E]	DCYA	Q4 2017
8.	Improve the application of the principle of rights and responsibilities in all engagements with jobseekers. [Q]		
8.1	Improve communication of rights and responsibilities in activation documents and Group Information sessions. [Q]	DSP	Ongoing

Action No.	Action	Owner	Due Date
8.2	Apply a requirement for Jobseekers to register their CVs (anonymised if desired) to JobsIreland when requested by their Case Officers. [Q]	DSP	Q2 2016
9.	Build jobseeker and other working age cohorts awareness of available supports through increasing marketing and communication activity. [Q]/[E]		
9.1	Increase use of on-line/social media channels as a means of communicating with jobseekers. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Ongoing
9.2	Partner with third-sector organisations (trade unions, INOU, CIB, IBEC, ISME, CIPD, NDA, DFI, MHI etc.) to promote awareness of programmes and schemes. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Ongoing
10.	Facilitate and advance recruitment levels from the Live Register to Enterprise Agency assisted companies. [Q]		
10.1	Promote employer support services and schemes (e.g. JobsPlus, JobMatching) via EI and the IDA. [Q]	DJEI/DSP	Ongoing
10.2	Provide responsive job-matching services on request to EI and IDA sponsored employers. [Q]	DSP	Ongoing
10.3	Participate in Regional Implementation Boards of the Action Plan for Jobs. [Q]	DSP	Ongoing
10.4	Operate the joint governance structure overseeing the implementation of the protocol between DSP and DJEI agencies. [Q]	DJEI/DSP	Ongoing
11.	Complete the establishment of a professional account management capability with employers. [Q]/[E]		
11.1	Complete the recruitment and training programme for account managers. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q4 2016
11.2	Agree and establish account management standards and co-ordination mechanisms with JobPath and LES providers. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q1 2016
11.3	Consider and, if appropriate, develop a plan to introduce an IT system to support employer engagement – using CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software interoperable with other DSP IT systems and databases and standardise this across all those delivering activation services (LES, JobPath). [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q4 2016



# Pathways to Work

Action No.	Action	Owner	Due Date
11.4	Establish a channel management approach to working with recruitment agencies with a view to helping recruitment agencies place jobseekers and other cohorts prioritised under PTW into employment. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q2 2016
11.5	Develop performance metrics to set targets and monitor and report on employer engagement activities. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q1 2018
12.	Continue to develop the national jobs week each year with a view to doubling employer participation over the course of the plan period and incorporating a national recruitment conference as part of the programme. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q4 2016
13.	Implement the new JobsIreland online recruitment service during 2016 and increase vacancies posted from c 100,000 per year to 200,000 per year over the course of this programme period (to end 2020). [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q2 2016
14.	Develop a methodology with the CSO for monitoring movements of new employees from the Live Register or other welfare status to enterprise-assisted companies and other employers. [Q]	DSP/DJEI/CSO	Q2 2016
15.	Develop and implement an engagement strategy for employer representative groups (e.g. IBEC, CIF, IHF) and other employer bodies (e.g. BITC, FIF). [Q]/[E]	DSP	Ongoing
16.	Continue to work to engage employers in offering training related work-placements to unemployed jobseekers through Skillnets and similar organisations such as FIT. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Ongoing
17.	Participate together with employers in Regional Skills Fora being established by DES to improve labour market relevance of further education and training provision. [Q]	DSP/DES	Ongoing
18.	Identify the skills needs of employers, including through the use of labour market data and studies, to inform the development and delivery of programmes that will upskill and re-skill unemployed people to meet the requirements of the enterprise sector. [Q]	DJEI/DES/DSP	Ongoing
19.	Strengthen the mechanisms and metrics for ensuring delivery on the skills needs identified at sectoral and occupational level and develop further the dissemination of labour market and skills data to higher education and further education and training institutions to respond to identified shortages. [Q]/[E]	DJEI/DES/DSP	Ongoing

Action No.	Action	Owner	Due Date
20.	Maximise the application of a social clause, subject to EU and national guidelines, in public procurement. [Q/E]	DPER	Ongoing
21.	Improve the quality of service provision. [Q]		
21.1	Design, develop and implement an accredited professional development programme for Intreo Case Officers.	DSP	Q4 2016
21.2	Design, develop and implement a quality management approach to improve the quality of the service offered to Intreo clients.	DSP	Q4 2017
21.3	Commission and publish regular customer satisfaction surveys.	DSP	Q1 2016
21.4	Refine and expand the range of published statistics relating to Intreo centre performance.	DSP	Ongoing
21.5	Maintain the physical Intreo Centre environment to best practice standards.	DSP	Ongoing
22.	Complete the development and implementation of IT systems. [Q]/[E]		
22.1	Deliver an expanded range of online services to jobseekers and employers (MyWelfare.ie and JobsIreland.ie). [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q3 2016
22.2	Complete the development and implementation of a new end-to-end case management system integrated with DSP's core welfare systems. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q2 2016
22.3	Develop and implement a new Programme Learner and Support System in the FET sector and build and operate interfaces between DSP and FET systems to ensure that referrals are managed and tracked appropriately. [Q]/[E]	SOLAS	Q4 2016
23.	Use evidence to inform the development of service and policy initiatives. [Q]		
23.1	Deliver a rolling programme of impact evaluation studies with the support of the Labour Market Council.	DSP	Ongoing
23.2	Establish a cross-departmental working group between DSP, DES, SOLAS, DJEI, HEA, CSO and Revenue to expand the scope and application of the Jobseekers Longitudinal Dataset (JLD).	DSP/DES/DJEI	Q2 2016
23.3	Promote research activity on the JLD among academic institutions.	DSP	Ongoing

# Pathways to Work

Action No.	Action	Owner	Due Date
23.4	Publish under the guidance of LMC an annual review of Pathways to Work progress and priorities.	DSP	Q4 2016
24.	Promote exchange of best practice between service providers. [Q]/[E]		
24.1	Organise and run an annual service providers conference for all service providers in the public employment services sector. [Q]/[E]	DSP	Q3 2016
24.2	Publish from Q3 2016 performance statistics relating to the cost and performance of contracted providers including JobPath, LES/JobClubs. [Q]	DSP/DPER	Ongoing
24.3	Refine the contract model with LES to apply learnings from Intreo and JobPath roll-out. [Q]	DSP	Q4 2016
24.4	Undertake a review of the operation of LES and JobClubs to assess performance and value for money. [Q]	DSP	Q4 2016
25.	Review and evaluate the performance of existing FET provision [Q]	DES	
25.1	Complete evaluations of the current rounds of Springboard and Momentum.	SOLAS/HEA/DSP	Ongoing
25.2	Complete the review of the Post Leaving Certificate Programme.	SOLAS	Q2 2016
25.3	Undertake reviews of FET programmes in accordance with the schedule set out in the FET Strategy 2014-19.	SOLAS	Ongoing
25.4	Seek to incorporate the JLD into FET programme reviews and examine the potential to enhance the JLD through the inclusion of data on participation in education and training programmes and overall educational attainment.	DES/SOLAS/DSP	Q1 2017
25.5	Complete an examination of the barriers to participation in FET programmes	SOLAS	Q3 2016
26.	Target provision to meet needs of jobseekers and employers [Q]/[E]	DES	
26.1	Develop the new apprenticeship system on an on-going basis to cover the broad range of skills needed for the economy to ensure the system is resourced to adapt to the changing needs of the workplace and employers over the coming decade. [Q]	DES	Ongoing
26.2	Roll out further rounds of Springboard and Momentum taking account of evaluation outcomes and analysis of need. [Q]	DES/DSP	Q4 2016

Action No.	Action	Owner	Due Date
26.3	Agree annual targets with Intreo for participation of priority cohorts (long term unemployed jobseekers, people with disabilities, young unemployed people etc.) in education and training programmes [Q/E]	DES/ETBs	Ongoing
26.4	Review conditionality of income support for Springboard participants to facilitate flexibility and innovation in the programme and review the waiting period for intensive ICT conversion courses. [Q]	DES/DSP	Q2 2016
26.5	Examine supports required to facilitate greater participation by people with disabilities, single parents, qualified adults, and individuals in need of greater support in education and training [E]	DES/DSP	Q4 2016
27.	Ensure that FET sector and Intreo employment services deliver and operate services in an aligned manner. [Q]		
27.1	Produce annual FET Service Plans, with engagement from the Department of Social Protection and Intreo offices [Q]	SOLAS	Ongoing
27.2	Complete the development and rollout of the Programme Learner and Support System (PLSS) including application interfaces with Intreo systems. [Q]		
27.3	Complete the review of inter-agency protocols between INTREO offices and DSP and disseminate the results. [Q]	DES/DSP	Q2 2016
27.4	Establish standing local arrangements to monitor the operation of the inter-agency protocols. [Q]	DES/DSP	Q2 2016
27.5	Ensure DSP participation in the Regional Skills Fora. [Q]	DES/DSP	Ongoing

## Appendix 1: Progress during 2012 - 2015

Over the period 2012 – 2015 the PtW programme identified over 170 specific actions to be taken to improve employment outcomes for people who are unemployed. Among the key actions delivered were:

- The merger of Community Welfare Services, Department of Social Protection jobseeker income support services and the former FÁS employment services to create one integrated service - Intreo.
- The development and implementation of new service processes including jobseeker profiling, group information sessions and case management of jobseekers. Jobseekers now engage with case officers within a period of two weeks from first registration compared to a waiting time of over three months previously.
- The introduction of a ‘social contract’ of rights and responsibilities between the State and each jobseeker in the form of a Record of Mutual Commitments backed up by the introduction of penalty rates of payment for jobseekers who fail to engage with the Intreo service.
- The development and implementation of new Jobseeker services including JobBridge, JobsPlus and Gateway.
- The redesign of payment claims processes to reduce average processing times for jobseeker claims from over three weeks to three days.
- Expansion of capacity on programmes such as TÚS, Community Employment and Back to Education.
- The development and launch of Springboard and Momentum to provide upskilling and training opportunities to people who are unemployed.
- An increase in the number of staff employed on front-line case officer duties to reduce average case-loads from over 1:800 to just under 1:500.
- The development and contracting of a new ‘payment by results’ contracted model of employment service delivery - JobPath - to further reduce this caseload ratio to 1:200.
- A package of measures to ensure that people are better off at work than on welfare:
  - The introduction of the Back to Work Family Dividend - a new ‘in-work’ support;
  - Promotion of the Family Income Supplement scheme;
  - Revision of some jobseeker and other payment rates to improve work incentives.
- The reform of the further education and training sector through the establishment of the new Education and Training Boards, which have taken over and streamlined the Vocational Education Colleges and the training side of FÁS.
- The creation of an Employer Services Division within the Department of Social Protection with a brief to build linkages with employers and promote their recruitment of unemployed jobseekers.

- The establishment of a National Jobs Week in autumn each year and the implementation of Feeding Ireland's Future, Positive To Work, Skills to Work and Taking Care of Business programmes with Irish employers.
- The development and rollout of an implementation plan to give effect to the EU recommendation on a Youth Guarantee.
- The development and launch of an Employers Engagement and Youth Activation charter - whereby employers commit to working with the State to recruit jobseekers from the Live Register.
- The establishment of an expert advisory council of labour market and industry experts – The Labour Market Council.

