



**Labour Force Survey Results: Deeper, Faster and Better than Expected Jobs
Recovery is Proof Positive that Proactive Government Policy is Working
Work will Continue with New and Innovative Ways to Help More Back to Work –
including ‘Cognitive CVs’ and ‘Returnships’**

Tuesday, 21 May, 2019

The Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty, T.D., today pointed to the latest CSO Labour Force Survey Report and the trends in long-term unemployment to emphasise that the rapid drop in the long term numbers were a result of effective and pro-active policies to tackle joblessness rather than simply an organic drop due to the ongoing recovery in the economy.

Today’s report shows that the long-term unemployment rate at 1.7% **represents a full 8 percentage points drop from the peak rate of 9.7% in early 2012**. To underline the scale of the recovery, as a share of total unemployment, long term unemployment represented **61.9%** of total unemployment in 2012 and now it is just **35.7%**.

Despite many predictions that improvements in the long-term jobless figures would take much longer to recover, Minister Doherty stressed that the impact of her Department’s activation programmes had ensured that the long term unemployment rate was now at its lowest in 15 years.

Minister Doherty emphasised:

“This improvement in the long-term unemployment figures is no accident. By employing a mixture of complementary supports through providers such as Local Employment Services, Job Clubs and JobPath service providers - alongside our own revamped Intreo service - we have provided an intensive activation service tailored to the needs of long-term unemployed jobseekers. This key shift in approach has allowed my Department to move from the role of a passive income provider of social welfare supports for working age people to becoming an organisation that is focused on helping and supporting unemployed people to actively find work.

“The impact of this approach is seen in the reduction in long-term unemployment over the last few years – it has been faster and more pronounced in Ireland than anywhere else. Furthermore, the reduction in unemployment since 2012 is completely the reverse of what happened following the recession in the 1980s and 1990s - when it took six years of sustained growth before the reduction in long term unemployment even started to kick in.

“While today’s figures are welcome, we can’t be complacent. Our work with unemployed people will continue to focus on getting even more people into the workforce and we will need to continue to innovate. I am currently looking at options to help long-term unemployed people in the over-50 age bracket for whom conventional approaches in the past have not worked. This will include piloting a new ‘cognitive CV’ approach which will capture the soft skills and hidden talents of jobseekers and present them to prospective employers. I am also looking at new and novel ways to help women - who have been absent from the workplace for an extended period usually for family reasons – to develop the skills and confidence to get back to work by piloting a ‘returnships’ initiative.”

Today’s Labour Force Survey Report shows:

- The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 5.6% to 5.0% over the quarter – down from the peak of 16% in early 2012.
- Employment increased by 81,200 or 3.7% in the year to Q1 2019, bringing total employment to a record 2,301,900 persons. This continues the upward trend since Q3 2012 and is the twenty-seventh consecutive quarter where employment has grown on an annual basis.
- Long-term unemployment decreased by 9,300 (-18.5%), bringing total long-term unemployment to 40,900.
- The youth unemployment rate is now 10.9% - down from 33.4% in 2012.
- The labour force is also at its highest level in the quarterly series, at 2,432,900.

ENDS

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection