



FOR INTERNAL USE

European Network of Public Employment Services

PES Capacity Questionnaire
Country Factsheet

Ireland

Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
2019



Written by ICON INSTITUT Public Sector GmbH
October 2019

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INSTITUT

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
Directorate B — Employment
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The European Network of Public Employment Services was created following a Decision of the European Parliament and Council in June 2014¹. Its objective is to reinforce PES capacity, effectiveness and efficiency. This activity has been developed within the work programme of the European PES Network. For further information: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESNetwork>.

This activity has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation 'EaSI' (2014-2020). For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>.

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¹ DECISION No 573/2014/EU

About the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Name of PES	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
PES Website address	www.welfare.ie
PES contact person and email address	Barry Kennedy barry.kennedy@welfare.ie

1. Background

1.1. Status of the national PES

The PES operates as a division of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) with the head of the PES reporting directly to the Deputy Secretary of the department. The DEASP is one of fifteen government departments and the social partners are represented in its Labour Market Council, which has representatives from employers, trade unions, industry leaders and labour market specialists. Its main task is to advise and monitor implementation of the Irish Labour Market Strategy. The head office coordinates and supports the work of the Divisions and offers technical, administrative and financial support for the regional offices and defines guidelines for the local units.

The mission of the DEASP is 'To promote active participation in society through the provision of income supports, employment services and other services.'

1.2. Geographical organisation

The PES is organised according to the following structure:

Level	Description
National	<i>Head office</i> – within the DEASP and coordinates and supports the work of the Divisions
Regional	<i>Divisional offices (10)</i> - located in Buncrana, Carrick-on-Shannon, Dublin, Dundalk, Letterkenny, Longford, Roscommon, Sligo, Tubbercurry and Waterford
Local	<i>Intreo Centres (64)</i> – spread throughout the country. They provide jobseekers with access to employment and income support services in one location and through one registration process. Employers can also use the <i>Intreo</i> Service and seek information from Case Officers on pro-employment schemes and financial incentives which support them in the recruitment of additional employees.

1.3. Relationships and cooperation with other organisations

The PES operates and cooperates with a range of organisations and with different types of relationships, the principal ones being as follows:

- The social partners are represented in its Labour Market Council within the DEASP comprising representatives from employers, trade unions, industry leaders and labour market specialists.
- The PES outsources some services including provision of ALMP (Active Labour Market Policies) measures to a range of organisations in the public and private sectors.

1.4. Key PES responsibilities





The key activities and tasks and the PES responsibilities within them are set out in the table below:

Activity/Task	PES Responsibility
Implementation of services of individualised assistance (e.g. intensive counselling and guidance, job-search assistance) and follow-up for unemployed people provided as part of a planned path towards durable (re-)employment (cf. services as in Eurostat LMP database Category 1.1.2)	Fully responsible
Implementation of ALMP measures (any measures within Eurostat LMP database Cats. 2-7) financed by national funds or ESF (the European Social Fund) co-funding.	Fully responsible
Administration of national unemployment benefit (UB) scheme (handling of UB claims, payments, financial planning and reporting, etc.)	Fully responsible
Administration of social types of allowances (e.g. child allowances for UB recipients), please specify each allowance separately:	The DEASP is fully responsible for all social welfare schemes, insurance based and means-tested.
Administration of benefits for people with disabilities or handicapped people, please specify which exact group(s) are covered:	Fully responsible – for all illness-related schemes, insurance based and means-tested
Approval of layoffs by employers. Please specify if this concerns specific conditions or situation only:	Not responsible
Licensing and supervising private employment agencies (PrES), please specify whether this covers PrES, temporary work agencies, or another type of service provision by private companies:	Not responsible - for licensing or supervising (other than when hired as subcontractors)
Notification of apprenticeship places and placement of apprenticeship candidates	Not responsible
Careers advice and guidance for young people still in education	Partly responsible – this is a recently-launched initiative and full details are not yet available.
Acting as Managing Authority for the EU's Economic and Social Fund ESF	Not responsible
Managing training centre for jobseekers (who are an integral part of the PES).	Not responsible
Issuing of work permits for third country nationals (e.g. dealing with applications, approving and issuing, keeping records, reporting, etc.)	Not responsible
Other – please specify: Eligible International Protection Seeking Applicants in 2018	With effect from 30 June 2018, and in compliance with the EU Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU), International Protection Seeking Applicants (IPAs) who are awaiting a decision

Activity/Task	PES Responsibility
	<p>on their asylum-seeking application for 9 months or longer, can apply for broader access to the labour market than they applied for under their earlier interim arrangement. DEASP Case Officers can provide a walk-in employment support service to eligible IPAs as currently applies to all jobseekers not in activation.</p> <p>Prior to the introduction of this initiative, access to both employment/self-employment for this cohort was very restricted and had to be within the limits of the employment permit scheme and self-employment.</p>

1.5. PES good practices

Examples of good practice in the Irish PES identified by the European Network of PES are listed below:

EN		Promising PES Practice - The Certificate in Professional Practice in Employability Services	2018
EN		PES Practice: Improving employer relations services (the Employer Relations Strategy 2017-20)	2018
EN		PES Practice: JobPath - Activation Service	2017
EN		PES Practice: Profiling of jobseekers using statistical methods	2016

Source: EC DG EMPL, PES Practices: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1206&langId=en>.

2. Annual expenditure

Total PES expenditure fell by EUR 1 684 million or 35% between 2013 and 2018, reaching EUR 3 123.2 million by the end of the period. Within this total, expenditure on all types of benefit fell by 41% and expenditure on ALMPs also decreased by 17%.

The principal source of funding for PES activities is the Government Budget, with additional funds from Social Security Contributions and the ESF.

Table 1. Annual expenditure summary (EUR million)

Expenditure category	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total PES	4 807.3	4 519.8	4 347.9	3 817.4	3 364.4	3 123.2
All types of benefits	3 669.4	3 343.7	3 129.7	2 808.1	2 443.9	2 179.9
ALMPs	992.4	1 035.4	1 077.8	1 009.3	920.5	828.5
Staff costs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Staff training costs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Budget intended for other institutions	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other expenditure	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Annual PES Benchmarking Data Collection.

3. Human resources

The total number of Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) staff who provide income support for a wide range of schemes (e.g. pensions, carers, child benefit, etc.), decreased over the period 2016 to 2018, reaching 5 965 FTE (Full Time Equivalent). Within this total, the proportion of PES staff exclusively servicing jobseekers fell between 2018 and 2019 to 293 FTE. The proportion of staff exclusively servicing employers has remained stable at 40 FTE in 2019.

The DEASP offices are located across the country and therefore include a broader all-inclusive Department staff numbers as well as PES staff. The Department also engages external service providers (e.g. Local Employment Services – LES) where LES Mediators and Jobpath Personal Advisors augment the internal PES employment support services by engaging with jobseekers referred to them by PES Case Officers.

For 2019, the DEASP is required to operate within a staff ceiling figure and a commensurate administrative staffing budget, which may involve reductions in staff numbers.

Overall staff turnover in 2019 was 1%.

Table 2. Staffing summary (FTE, as at 30 April each year)

Staff category	2016	2017	2018*	2019**
Total PES staff	6 246	6 190	N/A	5 965
Of which (absolute and in % of total PES staff):				
Exclusively servicing jobseekers	N/A	N/A	363*	293*
% exclusively servicing jobseekers	N/A	N/A	N/A	5%
Exclusively servicing employers	N/A	40	N/A	40
% exclusively servicing employers	N/A	1%	N/A	1%
Staff turnover (for all reasons – figure for calendar year)	3%	2%	N/A	1%

*Figures refer to PES staff, i.e. Case Officers plus the activation support teams (ASTs) who are solely engaged in PES work.

**Figures are as at 31 March 2019 and include staff working in 11 divisions. It includes staff who provide payments services to clients.

Source: Responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire.

4. Registered unemployed

The number of registered unemployed jobseekers fell by 198 885 or 47% between 2013 and 2018, ending the period at 220 065. There are no comparable figures for participants in ALMPs.

Table 3. Registered unemployed jobseekers and participants in ALMPs (average monthly stock each year)

Client Group	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Registered unemployed jobseekers*	418 950	383 779	343 558	302 661	258 580	220 065
Participants in ALMPs**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*The number of people registered with the PES, who are available for the labour market and who are, or should be, looking for a job, excluding those on any active labour market policy (ALMP) measure.

** The number of people participating in ALMP measures in the following categories (according to the LMP database): Training (Category 2); Job rotation and job sharing (Category 4.3); Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation (Category 5); and Direct job creation (Category 6).

Source: Annual PES Benchlearning Data Collection.

5. Job Vacancies

The monthly average of job vacancies notified to the PES fell by 1 998 or 22% between 2013 and 2018, reaching 6 827 in 2018. There is no available information on vacancies notified to the PES that were filled.

The share of the job finders who found their present job with PES involvement at any point has decreased between 2013 and 2018 ending the period at 2.2%.

Table 4. PES Job vacancies

Vacancy measure	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Vacancies notified to the PES (monthly average inflow) *	8 825	9 282	10 313	10 419	5 946	6 827
Vacancies notified to the PES that were filled (monthly average outflow at the end of the month) *	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vacancies notified to the PES that were filled within 60 days of notification (monthly average outflow at end of month) *	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Share of the formerly unemployed who stated in Eurostat's Labour Force Survey that the PES was involved at any moment in finding their present job (proxy for vacancies filled with PES assistance) **	5.8%	5.9%	5.1%	3.6%	2.8%	2.2%

Source:

* Annual PES Benchlearning Data Collection.

** European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS).

6. Active labour market policies (ALMPs)

One new employment measure was introduced in 2018 (see Table 5). One amendment was made to existing measures last year (see Table 6).

Table 5. New ALMPs introduced in 2018

Intervention name	Target group(s)	Type
<p>Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS)</p> <p>Introduced on 1st October 2018, it provides work experience placements in the private, voluntary and community sectors.</p>	<p>Jobseekers aged between 18 and 24 who have been out of work and in receipt of a qualifying payment for at least 12 months or if unemployed for less than 12 months, jobseekers considered by a Case Officer to face a significant barrier to employment.</p> <p>The YESS replaces the First Steps programme which ceased operation in December 2017. The YESS places a strong emphasis on Learning and development and is specifically designed to provide workplace experience opportunities to young jobseekers while on a work placement. Clearly defined learning and development outcomes for each placement will also be identified. A Learning and Development Plan will be agreed between all parties at the outset of the placement and the case officer will monitor the progress of same. The placement host will nominate an individual to support and mentor the participant during the placement.</p> <p>Participants will be required to work 24 hours per week, and placements will be for 3 months initially, with an option to extend this further to 6 months. Participants will receive a minimum payment of €229.20 per week. If a participant's primary payment already exceeds €229.20, they will retain their underlying entitlement and receive an additional allowance of €22.50 per week.</p>	4

* Classification of ALMPs according to the EU LMP database: Training (Category 2); Employment incentives (including job rotation and job sharing) (Category 4); Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation (Category 5); Direct job creation (Category 6); and Start-up incentives (Category 7).

Source: Responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire

Table 6. ALMPs modified in 2018

Intervention name	Target groups	Type	Main modifications
<p>TÚS Programme</p> <p>An activation measure designed to provide work placement opportunities for people who are unemployed.</p>	<p>People in receipt of a Jobseeker's Allowance for at least 12 months.</p>	4	<p>While the majority of people referred for TÚS are selected on a random basis, since May 2015 20% of available places can also be filled by assisted/self-referral, however from 2nd February 2018 this percentage of assisted/self-referrals has increased from 20% to 30% effective.</p> <p>The 30% allocation is available to the Case Officers, but it is up to each individual Division/Case Officer whether they use it.</p>

* Classification of ALMPs according to the EU LMP database: Training (Category 2); Employment incentives (including job rotation and job sharing) (Category 4); Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation (Category 5); Direct job creation (Category 6); and Start-up incentives (Category 7).

Source: Responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire.

Profiling clients

While clients are not categorised by sub-groups, all jobseekers are profiled each time they present themselves at an *Intreo* office to make a jobseeker claim. A statistical profiling tool estimates the probability of the jobseeker exiting unemployment to find other employment within 12 months. The model generates a Probability of Exit (PEX) score. The PEX scores facilitate segmentation of those who join the register of unemployed into Low, Medium and High-risk cohorts and engagement with those who need most employment service type supports as early as possible.

The second profile model was developed in 2013. This model also produces a score, which reflects a client's proximity to the Labour Market. As in the 'PEX' model, the score facilitates segmentation into Low, Medium and High-risk cohorts. Although the model uses fewer characteristics, it performs almost as well as the PEX model in terms of predictive power.

The following table shows the types of ALMPs that are primarily used for each of the client sub-groups listed in the table.

Table 7. Types of ALMP for specific client groups

Type of ALMPs \ Target group	Young people (aged under 25)	Long-term unemployed	Older workers	Disabled	Refugees*
2: Training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4: Employment incentives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5: Supported employment and rehabilitation				✓	✓
6: Direct job creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	
7: Start-up incentives	✓	✓	✓		

*Applies only to those with a temporary or permanent resident permit (status).

Source: Responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire.

7. Main strategic targets for 2018

Table 8 lists the main strategic targets set by the PES in 2018 for all clients and for sub-groups. The first column describes the indicators used, while the second column contains the actual targets set.

Table 8. Targets for all clients in 2018

Indicator, including target group and time frame where applicable	Target(s) set for 2018
The 2016-2020 Pathways to Work strategy, which is the current policy statement on labour market activation, sets out a wide range of key priority actions to be addressed, clearly defined goals and objectives. Performance in relation to these targets is tracked and monitored against key milestones and metrics. This document informs the DEASP Strategy Statement which contains strategic objectives actions, targets and timeframes for achieving these.	
Move 50,000 long-term unemployed at the start of 2016 into employment by the end of 2020	Target 20,000, 20,577 achieved

Indicator, including target group and time frame where applicable	Target(s) set for 2018
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	Target 20%, 23% achieved
Increase the exit rate of people on the Live Register for two years or more by 30% (to 52%) by the end of 2018	Target 52%, 44.4% achieved
Fully implement the JobPath programme and refer at least 60,000 long-term unemployed people to JobPath in 2018	Target 60,000, 72,998 achieved
Target an aggregate progression to employment rate across activation programmes of 40% (measured 6 months after completion of programme)	Target 40%
Increase the engagement frequency for 1:1 meeting for Low PEX and LTU (long-term unemployed) clients from 6 meetings per year to 12 meetings per year.	Target 12, 12 achieved

Source: Responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire.

Supporting Youth

Implementing the Youth Guarantee

Responsibilities for the Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee (YG) was introduced on 28 January 2014 and the PES manages the scheme. Other main actors are also responsible for specific aspects including the Department of Education & Skills (DES) and its relevant agencies, including SOLAS (the Further Education and Skills Service) and the Higher Education Authority which are responsible for the funding and content of education and training programmes. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation (DJEI) takes care of the job creation strategies. The Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA) has responsibility for state policy and provision on youth work services and for securing good educational and welfare outcomes for young people through the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). Finally, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) is responsible for overseeing exchequer funding (government funding) and ensuring that Youth Guarantee-related programmes are thoroughly evaluated and provide value for money.

The PES is the implementing body of YG activities and what is offered is the same as for regular clients, but with a greater focus on early engagement for all younger jobseekers compared to jobseekers in other age categories.

Main areas that the PES is responsible for within the YG are:

- Managing and coordinating the national YG scheme;
- Registration of young people;
- Coordination of partners
- Follow-up of all young people who received YG services;
- Design and maintenance of the YG monitoring system (including indicators).

Involving young people and youth organisations

Young people and youth organizations were involved in the design/re-design or improving the Youth Guarantee services. Since 2015, the Department has carried out customer satisfaction surveys in order to understand how its customers interact with unemployment supports and employment services offered to jobseekers via its own service provision and contracted service provision. Almost 20,000 people have engaged with the surveys since their inception. The surveys use a representative sample of the PES customer audience, stratified by age, gender and duration of unemployment. The cohort under age 25 is included in the sample. The surveys provide an essential feedback mechanism and inform clients how the Department tailors and develops its services, while receiving early warning of issues and challenges.

The most recent survey conducted in October 2018 revealed an average satisfaction level of 4.37 out of a possible top rating of 5 for Intreo services. More than 75% of jobseekers rated the service they received from the Intreo service as improving their job prospects.

This innovative approach to service delivery has been recognised at a national and a European level as developing a 'voice of the customer' metric.

Partnerships in place and main developments

The PES is developing partnerships (not yet in place) activity in the following ways:

- Partnerships to ensure that young people have full information and support available - the Regional Skills Fora are in place, but no further developments took place within the period April 2017 to April 2019.

- Partnerships aimed at increasing employment, apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities – the *Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS)* launched in October 2018 is a programme specifically designed to provide workplace experience opportunities to young jobseekers on a work placement. Participants on the YESS are required to work 24 hours per week, and the placement duration is 3 months initially, with an optional extension to 6 months. A Learning and Development Plan is agreed between all parties and learning, and development outcomes are identified for each placement. The placement host nominates a mentor for each of the participants while a designated case officer liaises with the jobseeker and the company monitors their progress. A formal review meeting is organised after 2 months, based on which the case officer decides the extension of the placement to 6 months.
- Partnerships aimed at supporting transitions from unemployment, inactivity or education – the *Ability Programme* launched by the DEASP in September 2017 provides funding to local, regional and national projects that focus on bringing young people with disabilities closer to finding jobs.

New projects focusing on young people

Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS) - introduced on 1st October 2018, this scheme provides work experience placements for unemployed jobseekers and people with disabilities. A key element of the scheme, aimed at ensuring the participants derive optimum benefit, is that a Learning and Development Plan is agreed between all parties at the outset of the placement and the case officer monitors the progress of the participants.

Resources for implementing the Youth Guarantee

Human resources

There are no dedicated staff members for the implementation of the YG as it is included in the portfolio of all case officers and contracted activation staff. Case Officers who engage with jobseekers, including the under 25 years old, are responsible for implementing the YG as part of their wider activation remit. At the end of April 2019, the number of case officers, excluding activation support staff, was 333 FTE (client-facing) staff.

Over the period April 2017 to April 2019, training modules have been provided to case officers, on a wide range of competencies required for the effective engagement with the wide range of clients. Topics of such training include activation of youth, communication, working with marginalised youth, case management, specific services and ALMPs for youth, interviewing techniques and drafting individual action plans.

Funding for Youth Programmes (planned)

The allocation of funding for the Youth Guarantee falls within the remit of the Department of Education and Skills. Funds come from the Exchequer (government funds) and the EU funding (ESF and the Youth Employment Initiative) is claimed in arrears.

Reaching out to young people, including NEETs

The Irish PES does not carry out outreach activities targeted at unregistered NEETs. The Department for Education and Skills has responsibility for youth outreach activities. But some cooperation is in place as well as plans to further develop the outreaching tools:

- *Proactive work with schools* – a DEASP plan to engage with Future Jobs Ireland to expand the link between the PES and Deis schools (schools in disadvantaged areas) to help disadvantaged students career plan from a young age. The 2019 deliverable is to roll-out pilots in all divisions.

- *Awareness raising events or campaigns* - cooperation with the Educational training boards and training providers (DES) in organising awareness events and Jobs Fairs
- *Single point services / one-stop shops* - the focus is on those who have left school but who are not registered with PES, so the key activities here would be outreaching to the youth, and efforts to prevent early school leaving, which is the remit of DES.

Follow-up on young people who drop out from activation schemes/no longer access benefits – not applicable. Ireland has a universal means tested payment for jobseekers from the age of 18 which covers virtually all unemployed young people who are actively seeking work. As part of the social contract, the retention of benefits is conditional upon participation in agreed appropriate activation measures.

Information management

The PES has access to the following information source to support implementation of the YG:

- Database of traineeship vacancies

The Department of Education and SOLAS are responsible for the funding, planning and providing further education and training in Ireland and operate the Apprenticeship system.

Timing in the provision of PES services

- Pro-active engagement by case officers with unemployed jobseekers selected for activation, who qualify for the YG, involves an early face-to-face activation meeting within a few weeks of registration - usually within the first 2 weeks. This is followed by further meetings shortly afterwards which include the completion of a PPP (IAP) setting out the agreed goals and actions which the jobseeker must follow to advance his/her job seeking efforts within 4 months for low PEX clients (low probability of exit from the live PES register) and 9 months for medium or high PEX clients.

Monitoring and evaluation

The PES does not segment its service provision and access to ALMPs by sub-groups of jobseekers and so it does not have specific targets for youth services.

While clients are not categorised into sub-groups, all jobseekers are profiled each time they present themselves at a Department of Social Protection office to make a jobseeker claim. A statistical profiling tool estimates the probability of the jobseeker exiting from unemployment to employment within 12 months. The model generates a 'Probability of Exit' (PEX) score and this facilitates segmentation of those who join the register of unemployed into Low, Medium and High-risk cohorts and allows engagement with those who need most employment service type supports as early as possible.

Monitoring and evaluation activities

- Satisfaction surveys of young jobseekers;
- Satisfaction surveys of employers - in October 2017, the Department commissioned a survey of employers who used an ALMP called 'JobsPlus' and those who did not, to better understand:
 - Overall awareness of the incentive
 - The attractiveness of JobsPlus to employers
 - Why some employers had not used JobsPlus
 - Employer satisfaction with JobsPlus (for those who had used it)

- The effect of the incentive - in the absence of JobsPlus, what was the likelihood of employers taking on long-term unemployed jobseekers.

The survey represented a sample of over 800 employers of all sizes and in all sectors. Almost 90% of Jobsplus service users indicated satisfaction with the service.

- Monitoring young people who leave the unemployment register;
- Monitoring how many young people receive an offer within 4 months;
- Follow-up of young people once they have entered employment or training (for those on programmes and on a caseload);
- Follow-up of young people referred to education and training providers (for those on caseload only).

Mutual learning activities

During the period April 2017 to April 2019, PES staff did not take part in any mutual learning or technical assistance activities relating to youth.