

Labour Market Situation for People with Disabilities in Ireland (PwDs)

- In general the most up to date Labour market statistics for PwDs are from the 2016 census of population.
- Of the total population of 359,657 PwDs in the 15-64 age group, 53% are not in the labour force.
- Of the 167,422 PwDs in the labour force (15-64 years age group) the unemployment rate was 27%, as measured by the census,. The comparable census-measured rate of unemployment for the general population in 2016 was 13%.
- The seasonally adjusted (ILO) unemployment rate for the general population was 7.6% at the end of 2016.
- Whatever way we measure it, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities and the numbers of those not in the labour force, are considerably higher than for the general population in Ireland.

Labour Market Approaches for PwDs

- Historically, specialised employment services were available for PwDs.
- Mainstreaming for PwDs within PES introduced in 2000. (PES is currently delivered by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), since 2012).
- Work Capacity assessment is conducted with professional medical support, mainly in the context of a partial capacity Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) benefit.
- Main cohort of working age people with disabilities are in receipt of a means-tested disability allowance.
- Government/ESF funded Supported Employment Programme 'Employability' was established in 2000 where 'job-ready' people with disabilities can get individualised specialist job-coaching services and supports related to employment.

Labour Market Approaches for PwDs (cont.)

- The Employee Retention Grant scheme-support to an employer to develop a retention strategy and then to implement it for the individual with an acquired disability (EUR2,500 stage 1, EUR12,500 stage 2).
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities, 2015-2024. Emphasis is on skills and capacities of PwDs; bridges into work; ensuring that work pays; promoting job retention and re-entry among those who acquire a disability during their working life; coordination of supports; engaging employers.
- Strategic research report on Making Work Pay for PwDs (2017).
- The implementation of the 24 recommendations in the Report are time-bound and are categorised under four broad headings:
 - Reconfiguring the system
 - Promoting early intervention
 - Communicating effectively that work pays
 - Future-proofing

Brief Reflections on the Host example

- A major difference between Latvia and Ireland is that the three roles of labour market orientated medical assessment, the PES and the social insurance agency are incorporated into one body, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP).
- The primary focus in Ireland is currently on more systematic employment-focused engagement rather than on assessment of work capacity linked to the social insurance or assistance payments.
- Two measures described in the host paper, the social mentor initiative and the motivation programme are similar to the Irish Employability programme and a job club approach.
- The support person at work for people with mental health challenges, does not have a direct parallel in Ireland.

Questions

- Roles of the social mentor that is being made available in the context of the motivation programme?
- Social Entrepreneurship: Useful to hear more about the model, particularly as to how it will improve the employment prospects of people with disabilities.
- PES in Latvia has a well-developed econometric-based profiling system that has been in place since 2013. How successful has this profiling and self-assessment approach been for the placement into work of people with disabilities?