



Evaluation of the operation of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) element of the European Social Fund (ESF) Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020



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Glossary

ACM	Activation Case Management
AIP	Annual Implementation Reports
BITC	Business in the Community
BOMi	Monitoring system
BTWEA	Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DSP	Department of Social Protection
ESF	European Social Fund
ESS	Employment Support Services
ETB	Education and Training Boards
FET	Further Education and Training
IB	Intermediate Body
IBEC	The Irish Business & Employers Confederation
ICTU	The Irish Congress of Trade Unions
ILDN	The Irish Local Development Network
LCDC	Local and Community Development Committee
LCDP	Local and Community Development Programme
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LES	Local Employment Service
LMC	Labour Market Council
LSS	Learner Support Services
NEET	Not in Employment Education and Training
NYCI	The National Youth Council of Ireland
PA	Priority Axis
PEIL	Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning
PLSS	Programme and Learner Support System
RSS	Rural Social Scheme
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SICAP	Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
UA	Unemployment Allowance
UB	Unemployment Benefit
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VFM	Value for Money
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative
YEP	Youth Encounter Project
YG	Youth Guarantee
YGIP	Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan

Executive Summary

This evaluation of the operation of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) element of the European Social Fund (ESF) Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020 has been undertaken to assess *“the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of joint support from the ESF and the specific allocation for YEI including the implementation of the Youth Guarantee”*¹.

The Youth Employment Initiative was introduced as a specific budgetary allocation from the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020 under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal in 2014 to tackle the persisting problems of high levels of youth unemployment and the associated risk of a lost generation.

The evaluation considers the objectives of the Youth Employment Initiative within the context of the early phase of delivery and makes a series of findings and recommendations for consideration.

A detailed methodology and work programme were applied to ensure rigorous analysis and assessment of the YEI, in line with the terms of reference. The methodology was shaped by the Guidance on Evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative² (GEYEI) and particularly its directive that *“the issues of strategy for YEI, its design and implementation should be dealt in-depth in the 2015 evaluation and depending on the state of play of implementation cover effectiveness, efficiency and impact issues”*.

Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)

¹ In accordance with Article 19.6 of the ESF Regulation 1304/2013

² European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

The YEI was available to member states with a level of youth unemployment above 25% in 2012 and above 20% in those where it increased by more than 30%. In 2012, Ireland’s youth unemployment rate, having averaged at approximately 9% in 2005-2007, rose sharply to reach a peak of 33% in mid-2012^[1], rendering the state eligible for funding from the YEI.

The programmes and schemes that have commenced operations³, which represent the scope of this evaluation, are;

Initiative
Youthreach Administered by the Education and Training Boards for early school leavers aged 15-20 to identify options within adult life and the opportunity to acquire certification
Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) Aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies
Tús Community work placement scheme for participants unemployed for 12 months to avail of short-term quality work opportunities also providing benefit to communities
MOMENTUM Publically funded initiative delivered in partnership (collaboration) with both public and private education and training providers who have developed linkages with employers. It consists of a number of projects aimed at significantly improving the employability of individuals who are long-term unemployed.
JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme Participants gain experience to bridge the gap between study and the beginning of their working lives
JobsPlus Incentive Scheme

[1] Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan Pg 3

³ The BTWEA scheme was under review at commencement of this evaluation

Employer incentive scheme targeting long term unemployed

Table 1: YEI Programmes

Youth Unemployment in Ireland

Ireland suffered a major employment shock in the recession that followed the financial crisis of 2008 where employment levels fell by approximately 340,000 (16%) from just under 2.2m to just over 1.8m by 2012. This led to an increase in unemployment levels of over 220,000, from 107,000 to a peak of approximately 328,000 – a threefold increase. This meant that overall unemployment increased from less than 5% to approximately 15% in early 2012; it has fallen since then, to 12.5% by the end of 2013, 10.4% by the end of 2014 to the current figure of 8.9%⁴.

In relative terms the reduction in youth employment levels was more pronounced than for the working age population during the period 2008-2012. The number of people aged 15 – 24 in employment fell by nearly 60%, accounting for over 210,000 of the overall figure; there were just 147,000 young people in employment at the start of 2013. The level of youth employment has improved significantly in the period since showing a year-on-year increase of approximately 3,000 to reach 175,000 in the final quarter of 2015.

Key Findings

It is widely recognised that the picture of unemployment, including youth unemployment, in Ireland is an improving one. CSO data clearly indicates a correlation in timing with the fall in unemployment and the commencement of the YEI programmes within the Youth Guarantee. While it is not possible at this juncture to measure the extent to which YEI interventions have

contributed to the reduction in youth unemployment, based on the findings of this first YEI evaluation we would view the contribution of the YEI interventions to be noteworthy.

Implementation

Ireland's strategy for YEI implementation was designed around using a range of existing training and employment based activation programmes to target interventions to NEETS in the age range 15-24. Each YEI measure is aligned to a specific marginalised or disadvantaged cohort within a particular socio-economic profile, with interventions designed to meet their particular needs and move them closer to employment. YEI interventions encapsulate all employability supports on the employment pathway including, achieving basic qualifications, community based schemes for long term unemployed, internships and employer incentivised job programmes.

The YEI employment pathway supports cross referral opportunities to assist progression between, Tús & SICAP for the long term unemployed and JobBridge and JobsPlus for those closer to the labour market.

Planning for the YEI activation programmes was led by the Department of Social Protection (DSP); the role of the EU Funding Compliance Unit within DSP was a critical one in translating the reporting requirements of the ESF Managing Authority across the policy and employment support functions within DSP. The inclusion of the SICAP programme within the YEI ensured that those most disadvantaged and marginalised would benefit from customised support to meet their needs to build their employability to offset poverty and social exclusion. The ethos

⁴ CSO statistics as at December 1st 2015

of community engagement and partnership is strongly embedded within the SICAP programme and provides an access point for hard to reach NEETS which would not be available through mainstream statutory provision. The YEI has benefitted from and has contributed to improving the quality and focus of existing provision especially via the Intreo activation process and implementing the OECD recommendation to reduce the eligibility for some measures from 12 months to 4 months.

Effectiveness

Early indications are that the YEI employment pathway design contains the requisite mix of education, training, work placement and employment based supports to sustain young people in the labour market.

Whilst this evaluation is satisfied that YEI funds are being invested in interventions for disadvantaged young people and those from marginalised communities, it is too early to measure the contribution of the particular YEI intervention to actual sustainable integration which at a minimum would require six months participation post YEI intervention. We would point to the quality and rigour of the employment supports available through, for example, MOMENTUM and JobsPlus, which are two years in duration and are based on labour market intelligence around emerging and growth areas in the economy and the resultant potential for the sustained integration of participants to the labour market.

The evaluation identified some divergence between the DSP focus on simple measure of success, accessing employment, and the softer aspects of Labour Market Activation Programmes reflective of a spectrum of need of young disadvantaged people with more

complex issues requiring more intensive support to ensure sustainable integration in the labour market.

Efficiency

In the absence of unit costs per operation and per target group, our analysis of efficiency has focused on improving the quality of and levels of innovation within existing provision and optimising partnerships and collaborative working. Many delivery agents are engaging in an efficient use of resources through collaboration with other agencies to ensure additionality through signposting and cross referral with employers, voluntary and community sector organisations and the Education and Training boards were identified as key collaborators.

Impact

In the absence of data on YEI employment outcomes and the resultant impact of YEI support on future employment sustainability, we did consider a range of impacts based on the wider effects of the programme.

The identified and perceived impact for young unemployed people from the YEI interventions, as measured by feedback from 165 Programme Implementers, IBs etc., illustrates the wider effects of the programmes and reflects the opinions of many respondents that there are non-absolute outcomes that should be measured as an indicator of success for the programmes but also of the progression of unemployed young people. Among the most significant identified perceived and proposed outcomes for young unemployed people were improvements to confidence and self-esteem, attitude to work and social interaction.

We are satisfied that there is no evidence of displacement of employment solutions for those over 25 and other targeting segments. The YEI implementation period has witnessed the embedding of larger scale structural change which has impacted positively on the process. In the course of this change the Department of Social Protection (DSP) took over responsibility for Community Employment and Employment Services. Intreo offices were established as the first point of contact for jobseekers including those under 25, and became the gateway for unemployed learners seeking training support. DSP were also the lead department in the drafting of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan in December 2013

Whilst the YEI cannot claim a contribution to such structural change, we would contend that the increased focus on activation measures for the Under 25s can be attributed to an extent to the YEI; the absolute measure of this contribution and that to the reduction in youth unemployment should be captured in a wider impact assessment within the 2018 evaluation.

Our consultation and stakeholder surveys have identified a range of issues of strategy and implementation of the programme to enable us to conclude that the strategic and operational approach adopted were important factors in a generally positive implementation for the YEI. Whilst it remains too early in the development and delivery of the programme to make robust assessments of effectiveness, efficiency and impact, there is emerging evidence that YEI programmes are making a collective contribution to the objectives of YEI, the extent and measurability of such should also be addressed in the 2018 evaluation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the evaluation, engagement with key stakeholder of the YEI programmes and the survey results a series of recommendations are offered to inform the future delivery of the programmes.

- **Funding draw down and reporting:** With an array of different tools and systems utilised by each programme it is important that Managing Authority and Intermediate and Beneficiary Bodies utilise the most effective systems to ensure maximum draw down of EU funding. As such, it is proposed that training on programme monitoring is provided by the ESF compliance unit to relevant DSP staff, delivery organisations and stakeholders especially those agencies with no prior experience of EU funding reporting requirements.
- **Clarity of targets and situation post 2015:** The YEI programme was frontloaded for delivery in 2014 and 2015, yet many of the programmes only commenced during 2015 and are unsure about the duration of the YEI interventions. We would recommend that the ESF compliance unit issue a circular to all measure managers clarifying the situation regarding YEI delivery and associated targets for 2016.
- **JobBridge 'First Steps':** This programme was designed to broaden and deepen the level of supports offered in respect of those young people who continue to be unemployed within an improving labour market. Take up to the programme was slow and the initiative was suspended in the second half of 2015 pending a review.

We would recommend that the review considers a community based approach to delivery with dedicated case officer time invested in meeting the more intense support needs of the disadvantaged participants and employer engagement in partnership with community organisations.

Should this not be possible within the guidelines of statutory provision, the review team should then consider commissioning specialist community based employment support organisations to deliver this service. A similar function was delivered by the local employment services (LES) prior to Intreo.

- **NEETs:** Based on the Youth Guarantee country report for Ireland published in March 2015 that suggested a lack of a *'comprehensive outreach strategy regarding, specifically, people not in employment, education nor training who are not active in the labour force'* consideration should be given to commissioning a research programme. This research should present a sound statistical analysis of NEETS under 25 in Ireland including the cohort of so called 'Hidden NEETS', their participation levels in employment programmes, the barriers they face in FET and supports required to overcome barriers. It should also explore why young people become NEET given that there does not appear to be a deficit in education and training provision for the under 18s and all can benefit from the universal offer of free post-primary education; the outcomes from this

study would also inform the ongoing delivery of the JobBridge 'First Steps' programme. The research programme should include a feasibility study on developing an outreach employment based support programme for those most disadvantaged and farthest from the labour market.

- **Consistency of criteria:** It is evident from the evaluation that the reduction in eligibility criteria from 12 months (on the live register) to 4 months for the JobsPlus Incentive Scheme was a key factor in engaging young people and helping to reduce or prevent the likelihood of becoming long term unemployed. We would recommend that programmes such as Momentum, Tús and SICAP be closely monitored to analyse their impact in providing employment outcomes to those unemployed for over 12 months. In the event of their cadre of long term unemployed reducing significantly, consideration should be given to reducing the eligibility criteria to 4 months unemployed for such programmes.
- **Impact:** Based on consistent feedback from programme implementers and delivery agents it is proposed that monitoring should be more cognisant of the relatively softer (non-absolute) outcomes recognising the efforts and activities of those providers engaging with 'hard to reach' groups that are more removed from the labour market. This will also inform the impact evaluation scheduled for 2018.

1.0 Introduction

To tackle the persisting problems of high levels of youth unemployment and the associated risk of a lost generation the European Council of 7-8 February 2013 proposed the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) with a budget of €6.4 billion. The YEI resources are composed of €3.2 billion from a specific budgetary allocation and a minimum of €3.2 billion from the European Social Fund. The YEI in Ireland is being delivered using the ESF support framework and features in the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020 under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal.

The YEI was available to member states with a level of youth unemployment above 25% in 2012 and above 20% in those where it increased by more than 30%. In 2012, Ireland's youth unemployment rate, having averaged at approximately 9% in 2005-2007, rose sharply to reach a peak of 33% in mid-2012⁵, rendering the state eligible for funding from the YEI. The policy framework for the YEI is constituted by the Youth Employment Package and the Recommendation on Establishing a Youth Guarantee adopted by the European Council in April 2013⁶. The Youth Guarantee (YG) aims to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

The YEI is positioned to support the implementation of the YG by reinforcing and complementing the activities funded by ESF. Limited to the support of young people who are not in employment, education or training, the measures supported by the YEI must be designed around achieving measurable results. The frontloading of the specific allocation of the YEI over the first two years of the PEIL programming period 2014 and 2015 is focused on achieving such results quickly.

PEIL 2014-2020 is the only ESF Operational Programme (OP) for Ireland for this period and contains a total budget of €1.153 billion. The ESF will contribute €542.43 million, the Exchequer will contribute €542.43 million and the EU Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) budget will contribute €68.145 million. The measures to implement the YEI in Ireland are prioritised for delivery during 2014 and 2015. In order to focus the ESF and YEI funding directly, a separate Priority Axis⁷ (PA) was established in the ESF OP for the YEI.

Gauge NI were commissioned by the ESF Managing Authority in the Department of Education and Skills in October 2015 to carry out an evaluation of the YEI to inform the overall process review. This report sets out the background, terms of reference, methodology and findings from the evaluation.

⁵ Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan Pg 3

⁶ [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426(01))

⁷ Priority Axis 4

1.1 Terms of Reference

Article 19(6) of the ESF Regulation (EU) No. 1304/2013 obliges Member States to conduct evaluations which will assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of joint support from the ESF and the specific allocation for YEI including for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. The terms of reference also specify that the evaluation should only cover the measures financed by the YEI⁸ under investment priority 8ii⁹, listed below:

- JobsPlus Incentive Scheme
- Tús
- JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme
- Youthreach
- Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
- Momentum

1.2 Methodology

A detailed methodology and work programme were applied to ensure rigorous analysis and assessment of the YEI, in line with the terms of reference. The methodology/work programme has been shaped by the Guidance on Evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative¹⁰ (GEYEI) and particularly its directive that “the issues of strategy for YEI, its design and implementation should be dealt in-depth in the 2015 evaluation and depending on the state of play of implementation cover effectiveness, efficiency and impact issues”.

Within the constraints of the early phase of implementation and delivery coupled with the short evaluation window it was not feasible to answer all the core questions regarding effectiveness, efficiency and impact. The following key questions were proposed through the evaluation.

Strategy for YEI implementation

Addressing the following questions set the scene for the assessment of the evaluation criteria by exploring the role the YEI played in the Irish context and the extent to which the strategy for implementation was achieved for the initiative.

In which socio-economic context is YEI implemented?	√
Which role does YEI play as regards / what is the planned contribution to the Youth Guarantee?	√
Were the most relevant target groups targeted starting from the design stage? Were the most important needs of these groups addressed?	√
Did the YEI provide a quick response to address the urgency of the problem?	√
In which ways does it complement other instruments supporting youth policies?	√

⁸ For the purpose of monitoring and evaluation the YEI should be understood in financial terms as both the allocation from the specific EU budget line dedicated to youth employment, the corresponding ESF support and the national co-financing from the Exchequer

⁹ Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee

¹⁰ European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Implementation

Data on implementation of YEI will be provided in the Annual Implementation Reports (AIP)¹¹, the evaluation team posed the following questions to gather additional information on the role the delivery systems played in the relative success or failure of the YEI intervention.

What was the design and functioning of the delivery system? Were they adequate to ensure an effective implementation of the strategy for YEI?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
What types of actions were funded to implement the YEI? Were they individual support actions or were they part of pathways or packages of support?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Did the implementation of the YEI make use of existing partnerships? Were new partnerships developed to facilitate the implementation of the YEI? Were relevant stakeholders involved effectively?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Did the implementation fund existing measures or trigger the introduction of new approaches?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Was the implementation of the YEI according to plans (financially, milestones and targets achieved as planned)? If not, why?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
What were the strengths and weaknesses of the delivery systems?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Effectiveness

Given the early stage of implementation and the associated absence of data on education and employment outcomes, it was not possible to address all of the questions below, though we were able to draw some early conclusions on YEI's potential to sustain young people into the labour market, to address the problem of NEET's and to effectively target the more disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

How and to what extent did YEI contribute to the achievement of the general objective of sustainable integration of young people into the labour market and to the specific objectives under ESF? How did it contribute to address the problem of NEETs?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Were YEI funds spent on those most in need of support? Were the disadvantaged persons, those from marginalised communities and those leaving education without qualifications targeted? Were the specific target groups reached as planned?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are YEI participants in employment, continuous education or training, apprenticeships or traineeships after leaving the intervention? If not, why?	<input type="checkbox"/>
What was the quality of the offers received by the participants? Did the offers come from the open market, sheltered labour market or public work schemes? Were they received under YG schemes?	<input type="checkbox"/>
What was the progress of YEI participants towards continuous education, sustainable and decent jobs, apprenticeships and quality traineeships? What are the characteristics of the jobs and traineeships which the former participants are holding as a result of the YEI?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Which types of interventions were the most effective, for which groups and in which contexts?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Efficiency

In the absence of unit costs per programme and per target group, our analysis focused on efficiency around the utilisation of resources regarding administration, optimisation of existing resources and partnership and collaboration.

¹¹ None of which were available to the evaluation, as most of the measures have not been live for one year, 1st one due in June 2016

Impact

Whilst the proposed questions on impacts concern mostly larger scale change which can be more robustly measured in the 2018 evaluation, we did pose these questions to the relevant stakeholders to detect any early evidence of larger scale change. The evaluation also identified areas of proposed wider impact including non-absolute outcomes that contribute to the progression of clients to employability.

What is the impact of the YEI support for young unemployed people on their future employment chances? How big is the effect of the YEI support on entering the labour market? What would have been individuals' employment status in the absence of the support?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
What was the net impact of the measures under YEI? Did displacement take place? Did dead weight loss and substitution effects occur?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Were there any structural impacts (changes in education system, vocational training system, Public Employment Services)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Were there any changes in the youth policies induced by YEI?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
What was the contribution of the YEI to changes in the youth employment/unemployment/activity rates in the areas covered by the YEI?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Were there any unintended effects, e.g. on people aged 25 or more or on young people in education or employment?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
What would have happened without YEI intervention?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.2.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Research

The process of engagement with identified stakeholders is outlined below.

Phase 1 Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiation meeting with DES representatives to agree scope, activities and timescale including agreement on the level of research and engagement. ▪ Review of literature to assess existing Irish, EU and International policy documents and models of best practice ▪ Collation and assessment of project level data on outputs and outcomes (where available) ; see Appendix 2.
Phase 2 Stakeholder Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1:1 meetings with identified Measure Managers of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI); Department of Social Protection (JobsPlus, Tús and JobBridge), Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (SICAP), SOLAS (Youthreach and Momentum) ▪ Electronic survey targeted at all project delivery organisations across the six programmes agreed ▪ Telephone interviews with identified key influencers (other relevant government departments) and follow up interviews with engaged stakeholders

Table 2: Stakeholder Engagement

Digital questionnaires were designed by Gauge for each YEI measure, which were also reviewed by the measure manager for each programme. The questionnaires were designed to complement existing programme data and also to assess the process and impact areas within the terms of reference. Links to the questionnaires supporting each survey are provided in Appendix 3.

E-mail was used to distribute the questionnaires to the beneficiary bodies and programme implementers. The covering e-mail accompanying the link came from a senior staff member within the relevant public body.

Electronic surveys were utilised as the most effective method to engage with as many Programme Implementers and delivery agents within the short timeframe of the evaluation. Electronic surveys also offer ease of use and flexibility for the user and reduce the margin for error as participants input the data directly.

1.2.2 Response Rates

The electronic surveys received a positive response rate of 35% on average across all programmes. This provides a robust level of response particularly when considered alongside the 1:1 engagement with measure managers and key influencers within each programme.

Survey	Providers	Responses	%
SICAP Programme Implementers	44	38	86.36%
SICAP Local Community Development Committees	33	7	21.21%
Tús Programme Implementers	48	27	56.25%
JobsPlus Case Officers (working with under 25s)	150	26	17.33%
JobBridge Case Officers (working with under 25s)	150	20	13.33%
Momentum Programme Implementers	35	17	48.57%
Youthreach Centres	110	28	25.45%
Youthreach ETB	16	2	12.50%
Total / Average response %	586	165	35.13%

Table 3: Electronic survey response rate

1.3 Measure data

The evaluation was also assisted by data on the measures from the Department of Social Protection, SOLAS, Department of Education & Skills, Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and Pobal. To coincide with the timing of responses and facilitate comparison with the findings from our primary research, the analysis of data from the relevant public body in this report is based on the position as of 2nd December 2015. Our evaluation was supported by engagement with the following key personnel whose roles encompass the strategy, design and implementation, overall management, compliance, co-financing, funding drawdown, delivery and monitoring functions within the YEI:

Name	Designation	Organisation
William McIntosh	Head of ESF Managing Authority	Department of Education and Skills
Nicola Finnegan	ESF Managing Authority	Department of Education and Skills
Andrew Diggins	Assistant Principal Officer	NDP Structural Funds Unit, Department of Education and Skills
Mary Kennedy	Principal Officer	EU Funding Compliance, Department of Social Protection
Neil Heffernan	Assistant Principal Officer	EU Funding Compliance, Department of Social Protection
Aoife Glennon	HEO	EU Funding Compliance, Department of Social Protection
Nora Durcan	Assistant Principal Officer	Employment Support Services, Department of Social Protection
Tina Ward	HEO	Employment Support Services, Department of Social Protection

Declan Nugent	Assistant Principal Officer	JobBridge Policy Unit, Department of Social Protection
Dr. Kasey Treadwell Shine	Assistant Principal Officer	Activation and Employment Policy, Department of Social Protection
Clodagh McDonnell	Principal Officer	Community Division, Department of Environment, Community & Local Government
David Burke	Head of Funder Liaison & Project Management	Pobal
Ruth Pritchard	Programmes Directorate	EU & International Relations and Programmes, Pobal
David Dunne	Manager Management Accounting	European Finance SOLAS
Ciaran Conlon	Director FET	Operational Planning & Stakeholder Engagement. SOLAS
Ken Seery	Manager	Contract Training and Momentum
Gerard Griffin	National Coordinator	Youthreach
Liz Lavery	Education Officer	Louth Meath Education and Training Board
David O'Connor	Co-ordinator	Youthreach, Laytown

Table 4: Consultation List

1.4 Report Structure

The remainder of the Evaluation Report is structured, as follows:

- Section 2 examines the policy context for the YEI, inclusive of literature review of EU, ESF and Government documents, mapping of YEI within the policy and strategic context of government departments and the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP). This section also develops the theory of change for the YEI to establish the framework for the evaluation and provides the rationale for the selection of individual measures and process areas to be analysed in each of the subsequent sections relating to the measure areas.
- Sections 3 - 8 assess the emerging evidence in relation to the implementation of the YEI within the measures to be financed under the initiative and furthermore early indicators of efficiency, effectiveness and impact in the programmes.
- Finally, Section 9 brings together the detailed analyses presented in the preceding sections to develop overall conclusions and present Gauge's recommendations to the ESF Managing Authority in relation to the progress and possible future direction of the scheme.

2.0 Policy Context

2.1 Youth Unemployment in Ireland

Ireland suffered a major employment shock in the recession that followed the financial crisis of 2008 where employment levels fell by approximately 340,000 (16%) from just under 2.2m to just over 1.8m by 2012. This led to an increase in unemployment levels of over 220,000, from 107,000 to a peak of approximately 328,000 – a threefold increase. This meant that overall unemployment increased from less than 5% to approximately 15% in early 2012; it has fallen since then, to 12.5% by the end of 2013, 10.4% by the end of 2014 to the current figure of 8.9%¹².

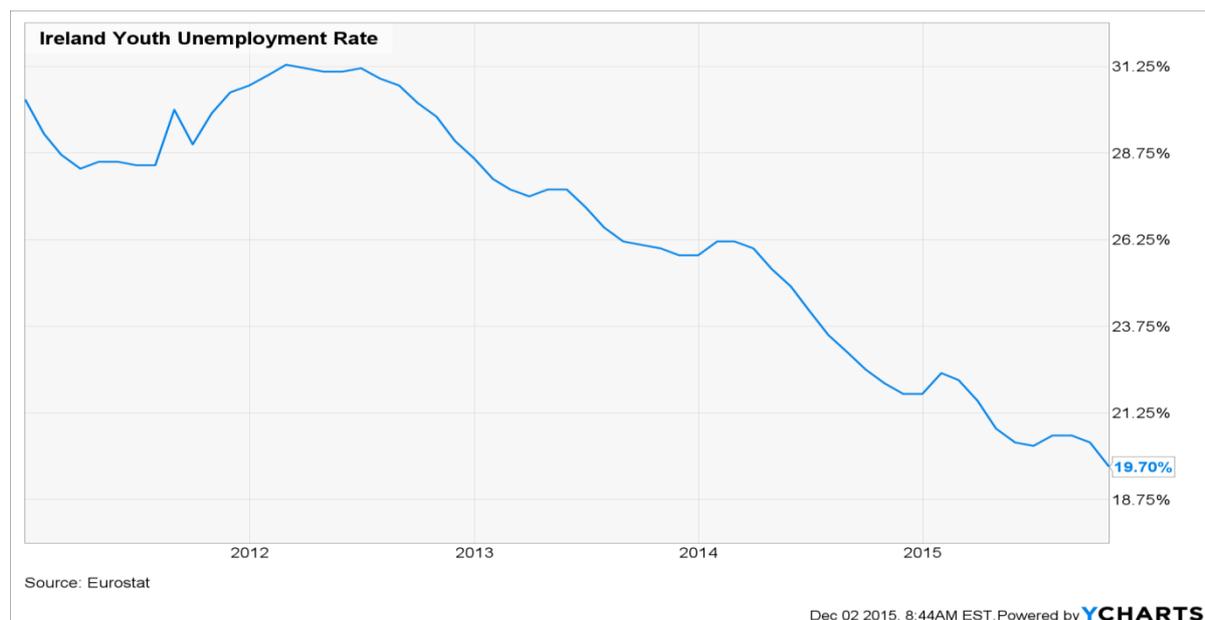


Figure 1: Ireland Youth Unemployment Rate 2012-15

In relative terms the reduction in youth employment levels was more pronounced than for the working age population during the period 2008-2012. The number of people aged 15 – 24 in employment fell by nearly 60%, accounting for over 210,000 of the overall figure; there were just 147,000 young people in employment at the start of 2013. The level of youth employment has improved significantly in the period since showing a year-on-year increase of approximately 3,000 to reach 175,000 in the final quarter of 2015.

The youth unemployment rate, having averaged at approximately 9% in 2005-2007, rose sharply to reach a peak of 33% in mid-2012, before experiencing a gradual decline, 25.5% at the end of 2013, 22% at the end of 2014 and the current figure of 19.7%¹³. Ireland's youth unemployment figure now sits below that of the average across the EU (20.5%) and the Euro area (22.4%)¹⁴ these trends are illustrated in Figure 1 and depict a transformation in the levels of youth unemployment in Ireland coinciding with the YEI.

¹² CSO statistics as at December 1st 2015

¹³ CSO statistics as at December 1st 2015,

¹⁴ Eurostat

2.1.1 Other structural and environmental issues

It is important to recognise the wider context for employment in Ireland. As such, a brief assessment of other contributory factors to reducing unemployment is offered in this section to help provide further context when assessing the unemployment figures above.

- Emigration: 165,000 young people aged 15-24 have emigrated in the last five years. In the last year, according to April 2015 CSO statistics¹⁵, 37.5% of total migration was from young people aged 15-24 with a higher proportion of young women leaving the state. This will, of course, have a significant bearing on the data available to us.
- Young people returning to education: Statistics from the DSP, Figure 2 below, outlines the number of live register claimants exiting to activation schemes. The seasonal peaks experienced in quarter three each year relate to the commencement of the academic year and those returning to education.

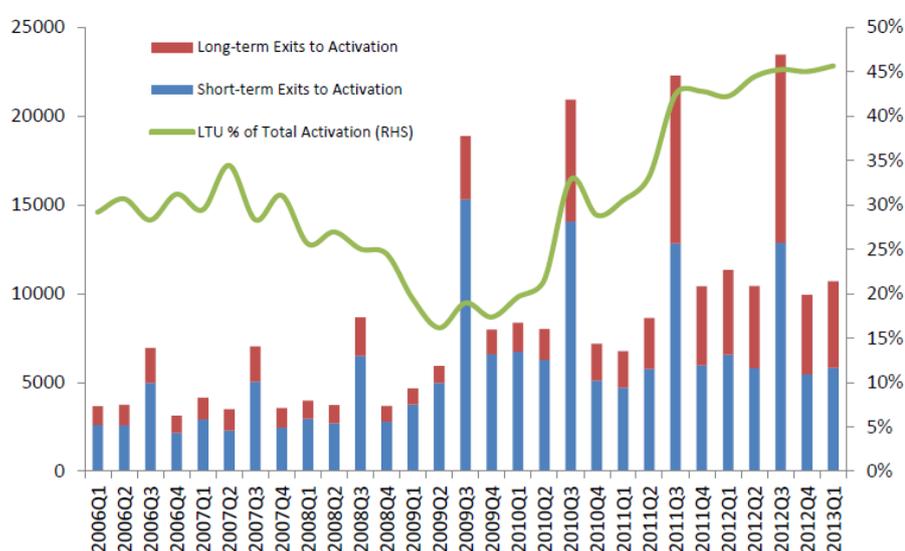


Figure 2: Live register exits to activation (DSP)

2.2 Young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)

YEI interventions can only be delivered to those young people who are NEET; this section will further explore this constituency in Ireland up to and including the end of Q2 2013 which encompasses the timeline of European Council's proposal for the YEI. It is important to analyse NEETS during this period as it set the baseline for the targets within the YEI programme measures for 2014 and 2015.

NEETS measures based on data from the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS, in Ireland the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS)) for the four quarters up to and including Q2 2013 included anyone under 25 who is a) not working and b) did not engaged in education or training in the 4 weeks preceding the survey¹⁶. Therefore the final figure includes the unemployed, but also includes anyone who, while continuing their full-time studies, happens not to have engaged in education in the four weeks prior to being surveyed. Both these groups are large in Ireland relative to the total

¹⁵ <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2015/>

¹⁶ Data and NEETS definition used in the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan

size of the NEET population. The NEET measure also includes people who have withdrawn from the labour force to care for children, as well as people who describe themselves as inactive due to a disability. The contribution of these various groups to the overall NEET measure is illustrated in the tables in Appendix 1. In summary:

- Overall the NEET rate reported for Irish people aged 15-24 is 18%. However, when students and the unemployed¹⁷ are excluded from this figure, it can be seen that the “inactive” NEET rate is 3%. The “inactive” NEET rate for those aged under 18 is less than 1% and 4% for those aged 18-24.
- Among inactive NEETS aged 18-24 almost 60% are carers – primarily young women aged 22-24 who describe themselves as looking after children. A further 20% describe themselves as disabled. Excluding these groups, “other” inactive NEETS account for approximately one half of 1% of the young adult population aged 18-24.
- In relation to those aged 18-24, the vast majority of non-student NEETS are identified as unemployed. The tables also present some data on the young unemployed registering for welfare payments¹⁸. It is clear from this data that the vast majority of the young unemployed aged 18-24 do in fact register for such payments.

In quantitative terms, there were 60,000 NEETS on the live register in August 2013 with a further 13,800 NEETS aged 15-17 of whom 11,300 self reported as students¹⁹, 1,500 reported as being unemployed and 1,000 inactive²⁰. This was the NEETS statistical environment which informed the planning for the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative in the second half of 2013.

2.3 Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)

The impetus for the the YEI was contained within the commitment of EU institutions, governments, businesses and social partners at all levels to work to avoid a "lost generation" emanating from the economic crisis which had a severe impact on young people and posed a serious threat to social cohesion in the EU and presented risks of a long-term negative impact on economic potential and competitiveness.

In Ireland, unemployment is higher for young people with lower levels of qualification, and their labour force participation is below that of those with higher qualifications. Over recent times in Ireland, the unemployment rate for those aged 20-24 with no more than lower secondary education has been over 50%, as compared with about 30% for those with higher secondary education and 20% for third-level graduates²¹.

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) was proposed by the European Council in February 2013. The objective of the YEI is to support young people not in education, employment or training in the Union's regions with a youth unemployment rate in 2012 above a certain threshold

¹⁷ The unemployed here includes, as well as those identified as unemployed on the standard international ILO criteria, others who self-identify as unemployed on the “main status” criterion in the EU LFS – typically referred to as “principal economic status” in the Irish data.

¹⁸ The registration data here exclude partially unemployed people with part-time or casual employment.

¹⁹ Have not engaged in education in the 4 weeks prior to the survey

²⁰ Disability, Carer, Other

²¹ PEIL Operating Programme 2014-20 Pg 17

(25% in mid 2012) by integrating them into the labour market.

In particular, the funds would be available for Member States to finance measures to implement in the eligible regions the Youth Guarantee Recommendation agreed by the EU's Council of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers. Under the Youth Guarantee, Member States are required to put in place measures to ensure that young people up to age 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. Given the synergies in the timelines for implementation of both the YEI and Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP), and the fact that all of the YEI measures within this evaluation are included in the YGIP, we would point out that reference to the YGIP throughout this report should be understood as those YEI programmes within the YGIP.

A total of €6 billion is provided for the YEI in regions that qualify for support. Due to their high levels of youth unemployment in mid 2012, Ireland is one of these regions. The investments supported by the YEI are strongly oriented towards achieving concrete results and achieving them quickly. The Commission therefore frontload the YEI for delivery in 2014 and 2015, notably by not submitting it to the performance reserve mechanism, to achieve tangible impact early on in the implementation.

A total YEI allocation of €68.145 million was provided for Ireland. This was principally to be targeted at measures identified in Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP) that was submitted to the European Commission in December 2013. In order to focus the ESF and YEI funding directly, a separate Priority Axis was established in the ESF OP for the YEI. The Youth Employment Target Group is young people under the age of 25 not in employment, education or training, who are inactive or unemployed, including the long term unemployed, and whether or not registered as seeking work.

2.3.1. YEI funding by measure

Whilst recognising that costs associated with the implementation would, in the first instance, be met by the Irish Exchequer, a number of existing activation programmes which met the ESF eligibility criteria were included in the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) application for Ireland. The readiness of the activation measures would enable the full drawdown of the specific YEI allocation for Ireland of €68.145 million (with a further similar amount in ESF and Exchequer funding) to be taken up over 2014 and 2015.

Table 5 below outlines the funding awarded to each programme within the Priority 4 Axis of the Youth Employment Initiative.

YEI Programme	YEI/ESF funding €m
Jobs Plus	5.32
Tús	23.6
JobBridge	38.2
Youthreach	53.5
Momentum	8.88
SICAP	4.00

Table 5: YEI/ESF Funding per Programme

2.4 Theory of Change

YEI programmes reflect a wider Vocational Education and Training (VET) journey based around early intervention and activation which include some or all of the following stages: decision to access VET, engagement with employment services (Intreo), a guidance process, activation to VET, VET provision, transition to employment/higher education, up-skilling in the workplace.

This journey is reflected in how the YEI programmes interact and complement each other, as evidenced by a number of cross referrals from one to another throughout the evaluation process. This is illustrated in a pathway developed by the evaluation team below:

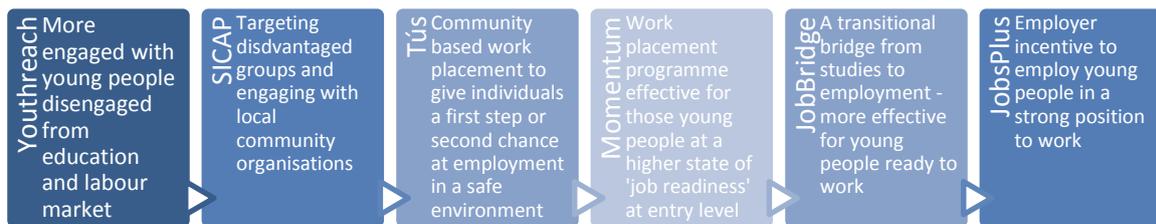


Figure 3: Employment Pathway evident in YEI

The pathway goes some way to demonstrating how the Theory of Change (Figure 4 below) for YEI has been implemented by representing how a young unemployed person enters the pathway facing barriers to employment that are supported through the activities of individual, or multiple programmes, leading to a clear output but also significant outcomes that contribute to the sustainable integration of unemployed young people in the labour market.

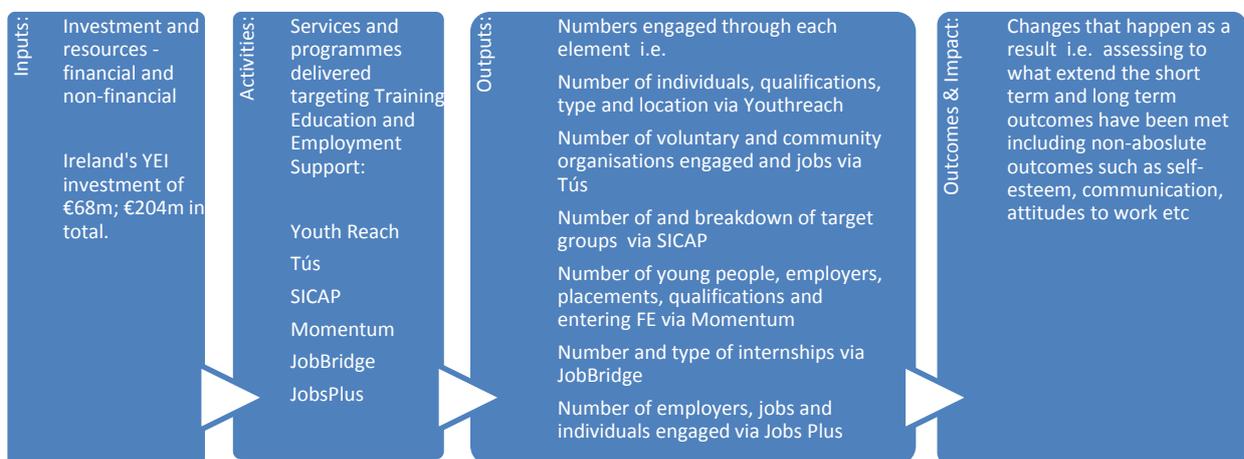


Figure 4: Proposed theory of change for YEI programme

This Theory of Change for the YEI underpins the framework for the evaluation and includes the individual measures and process areas to be analysed in each of the subsequent sections relating to the measure areas.

Sections 3-8 of this report are devoted to analysing the YEI activities/measures.

3. Youthreach

Ireland's level of early school leaving has fallen consistently over many years, currently sitting at 9.7%²². This is below the EU average of 12.8% and narrowly below the EU target level of 10% set in Education and Training (ET)2020 – the EU's Strategic Framework for Education and Training. Ireland has set itself a national target of 8% for early school leaving. Approximately 8,000 young people leave school each year without completing upper secondary education.

Education and Training Boards (ETB's) deliver the Youthreach education programme to provide early school leavers with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to participate fully in society and progress to further education, training and employment. The programme, which is two years in duration, seeks to address the personal and social development needs of unemployed young school leavers typically aged 15 to 20. Certification is available relative to the ability and career options of the individual participant. The programme also seeks to address the issue of social inclusion on a broader scale.

Youthreach is designed as part of an integrated strategy to address educational disadvantage in the context of a continuum of provision. The measure ensures that young people who have left school with no qualifications have a second chance to gain access, participate in and benefit from education of sufficient quality to allow them to find employment, to either prevent them from becoming poor or move out of poverty or to progress to further education and training.

In Youthreach the recruitment guidelines for young people seeking entry to the programme are:

- Students will be in the age group 15-20 and have left school, be unemployed at the commencement of his/her engagement with Youthreach.
- Have no qualifications or have incomplete qualifications from Junior Cycle (i.e.) less than 5 grade Ds at Ordinary Level in the Junior Certificate or otherwise lack competencies or skills in the area of inter-personal communications, enterprise or motivation.

Registration in Youthreach is determined locally through a centre based assessment. The YEI component of Youthreach is delivered in 74 Youthreach Centres across ten²³ of the sixteen Education and Training Boards (ETB's) The draw down for the Youthreach programme for the years 2014 and 2015 from the YEI is €79.875 million²⁴ and the commencement date for this co-financed activity was the first quarter of 2014²⁵.

This evaluation engaged with a range of stakeholders including SOLAS, Youthreach Centres and Education & Training Boards on the YEI through a combination of face to face meetings and attitudinal surveys. The findings are presented in the following sections.

²² Eurostat: 2015

²³ The 6 ETB's covering the Border, Midlands West (BMW) region are not included in the YEI

²⁴ For the purposes of monitoring and evaluation the YEI should be understood in financial terms as the allocation from YEI, ESF and the national co-financing of the ESF support

²⁵ ESF PEIL OP 2014-2020 – Data Collection Summary Action Plan

3.1 YEI Implementation

- While Youthreach is targeted within the YEI as the main programme offering for early school leavers aged 15-20, it is the only programme within the YEI that provides for those aged under 18 with over 50% (1676) of its 2014 learners in the 15-17 age category.
- The design and function of the delivery system with SOLAS and the Department of Education and Skills (DES) Structural Funds Unit as joint Intermediary Bodies and the Education and Training Boards as the Beneficiary Body was effective in that it commissioned Youthreach to deliver the YEI thus ensuring continuity of provision to those aged 15-20.
- The implementation of YEI within Youthreach has made optimum use of existing operational partnerships in so far as they were already in place and established. Relevant stakeholders within the Intermediate and Beneficiary bodies were consulted.
- The implementation of the YEI in Youthreach was based on existing financial & budgetary management systems and the key performance indicators around total learners enrolled and qualifications achieved which reflect the YEI targets around support and certification.
- As Youthreach was an established programme, strong evidence emerged that the YEI funding drawdown will be around existing measures rather than trigger the introduction of new supports.
- Youthreach Centres have already implemented measures to increase their accessibility to young NEETS: Youthreach Centres are working with their local post primary schools to ensure that contact details for early school leavers are passed to the relevant Education and Training Board for early follow-up on alternative education and training options.
- There was no sense emerging from the consultations that there was an implementation phase for the YEI. We would contend that this was primarily due to the fact that the funding process, schedule or amount did not change from what was in place previously.
- Much work is required to increase general awareness and understanding of the YEI within the Youthreach programmes on the ground. This should improve with the introduction of the new reporting systems to track the impact of the Youthreach intervention.

3.2 Effectiveness

- The model of early intervention and activation for those aged 15-17 is more complex than for those 18-24 as this cohort will not be in receipt of a benefit payment and will not be subject to DSP activation measures. To offset this, Youthreach have an effective range of community based supports in place to deliver early intervention to early school leavers, in order to provide a bridge and introduction to “second-chance” opportunities.
- Youthreach is effective in contributing to the sustainable integration of young people into the labour market as it seeks to address the personal and social development needs of unemployed young school leavers typically aged 15 to 20. Certification is available relative to the ability and career options of the student.

- The Programme Learner Support System (PLSS) will address all of the key YEI reporting requirements including, output results, socio-economic profile, situation after leaving Youthreach. It is scheduled to be operational by September 2016 with a full dataset available by September 2017, data collection will also require significant work from the ETB's.

3.3 Efficiency

- No data on unit cost per target group or per type of operation was available to the evaluation. The implementation of YEI has made optimum use of existing operational partnerships in so far as they were already in place and established and no additional costs were incurred.
- The YEI co-financing arrangements for Youthreach began in Q1 2014 and will conclude at the end of 2015 reflecting the timeline within the YGIP that *“the guarantee as it affects those aged under 18 years will be implemented within 2 years, i.e. by the end of 2015”*. No drawdown of YEI funding has yet been made, it is important that the required reporting systems are integrated promptly to ensure drawn down by the end of 2018 taking account of the N+3 rule²⁶

3.4 Impact

- The consultations have uncovered effective interagency working particularly involving the mainstream education sector in supporting the managed transfer of students from mainstream second level education to work towards accreditation at Junior or Leaving Certificate level in Youthreach. This approach represents a structural change in interagency working between mainstream second level education providers and those providing alternatives to mainstream provision. Youth Work approaches were also cited as being useful in identifying young people who might benefit from second-chance options.
- The programmes capacity to deliver both second level and third level education equivalents across the age range 15-20²⁷ depending on need provides a smooth transition at a very difficult point in the VET journey for those who have exited mainstream provision.

²⁶ Both the specific allocation for the YEI and the corresponding ESF support will have to be committed and spent by the end of 2018

²⁷ 3187 students aged 15-20 enrolled as at 31st December 2014

4.0 Tús

This initiative was announced in Budget 2011 as one of a number of initiatives introduced by the Government to offer work placement opportunities for people who are unemployed. It is focused on the community and voluntary sectors, has both an urban and rural dimension and builds on the architecture of the Rural Social Scheme (RSS).

Tús is a community work placement initiative to provide placements with community, voluntary and not-for-profit operators nationally. The initiative is delivered at local level by the local development companies and Údarás na Gaeltachta (in Gaeltacht Areas) who were already delivering the RSS initiative and is targeted at job seekers on the live register for over a year and in receipt of a jobseeker's payment. This initiative is an activation measure to keep people job ready and support the management and control of the Live Register.

Eligibility is confined to those on the Live Register for at least 12 months and in receipt of jobseeker's allowance. In general, all works and services undertaken or delivered by the community and voluntary sectors for the benefit of the general community or specific sectors can be considered eligible.

The Department of Social Protection randomly select and contact persons on the Live Register who satisfy the criteria and offer them the opportunity to be considered for local employment as opportunities arise. When those identified agree to participate, they are referred by the Department to the Local Development Company operating in their area for interview and consideration for placement with a community organisation.

The Local Development Company will then profile and match participants with suitable work placements identified in co-operations with community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations providing services in the area. The participant becomes the employee of the Local Development Company. While participants work 19½ hours per week, they are encouraged to find and engage in other employment or learning programmes during the rest of the week.

While some YEI measures are designed to activate the recently unemployed, Ireland's circumstances require engagement with the large number of young people who are already unemployed for longer periods. Tús will activate this cohort through a structured engagement process beginning in the first instance with those young people already unemployed over 12 months.

This evaluation engaged with the measure managers and the 48 Tús companies via electronic survey and the findings are presented in the following sections.

4.1 Implementation

1,000 Tús places were reserved for young people under 25 in early 2015, the eligible period for the YEI co-funding arrangements began on 1st May 2015. Key findings from engagement with measure managers and Programme Implementers of Tús include:

- There were no significant variations in the actual start date and the proposed commencement date, this can be attributed to the fact that Tús has been operational since 2011 with established relationships with both the DSP and community organisations. Intermediate Bodies overall felt that this contributed to an efficient implementation.

- The vast majority (92.3%) of survey respondents felt that the design & function of the delivery system was adequate to ensure the effective implementation for YEI. Contributory factors include; adequate information from DSP, clarity, clear referral forms, and contracts issued to identify eligible youth and pointing to a seamless transition to the programme.
- Evidence emerged that the most important needs of the long-term unemployed are met; Tús providers highlighted that participation on the programme impacted positively on the motivation and confidence of participants offering them opportunities to experience different work environments and provide them with employment related experience to re-enter the labour market.
- The Tús programme is appropriately targeted at interventions for long-term unemployed young people in disadvantaged communities to enable them to break the cycle of joblessness, helping them to improve their work readiness and support them in accessing the labour market.
- Intermediate Bodies (IBs) felt that the YEI implementation strategy should have factored in a placement scheme of longer than 12 months to build resilience and sustainable integration into the labour market. IBs also felt that the implementation strategy should have included comprehensive guidance in relation to the ESF/YEI guidelines.
- No overwhelming barriers to the transition to YEI were identified but a few respondents pointed to the additional paperwork and bureaucracy required and a lack of information, guidance and training being made available to IBs regarding guidelines and procedures and a lack of control over the number of under 25s being referred.

4.2 Effectiveness

The delivery of Tús has been highly effective in exceeding its expected full year intake for 2015 at time of writing. This has been achieved as a result of a uniquely targeted approach on young unemployed people and the benefit of an experienced delivery team across the state due to the previous delivery of the programme and a high level of community engagement.

- 93% of IBs felt that the most significant element of the programme funded by the YEI was 12 months work placement which given that many of the participants would not have been previously actively employed would contribute to their sustainable integration onto the labour market.
- Overwhelmingly, IBs felt that the funds were spent on those most in need of support illustrating the importance of investing in activation programmes in rural areas where opportunities for clients are limited. Community groups also gain valuable additions to their work force as with their funding cuts they would not be able to recruit staff. This community engagement aspect of Tús was deemed by 81% to have made a contribution or significant contribution to meeting targets.

- The most significant element of the Youth Guarantee that the Tús programme has been effective in delivering was identified as 'Employment', by a significant margin. Once recruited, support needs of NEET participants are being met through; mentoring, placements and short-term work opportunities, skills audit, training (IT, H&S), ongoing communication with the participant and host organisations and cross referral to other programmes (SICAP and Rural Employment and Education Service)
- Programme Implementers were making excellent progress in meeting targets, based on a self assessment of KPIs provided. This is reinforced by the overall figures for the Tús programme nationwide²⁸ which after just five months in operation the programme has exceeded it's 2015 intake target of 1,000, achieving a figure of 1,070²⁹.
- Other aspects of the Tús programme that were deemed to be effective included the opportunity for self selection giving young people the choice to refer themselves to the programme rather than, from their perspective, being forced onto it and the strategic matching of the skill set of the individual to the community organisation.
- Negative aspects of the programme highlighted included a view that the random selection process for Tús has resulted in a wide geographical spread, making it more difficult to create cohesion between participants.

"We struggle to sustain engagement between the more centralised urban cohort and the more disparate rural areas."

4.3 Efficiency

- There is significant evidence within the feedback that the YEI element of Tús optimised existing partnerships and opportunities to collaborate with other providers at no additional cost with the most significant being; Voluntary & Community Sector organisations, DSP and ETBs.
- Almost 30% of respondents suggest that they would have been able to deliver similar outcomes for the NEET target group under previous funding arrangements.

"We had already been providing these supports prior to the funding being made available."

- However, others felt that YEI interventions provided a clearer focus on the under 25s suggesting that prior to 2015 Tús was not as focused on NEETS and without the YEI intervention, the supports would not have been put in place.

"Stronger focus on improving our engagement with the age group as a consequence of the funding."

²⁸ As at September 30th 2015

²⁹

- Areas of efficiency identified include; Ability to match customers in a timely manner, mentoring, self referral process and shared resources among the IBs. Areas of relative inefficiency identified include; lack of accredited training, inability to offer commercial placements, and information not being user friendly.
- There was evidence of aspects of innovation in engaging participants including collaboration with other providers, case conferences to discuss individual needs, job clubs and job search services, CV development and work readiness training through individual mentoring. However, there is also evidence that some providers appear to be offering little innovation;

“once the person is placed with the local development company - they are with them for a 12 month period and are supported by the local development company and they work with them to integrate them into the local labour market and DSP.”

- Over 80% deemed the monitoring requirements (utilising the OneView system) as appropriate and balanced. However, some respondents proposed that there was duplication of reporting, further guidance was required over what was expected of groups and that if DSP had access to the OneView system it may increase efficiency.
- OneView limitations were identified as not having the capacity to capture soft outcomes, no capacity for tracking once a participant has exited (after 12 months) and a need for additional training for delivery staff.

4.4 Impact

- The role of YEI funding mechanisms was deemed highly important with all Programme Implementers responding to the survey suggesting that without it the level of service would be the same, less or significantly less.
- The core proposed outcomes for NEETS as a result of the programme were identified as confidence & self-esteem (92%), social interaction (88%) and improved attitude to work (84%).
- Whilst it was considered too early to make a judgement on the impact of the YEI intervention on youth unemployment, there were some early indicators that Tús was contributing to reducing youth unemployment – 31% suggesting it had.
- In terms of displacement the overwhelming response was that the Tús initiative was not displacing activities for other groups with one respondent noting that ;

“No. As per the number of active participants on OneView there is a higher percentage of over 25s currently engaged on the scheme. While U25s are increasing, evidence would suggest that there is a high requirement for the skills and experience that the over 25s possess. There is enough variety of placements through community groups to cater for both populations. An integrated approach may be an added benefit to community groups.”

- Overwhelmingly it was felt that Tús would have a positive impact for young people on their future employment chances. This was largely attributed to the mix of improving participants' motivation and confidence, exposing them to the socialising effects of the work place while simultaneously providing prospective employers with evidence that the participant has the necessary skills and abilities to do the job.

5.0 Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

SICAP, which is led nationally by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long term unemployment through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

SICAP's vision is to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment through community development approaches and targeted supports. The programme was rolled out on 1st April 2015 and will run until December 2017. It is the successor programme to the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP). It is a national programme that is led in each County by a Local and Community Development Committee (LCDC).

The objective of the SICAP activities proposed for ESF funding is to support young unemployed people under 25 years of age from disadvantaged groups and communities onto and along an effective pathway towards employment by providing a series of activities locally delivered under the Youth Employment Initiative and then continuing under the ESF investment priority.

This evaluation consulted with the SICAP measure manager, funding liaison and programme directorate staff in Pobal and the 48 Tús Intermediate Bodies. The findings from these consultations are presented in the following section.

5.1 Implementation

- Whilst operating within a national programme framework, SICAP affords sufficient local flexibility to Programme Implementers to be able to respond to local priorities. Individual communities throughout the country have particular needs and circumstances may differ considerably between them. Thus, while SICAP is a national programme, it has sufficient flexibility to be tailored locally to best meet the needs of disadvantaged areas and target groups.
- SICAP is contributing to the Youth Guarantee through a range of defined activities including training; job preparing/job search, work placements and mentoring. As well as achieving defined outcomes of placing people into employment a range of other outcomes will be achieved for a wider set of individuals, who will progress towards employment.
- The structure and role of the LCDCs was an important factor in the implementation strategy for the YEI. Reflecting a diverse and representative mix of the local areas the LCDCs comprise on average, representation comes from the Community & Voluntary sector (24%), Local Government (21%) and State Agencies (17%). The LCDC structure allows for an integrated, coordinated and synergistic approach that meets objectives of SICAP.
- SICAP is appropriately targeted at NEETS who are disadvantaged and face barriers to employment. Their needs are addressed through the preparing for work supports which provide critical learning opportunities to overcome barriers to employment while the training in growth sectors enables participants to develop sustainable employment skills.

The ready for work supports provide participants with real employment and/or training opportunities.

- The involvement in the delivery phase of Programme Implementers with experience of delivering similar programmes was essential as was reflected in feedback regarding the design and function of the delivery system.

“The Partnerships existing strong links within the community and strong links with other agencies provided a strong foundation for delivery.”

- There were a few perceived weaknesses in the delivery design and function that related to the additional layers of reporting and paperwork. Delays in the roll out of the system and the resultant short time scale for delivery (April to December) was deemed to have displaced young people to private sector activation programmes and the need for more intense pre-development support for groups of young people was cited. The issue of data was also prevalent in the feedback with some Programme Implementers suggesting that it was a disincentive and discouraged some young people from participating;

“When dealing with vulnerable young people one must be aware of their sensitivity and the level of form filling required can be a hindrance as opposed to a benefit. The requirement for follow up contact with the young person to capture if their situation has changed within four weeks and 6 months can prove problematic i.e. trying to get a response to progression questions being asked.”

5.2 Effectiveness

- SICAP has a clear strategic fit within YEI as a targeted programme to meet those most at risk of sustained long term unemployment, the implementation strategy delivered by local stakeholders has helped to ensure strong progress against targets. The most recent figures indicate that, 3,467 YEI eligible NEETS³⁰ have received at least one intervention through SICAP , it is anticipated that the national YEI target of 4,000 individual interventions will be achieved in January 2016.
- It is evident that the YEI funds are invested in those most in need of support, the most significant element of the programme funded by the YEI was ‘Education and lifelong learning’ and ‘Progression into employment or self-employment’ at 95.8% illustrating the programmes’ focus. This is reflected in the expenditure to date on the action categories. The SICAP Mid Term review identified that 2/3 of spending had been concentrated on ‘Lifelong learning opportunities’ and ‘Employment Supports’ accounted for some 45%.
- Whilst SICAP interventions are tailored to those with barriers to labour market progression, evidence did emerge that the integrated work placement and continued education approach embedded within the programme is delivering enhanced employability skills. These skills when linked with other interventions on the YEI pathway, such as Tús, build participants capacity to sustain in the labour market. For both Implementers’ and LCDCs alike, the most significant element of the Youth Guarantee that the SICAP programme has been effective in

³⁰ December 18th 2015

delivering was identified as 'Continued Education', ranking higher than 'Employment' in the scale.

- Community Engagement was deemed as a critical aspect of the YEI programme in helping to meet targets suggesting that it had played a contribution or significant contribution. This again illustrates the importance of local knowledge when it comes to targeting those most removed from the labour market.

"Community development in geographical areas and with groups and families which represent those most at risk of NEETS adds value in terms of networks, understanding client group and referral networks."

- Due to the early stage of delivery of the SICAP programme a clear judgement on the appropriateness of the proposed KPIs could not be made other than to reflect that a 'stake' had to be placed to make some progress in measuring effectiveness. There was, however, broad agreement from both Programme Implementers and LCDCs of the need to recognise the more intense intervention for some young people and the additional time needed. This was reflective of the opinion that young people are;

"...not a homogenous group and most need additional supports as there is a major 'welfare culture'. In addition, there are literacy, numeracy, interpersonal, communication and IT skills barriers."

- There is evidence of positive cross-referral to other YEI programmes that demonstrates the strategic fit of programmes within the identified 'pathway'. Many providers have been active in developing measures to target and recruit those most removed from the labour market including outreach and collaboration with other agencies, marketing (press, fliers and social media), door to door calling, good relations with DSP and complementing other ESF programmes, significantly Tús.
- Once recruited, support needs of NEET participants are being met through a range of ongoing mentoring (particularly effective with specific groups such as lone parents and those engaged in substance misuse), small project team work, training (motivation, digital media, IT, communications) that is often tailored around an individual's personal action plan,³¹ engaging with employers, follow up at three and six months and softer skills interventions.
- SICAP provides a range of support for unemployed young people (both on the live register and not on the live register – in line with the national NEET definition) to enable them to benefit from life-long learning opportunities and to bring them closer to employment. The programme of activities can be tailor-made to suit the needs of the participant. The use of the PEX rating system and the HP Deprivation Index will ensure that activities are delivered

³¹ "At the same time, issues affecting disadvantaged young people locally are raised with national organisations such as Youth Work Ireland, the Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed, the European Anti-Poverty Network etc, in the hope that they will influence policy that affects these young people"

to young unemployed people within the most marginalised communities who are furthest from the labour market.

5.3 Efficiency

- There is significant evidence of collaboration with other providers with the most significant, across both partners in the SICAP delivery, being ETBs, Local Enterprise Offices and Schools, Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations and Employers.
- Interestingly, there was no clear indication either way as to whether LCDCs or Programme Implementers felt that they could achieve similar outcomes under previous funding arrangements but there was suggestions that, even though the LCDC structure is relatively new, it allowed for increased local awareness and response to needs. However, it was also suggested that agents were allowed more flexibility under the previous funding regime and that whilst the YEI intervention was welcomed there were significant barriers to engaging the target group that needed to be reflected in delivery and in monitoring;

“It is fantastic that specific funding has been allocated to NEETs under YEI. However, this target group is very difficult to reach and more so in a Rural Area, they are almost invisible, so working with NEETs for us is a massive challenge with the barriers of little by way of jobs in the area and poor public transport.”

- There was a relatively equal split of both LCDCs and Programme Implementers that deemed the monitoring requirements as appropriate and balanced. Detractors point to the excessive reporting and data collection prohibiting on the ground delivery, in fact, suggesting that in some cases it discouraged some people from taking up supports. Moreover, the systems in place do not recognise the complexity of unemployment and lacked the capacity to track so called ‘soft outcomes’.
- The programme focuses on the synergies to be achieved between it and other national, regional and local strategies for social inclusion, activation and community development. By focusing on potential space for synergies it seeks to reduce the duplication of services and thus ensure greater value for money for the Exchequer.

5.4 Impact

- Evidence did emerge that SICAP is delivering an increased net impact when compared against the impact of previous funding arrangements. The role of YEI funding mechanisms was deemed highly important with all seven respondents suggesting that without it the level of service would be the same, less or significantly less (67% of LCDCs and 96% of Programme Implementers). YEI involvement and the provision of this new programme has allowed for a focus on the particular target group of young unemployed people. This was considered important in the light of national funding reductions for social inclusion programmes as YEI funding was seen to augment the funding which is available for work with disadvantaged young people.

- The additional outcomes for NEETS as a result of the programme were identified as confidence & self-esteem (100%), qualifications and training (83%) and social interaction (81%), when averaged across both respondent groups. Such soft outcomes will build resilience to sustain their journey to employment.
- Whilst it was considered too early to make a judgement on the impact of the YEI intervention on youth unemployment, in the absence of contextual data, there were some early indicators that SICAP was contributing to reducing youth unemployment;

“Local CSO figures indicate that the number of those under 25 on the live register is dropping e.g. 764 in April 2015 down to 675 in Oct 2015 = a drop of 89.” “Employment figures for young people have increased as evidenced by Live Register.”

- No evidence emerged of SICAP displacement; the overwhelming response was that the SICAP programme was not displacing interventions for other age groups.

6.0 MOMENTUM

MOMENTUM, a scheme for education and training interventions, which is part of the Government's Action Plan for Jobs initiative, was initially rolled out by the Department of Education and Skills in early 2013 and attracted part funding within Ireland's 2007-13 EU Structural Funds Programme. The programme supports the provision of free education and training projects.

It is delivered by public, private and not-for-profit organisations that can demonstrate links with employers and is commissioned through a tendering process. It consists of a number of projects aimed at significantly improving the employability of young people under 25 who are in receipt of Unemployment Allowance or Unemployment Benefit (UA or UB) for at least 12 months out of the previous 18 months.

The programme is a significant departure from traditional training and education offerings in Ireland. It is a payment-for-outcomes model based on achievement measured at key stages of project delivery. It was designed with reference to labour market intelligence on likely future employment trends, and also in recognition of the particular challenges faced by the long-term unemployed. A further theme within MOMENTUM 1 focussed on the long term unemployed who were under 25 years of age.

Given its focus on skills, employment and sustainability in employment and its successful delivery to Under 25s in MOMENTUM 1, the 2014-16 MOMENTUM programme was embedded within the YGIP and the 18-24 age cohort within the YEI. The programme is managed by SOLAS on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills; SOLAS is the new Further Education and Training Authority in Ireland and is responsible for funding, planning and co-ordinating training and further education programmes.

The MOMENTUM Programme is one of a number of programmes that have been incorporated into the recently launched *Skills to Work* initiative (skillstowork.ie). *Skills to Work* is aimed at making it easier for jobseekers and employers to access the Government skills initiatives that are available, and to encourage businesses to employ people currently on the Live Register.

The programme is broadly split into four six month phases, tendering for the current MOMENTUM programme started in early 2014 and concluded in September 14, recruitment to the programme took place up until March 15, and delivery took place until the end October 15 with post training supports available until March 16.

Registration happens through a web portal which is operated by DSP, systems include PLSS, BOMI, LSS & PLSS, and efficiency is achieved in that providers deliver the training but also access a range of employers. The programme is jobs-focused and is based on a payment by results approach with 9 separate payments to providers possible through the recruitment, delivery and post completion stages of the programme.

This evaluation consulted with the MOMENTUM training and contract manager and the 35 providers within the 2014-16 MOMENTUM programme. The findings from these consultations are outlined in the following section.

6.1 Implementation

- MOMENTUM is situated within the socio-economic context of those who are relatively close to the labour market and who are capable of sustaining entry level employment. It is a programme that can tangibly tackle the issue of youth unemployment and contribute to the Youth Guarantee as it is a payment by outcomes model designed to reward employers who can sustain young NEETS in the programme over the two year period.
- MOMENTUM is an innovative initiative to assist long-term unemployed people to gain the skills needed to access work in growth sectors of the economy where there are job opportunities. It is conceptually designed to utilise resources to provide solutions to the needs of both unemployed individuals and employers within themes supporting occupational clusters where demand and vacancies exist within Labour Market sectors. The identification of these occupational clusters is based on strong regularly updated Labour Market intelligence.
- The Under 25 YEI element of MOMENTUM was rolled out in early 2015, its implementation has been shaped by the success of its precursor programme which on its conclusion in mid - December 2014³² a total of 3,532 long-term unemployed people had finished a MOMENTUM Programme training course. Of these there was a positive outcome for 1,333 individuals, or almost 40% of this group. 617 of these finishers were under 25, with 38% achieving a positive outcome i.e. progressing to employment or further education. Over 50%³³ of those who started the MOMENTUM Programme were signed-off the Live Register at the end of the programme (December 2014).
- The current programme is primarily targeting under 25s as evidenced by survey respondents. On average 34% of trainees are under 25 on the MOMENTUM Programme. The majority of respondents (58.8%) said there was an emphasis placed on their capacity to deliver the programme to under 25s, several commented that it had been clearly stated that 33% of places should be filled by under 25s.

6.2 Effectiveness

- Under 25s are integrated with other age groups and this creates a positive dynamic in that the under 25s tend to behave more maturely in the mixed age group than if it was their own age. Positive feedback around the design & implementation of MOMENTUM exclusively for the under 25s focused on the additional four weeks additional work placement for under 25s and the targeting of interventions and support to young people, although some found the additional 4 weeks unnecessary.
- Given its focus on skills, employment and sustainability in employment and its successful delivery to under 25s in MOMENTUM 1, the 2014-16 MOMENTUM programme is effectively positioned to contribute to the Youth Guarantee and sustain the YEI cohort aged 18-24 within the labour market.

³² End of Momentum 1 Programme

³³DSP/SOLAS Client Services System

“Other programmes have outcomes that are highly focused on certification and not the desired outcome of employment. Certification is important/desirable but not essential in all cases. Experience is the key!” (MOMENTUM Measure Manager)

- There have been structural difficulties in recruiting to the 2014 programme as there are less unemployed people than for the 2011-13 programme. The currently programme (2014-16) is slightly below target with 1,777 starts against a target of 2,000³⁴. Harder to reach participants will require greater investment and support. The internal changes with the introduction of Intreo offices has impacted positively on DSPs ability to recruit and activate clients for the programme as DSP complete the career guidance assessment before referring to MOMENTUM.
- Given the phased nature of the programme, no hard outcomes on sustainable employment will be available until March 2016 at the earliest. Early indications are positive in that when comparing dropout rates thus far, the current MOMENTUM programme has a dropout rate of 28% against the overall dropout rate for MOMENTUM 1 which was 45%
- One to one support is offered by many of the respondents to support the needs of under 25 participants such as additional 1:1 coaching and mentoring and additional training time to address key issues such as time management and interviews. There have been some innovative interventions to help ensure sustainable integration into the labour market for participants including utilising mentors, guest speakers and on-site visits. YEI under 25s training includes an additional 8 weeks around life skills to meet their particular support needs.

“The big issue is that the young people recruited to the programme can lack confidence and motivation. They will be going into entry level jobs and maybe don’t understand the value of work beyond money. There is a need to build confidence to develop they believe that they can do the job beyond the skills training.”

- *MOMENTUM Measure Manager*

6.3 Efficiency

- The most common organisations respondents are collaborating with to deliver the programme are DSP (100%), Employers (100%) and Local Enterprise Offices (70.6%). 43.8% of respondents said they don’t think they could have delivered similar outcomes for the under 25 target group as efficiently using previous or alternative funding arrangements, while 43.8% said they did not know.
- Efficient data collection systems are in place which navigated MOMENTUM through its previous programme funded through the 2007-13 EU programme. It meets all of the YEI

³⁴ Meeting with Momentum Manager November 6th 2015

reporting requirements. Data is well defined and verifiable within the 56 contracts with 35 providers.

- Areas of delivery that have been inefficient include the difficulty in maintaining contact with under 25s and a perceived mismatching of learners (several respondents suggested that an interview process would have been beneficial).
- The vast majority of survey respondents (93.8%) felt that the monitoring requirements were appropriate and balanced to ensure efficient delivery. However, respondents also suggested that there was too much bureaucracy;

“There is too much bureaucracy that has little impact on the success for the participant.”

- A majority of survey respondents felt that their reporting system is effective (62.5%) or very effective (31.3%) with comments including:

“The overall reporting system is effective in establishing the effect of the training intervention on the under 25s. It provides an opportunity to capture the progress and needs of each client.”

6.4 Impact

- Half of respondents felt there would have been fewer services for under 25s in the absence of the EU YEI Funding.

“This is a very powerful intervention for the under 25s. There is nothing similar that we are aware of.”

- The largest perceived impacts for the under 25s completing the MOMENTUM programme are; improved attitudes to work (94.1%), transferable skills (82.4%), qualifications and training (94.1%).
- The majority of respondents (70.6%) feel that there is evidence of reduction in unemployment in their area. While some felt it was too early to say for sure;
- The programme is additional and complements other interventions rather than offering displacing outcomes from other groups;

“The other displaced groups in question also had access to take part in the MOMENTUM courses and had the same potential to gain employment.”

- Many providers that engaged in the survey (64.7%) were involved in the delivery of the 2012-14 programme and that; the new programme is open to over 25s also;

“During this round of MOMENTUM 2015 we have a 50/50 split of under 25s and over 25s. More resources need to put into the under 25 age category but it seems that the additional resources this year has increased our progression rates to date with more young people becoming employed.”

7.0 JobBridge

JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme, is designed to assist individuals bridge the gap between unemployment and the world of work. It provides those seeking employment with an opportunity to undertake a 6 or 9 month internship in a host organisation. Participation on the scheme will assist in breaking that cycle whereby unemployed people are unable to get a job without experience but are unable to get experience without a job. On completing their internship, participants will have improved their prospects of securing employment. 18,000 organisations across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors currently provide internships throughout Ireland.

Participants are paid an Internship Allowance equivalent to their prior Social Welfare payment plus €50 weekly. All participants must be NEETs (Not in Employment Education and Training) as defined by the nationally agreed YEI definition, under 25 at the point of commencement and meet the scheme's eligibility of being 3 months in receipt of a DSP payment within the last 6 months, not exclusively live register as they can be eligible through an ETB course. Host organisations must register with JobBridge through the National Contact Centre in Edenderry prior to advertising available internships. The internships are put on the Jobs Ireland website (www.jobsireland.ie) where eligible participants apply directly to the host organisation with proof of eligibility.

JobBridge has been in operation since 2011, numbers on the programme have reduced significantly in the past year from 6,900 in Q3 2014 to the recent available figure of 4,800³⁵. The YEI co-financing arrangement for under 25s who are NEET began on 1st February 2015 with 1,149 people young people under 25 currently on the programme. Over the period of the YEI, the target number for under 25s completing the programme is 4,990³⁶ JobBridge has consistently achieved positive outcomes, the 2013 evaluation of the programme found that 36% of participants secured employment immediately with their host organisation and 51% were in employment within 6 months of completing the programme³⁷.

In addition to the existing JobBridge internship, a developmental internship variant for the most disadvantaged young people, First Steps was launched in April 2015, it is aimed at the very marginalised, and the first internship started in April. However uptake to the programme has been slow with just under 50 currently on the programme. The main barrier has been the commitment of the host organisations to making work experience places available for young people with low levels of educational attainment and/or long periods of unemployment and/or other social barriers to employment, with the preferred option that these places will include a certified training element accredited by the national qualifications authority.

Some reasonable adjustments were made in the design of First Steps such as reducing it to a four day week and forging closer relationships between the Intreo Case Officer, participant and host company based around the monitoring of a progression plan for the participant. However due to the lack of uptake, activation to the programme has now been stalled with a review team looking at a new framework for the programme to accelerate uptake. Options being considered include

³⁵ End of September 2015

³⁶ PEIL Activity Implementation Plan 2014-2020

³⁷ Indecon's evaluation of Jobtrack April 2013

allowing smaller companies to participate³⁸ and making it mandatory for those young people selected.

Main JobBridge numbers have plummeted from 6,900, one year ago to 4,800 currently, the economy is improving. 2015 has been about putting in place the processes and procedures to track and claim through YEI which commenced in February . There is a new reporting system being implemented which will include participant household data, tracking and impact reporting. There is also a wider evaluation of JobBridge which will be concluded in June 2016 which will inform future developments

The EU Funding Compliance Unit within DSP is an Intermediate Body responsible for the implementation, whilst the Employer Engagement Team in DSP runs the scheme on a day-to-day basis.³⁹Both units meet regularly to implement the policies required for YEI reporting.

This evaluation consulted with the measure manager and policy unity for JobBridge, the EU compliance unit and employment support services in DSP. An electronic survey was also circulated to all JobBridge case officers dealing with the under 25s. The findings from the consultations are described in the following sections

7.1 Implementation

- The JobBridge programme is situated within the socio economic context of those who would be deemed relatively close to the labour market as it is targeted at enabling participants to gain experience between study and the beginning of their working lives. The programme is jobs focused; since it began in 2011, 4123 (37.1%) of the 11,148 young people under 25 who have completed a placement progressed into employment immediately with either the host organisation or another organisation. Though labour market conditions have changed, it is evident that the programme has and will continue to contribute to the Youth Guarantee.
- Intreo Case Officers are targeting/recruiting NEETs through a range of activities including; activated DSP clients, group information sessions, open days/open calls for under 25s and collaboration with other Case Officers, employer engagement directly and communication with ETBs, job clubs, group information sessions and other partnership companies. It is evident from this that the delivery mechanism for the YEI designed around a fully functioning responsive activation process is fit for purpose to deliver the YEI interventions.
- There are synergies between JobBridge and other YEI activation programmes such as JobsPlus, evidence emerged that both clients and employers on upon completion of JobsPlus move to the JobsPlus incentive scheme. This reinforces the concept of YEI as an employment pathway building resilience for sustainable integration into the labour market illustrated in the Theory of Change (page 19).

³⁸ Host company with staff base of <200

³⁹ JobBridge Policy Unit

- JobBridge compliments broader youth policy around choice and digital inclusion. The initial activation is voluntary and choice led, young people are referred to the website (www.jobbridge.ie) where they can find out more and register. This activation approach can deliver positive employment outcomes in a more efficient manner.

7.2 Effectiveness

- JobBridge combines work placement with training, education, lifelong learning and collaboration to build the capacity of young people to bridge the gap between study and the beginning of their working lives. This 6-9 month programme is effectively positioned in the employment pathway for sustainable integration into the labour market for that element of the NEETS's cohort who are relatively close to the labour market.
- The JobBridge variant initiative 'First Steps' is targeted at young people with low levels of educational attainment and/or long periods of unemployment and/or other social barriers to employment. The design of the initiative acknowledges that those furthest from the labour market require additional supports to increase employability. However, take up of the initiative by this specific NEETS cohort has been slow. As a result, activation to the initiative has now stopped with a review ongoing.
- It was evident that the programme is creating extra work through administration and time required for clients who need,

“Extra encouragement to engage in the process and to ensure the correct intervention is chosen by both the case officer and the client. There is also additional pressure with ensuring copies of paperwork are kept and clients are monitored in line with YEI guidelines.”

- The limitations of participants having to be three months in receipt of a DSP benefit eligibility can hinder activation. The Intreo process will sometimes call young people who are still some weeks or even months from satisfying the eligibility criteria, this can lead to a sense of frustration among both clients and case officers.
- In order to sustain client's integration in the labour market some case officers are being proactive in targeting employers to advertise a First Steps vacancy and engaging with the ETB to set up appropriate training. In addition, making employers aware that JobBridge participants are eligible for Jobs Plus illustrates an effective use of the pathway of programmes within YEI.

7.3 Efficiency

In the absence of unit costs per programme and per target group, we focused our analysis of efficiency around administration, optimisation of existing resources and partnership and collaboration.

- The overall approach of DSP as the activation agency for the YEI programmes is underpinned by a focus on improving the quality of existing provision and optimising existing resources.

While this may be driven somewhat by resource constraints, it is nonetheless prudent and is delivering results.

- There is robust evidence of collaboration with other providers such as; Employers (94%) and ETBs (71%). A significant 82% of Case Officers felt that the monitoring requirements were appropriate and balanced. Monitoring ranges from 100% of case load over 3 months to 10% of all interns, with ESF clients as a priority group.
- There is a sense within the case officer group that their internal reporting system is providing them with the information that can help them manage their caseload better in addition to satisfying YEI reporting requirements. The Activation Case Management System enables case officers to record key data in the journey towards employment of the client ensuring that interventions are timely and anticipate transition points in the VET journey.

7.4 Impact

- The additional programme outcomes for NEETS other than direct employment and accreditation were identified as confidence & self - esteem, improved attitude to work, transferable skills (communication, teamwork etc.) and social interaction.
- Whilst it was considered too early to make a judgement on the impact of the YEI intervention on youth unemployment, in the absence of contextual data, there were some early indicators that JobBridge was contributing to reducing youth unemployment – 64% of Case Officers suggesting it had and commenting;

“Placement rates appear to be over 60% which is a very good outcome.”

- In terms of displacement the overwhelming response was that the JobBridge programme was not displacing activities for other groups in fact suggesting that the specialist provision of the programme was unique and tailored to the under 25s. Case Officers who also work with the over 25s felt that an equivalent level of DSP resources were invested for the over 25s.

8.0 JobsPlus

JobsPlus has been operational since July 2013 with the objective of supporting longer term jobseekers back into work. The initiative is targeted at employers to incentivise them to recruit additional employees from the live register. Young people who are classified as low-medium probability of exit (PEX) by the Department of Social Protection will be provided with certification that they qualify for the subsidy and will be in a position to use this certification in job applications with employers.

'JobsPlus Youth', the YEI intervention for those under 25 began on 12th February 2015, the activity implementation plan specified a target of 1,800 participants and 1,260 completers of the two year programme, as of 31st October 2015, there were 721 young people on the programme broadly in line with target. The employer incentives are equivalent to €10,000 over two years to employers recruiting a person who was unemployed for over 2 years, or €7,500 over two years for employers for recruiting a person who was unemployed for between 1 and 2 years.

Employment Support Services (ESS) which is a section within DSP based in Carrick on Shannon run the service and are the activation agent for both the NEET and the employer. DSP advertise the scheme nationally to both employers and participants, employers register on-line as do the participants, the impetus for the participant to apply will in most cases come after a group engagement and a 1-1 interview with the Intreo case officer.

Employers select participants for interview from the on-line registration portal and confirm recruitment through the portal which triggers the incentive payment. Intreo is a new service from the Department of Social Protection providing a single point of contact for all employment and income supports. Designed to provide a more streamlined approach, Intreo offers practical, tailored employment services and supports for jobseekers and employers alike.

'JobsPlus Youth' is being integrated to a new reporting system which will generate activity reports and track outcomes for participants. Currently, reporting is based around new starts on the scheme with no tracking of exits from the programme. As it is a two year programme, the first tranche of data on outcomes for those who commenced in February 2014 will not be available until February 2016 at the earliest.

This evaluation consulted with the measure manager, employment policy unit, the EU compliance unit and employment support services in DSP. An electronic survey was also circulated to all JobsPlus case officers dealing with the under 25s. The findings from the consultations are described in the following sections.

8.1 Implementation

- Eligibility for JobsPlus was broadened in February 2015 to provide for the Government's commitments in respect of the Youth Employment Initiative to enable the subsidy to be paid to employers who recruited jobseekers aged under 25 years of age and on the live register for four months in the previous six months. This element of the programme was subsequently branded JobsPlus Youth.

- ‘JobsPlus Youth’ is situated within the socio economic context of those who would be assessed with a low to medium PEX. It is jobs focused which is where it will contribute to the Youth Guarantee, targeted at employers who take on additional employees from the live register which is incentivised. ‘JobsPlus Youth’ is jobs focussed YEI intervention designed to deliver immediate results in the reduction of Youth Unemployment. Whilst it is too early to judge the impact of this intervention, recent figures as of 31st October 2015 are encouraging with 721 young people being supported by ‘JobPlus Youth’⁴⁰ by 432 employers.
- It is evident that the programme complements other interventions designed to increase the employability of the young NEET, the initial Intreo assessment and progression plan is shaped by participant’s existing level of education and training, additional supports such as courses or skills training may be prescribed to maintain the pathway towards achieving employment as the end goal.
- The availability of JobsPlus Youth as a programme for Case Officers is seen as a positive activation tool for clients in their work to reduce youth unemployment pointing specifically to the reduced qualifying time from 12 to 4 months as a key driver;

“As part of employer engagement team reducing the qualifying period to four months has made this cohort more attractive to prospective employers and has also increased our pool of JobsPlus eligible jobseekers.”

- The targeted group, those with a low to medium PEX include young people with more challenging needs, requiring additional resources in terms of case officer time. It is evident that such important needs are being addressed.

“For those clients who are between 18 - 20yrs with no training/experience it can be difficult to get them to see the advantage of considering this option - it can take a couple of interviews and the incentive of additional training or education support to convince them this option is the best way to go.”

- JobsPlus Intreo Case Officers are targeting and recruiting NEETs through a range of activities including; group information sessions, open days/open calls for under 25s and collaboration with other Case Officers, employer engagement directly and communication with ETBs and Local Employment Services. It is evident from this that the delivery mechanism designed around a fully functioning responsive activation process is fit for purpose to deliver the YEI interventions.

8.2 Effectiveness

- JobsPlus is effective in its contribution to sustainable integration of young people into the labour market as it provides a two year job programme with additional supports around education and training if required all of which are designed to move the young person into fully paid employment at the end of the programme.
- In order to sustain client’s integration in the labour market some case officers are being proactive in targeting young people who have completed the JobBridge internship scheme

⁴⁰ DSP, Employment & Activation Policy

without achieving full employment and activating them quickly with JobsPlus. This can also be an incentive for employers to recruit a young person who has recently completed an internship.

- It was evident that the programme requires additional administration and time required for clients who need;

“extra encouragement to engage in the process and to ensure the correct intervention is chosen by both the case officer and the client. There is also additional pressure with ensuring copies of paperwork are kept and clients are monitored in line with YEI guidelines.”

- JobsPlus is effective in complimenting broader youth policy around choice and digital inclusion. The initial activation is voluntary and choice led, young people are referred to the JobsPlus portal where they can find out more and register. This activation approach can motivate young people to engage through a smart device.

8.3 Efficiency

- Whilst there is no data available on the unit costs per type of operation and per target group for JobsPlus Youth, data from July 2013, when the main JobsPlus initiative became operational, to the end of June 2014 found that the programme achieved a net benefit to the Exchequer of €12,407 per annum for each employee⁴¹. The average level of subsidy paid amounted to just over €373.78 per employee per month. This compares favourably with the average value of the payment of jobseeker allowance of over €219 per week in respect of each employee previously on the live register before commencing employment with JobsPlus support.
- The overall approach of DSP as the activation agency for the YEI programmes is underpinned by a focus on improving the quality of existing provision and optimising existing resources. While this may be driven somewhat by resource constraints, it is nonetheless prudent and is delivering results. The 2015 review found that the programme had achieved its aims in respect of, the level of application from employers and jobseekers, providing a simplified implementation and administrative framework has been achieved and activating the long term unemployed.
- There is robust evidence of collaboration with other providers such as; Employers (89%) and ETBs (44%). A noteworthy 80% of Case Officers feel that the monitoring requirements are not appropriate and balanced perhaps due to the lack of a specific monitoring system. Some Case Officers demonstrated that they utilise basic spreadsheets but that the proposed BOMI system will rectify this.

8.4 Impact

- The additional outcomes achieved for NEETS as a result of the programme were identified as improved attitude to work (100%), confidence & self- esteem (81%), transferable skills

⁴¹ Update of JobsPlus Interim Review Final 19 May 2015, Department of Social Protection

(communication, teamwork etc.) and reduced barriers to employment (access issues, antisocial behaviour etc.) (76%) Such softer outcomes can build resilience to sustain the young person in the labour market.

- Whilst it was considered too early to make a judgement on the impact of the YEI intervention on youth unemployment, in the absence of contextual data, there were some early indicators that JobsPlus was contributing to reducing youth unemployment – 37% of Case Officers suggesting it had and commenting;

“Live register has dropped but I do not have statistical analysis to indicate the impact of YEI funded JobsPlus”.

“Our feeling from employers is that it is having a positive effect.”

- In terms of displacement the overwhelming response was that the JobsPlus programme was not displacing activities for other groups in fact suggesting that the specialist provision of the programme was important;

“Under 25s were particularly affected by the recession lots of them have no work experience so they need incentives for employers to take them on.”

9.0 Conclusions and recommendations

This section provides a summary of the conclusions and recommendations from the YEI evaluation.

9.1 Overall Conclusion

It is widely recognised that the picture of unemployment, including youth unemployment, in Ireland is an improving one. CSO data clearly indicates a correlation in timing with the fall in unemployment and the commencement of the YEI programmes. While it is not possible at this juncture to measure the extent to which YEI interventions have contributed to the reduction in youth unemployment, based on the findings of this first YEI evaluation we would view the contribution of the YEI interventions to be noteworthy.

“Ireland has come a long way in the past five years. Determined efforts ...have paid off. Ireland has emerged from the crisis with a strengthened and more efficient public administration and a much improved labour market regime”

- OECD Economic Survey Ireland (September 2015)

9.1.1 Implementation

Ireland’s strategy for YEI implementation was designed around using a range of existing training and employment based activation programmes to target interventions to NEETS in the age range 15-24. Each YEI measure is aligned to a specific marginalised or disadvantaged cohort within a particular socio-economic profile, with interventions designed to meet their particular needs and move them closer to employment. YEI interventions encapsulate all employability supports on the employment pathway including, achieving basic qualifications, community based schemes for long term unemployed, internships and employer incentivised job programmes.

The role of the relevant Government Departments was critical in steering their existing programmes to meet the requirements of the YEI. SOLAS with the DES were pivotal in shaping Youthreach as the main offering for NEETS aged 15-20 who are/were outside of mainstream education. SOLAS are also the measure manager for the MOMENTUM programme; the programme achieved very successful employment outcomes in its 2011-13 phase and its links with employers provides a quick response to addressing youth unemployment for those close to entry level jobs within the labour market

Planning for the YEI activation programmes was led by the Department of Social Protection (DSP); the role of the EU Funding Compliance Unit within DSP was a critical one in translating the reporting requirements of the EU Managing Authority across the policy and employment support functions within DSP. The inclusion of the SICAP programme within the YEI ensured that those most disadvantaged and marginalised would benefit from customised support to meet their needs to build their employability to offset poverty and social exclusion. The ethos of community engagement and partnership is strongly embedded within the SICAP programme and provides an access point for the hard to reach NEETS which would not be available through mainstream statutory provision.

The YEI implementation strategy was closely aligned with Ireland’s Youth Guarantee implementation Plan (YGIP) ‘Pathways to Work’. DSP, as the lead organisation for the Youth Guarantee, has consulted effectively with a wide range of existing and new partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors in Ireland⁴² on the National Youth Guarantee Model. This partnership model is

⁴² Section 2.3

now operating at both the macro (national policy formulation) and micro (local delivery) level. This improved collaborative approach to service provision across all sectors has impacted positively on the planning and delivery of the YEI.

The YEI has benefitted from and has contributed to improving the quality and focus of existing provision especially via the Intreo activation process and implementing the OECD recommendation to reduce the eligibility for some measures from 12 months to 4 months. The YEI measures are framed around an employment pathway with cross referral opportunities to assist progression between, Tús & SICAP for the long term unemployed and JobBridge and JobsPlus for those closer to the labour market.

Overall we would conclude that the YEI implementation strategy had clarity in terms of its socio-economic context, targeted the relevant groups effectively, made provision for the support needs of these groups and manifested a partnership approach at both local and national level

9.1.2 Effectiveness

The EC Guidance of the evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative informs that

“The ultimate objective against which the general effectiveness of the YEI should be evaluated is thus the sustainable integration into the labour market of young people not in employment, education or training below 25 years of age (30 if so decided by the Member State). The focus here is on long term results for participants.”

Early indications are that the YEI employment pathway design contains the requisite mix of education, training, work placement and employment based supports to sustain young people in the labour market. Whilst this evaluation is satisfied that YEI funds are being invested in interventions for disadvantaged young people and those from marginalised communities, it is too early to measure the contribution of the particular YEI intervention to actual sustainable integration which at a minimum would require six months participation post YEI intervention. We would point to the quality and rigour of the employment supports available through, for example, MOMENTUM and JobsPlus, which are two years in duration and are based on labour market intelligence around emerging and growth areas in the economy and the resultant potential for the sustained integration of participants to the labour market.

A significant challenge within the programme has been the divergence between the DSP focus on simple measure of success, accessing employment, and the softer aspects of Labour Market Activation Programmes reflective of a spectrum of need of young people with more complex issues requiring more intensive support.

The Youth Guarantee country report for Ireland published in March 2015 had implications for the YEI, among the conclusions within the report was;

“More measures need to be implemented, within the Youth Guarantee, to improve the situation of young people. Currently, there is a nine-month waiting period for young people who have been assessed to have a medium or high probability of exiting unemployment. The Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee recommends young people receive a good-

quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education to avoid scarring effects.

It must be acknowledged that the EU commission's conclusion is accurate in that it refers directly to the phased approach to the implementation of the youth guarantee described in 'Pathways to Work';

"Starting in 2014 – and for completion by the end of 2015 processes and programmes will be progressively rolled out to ensure that all those young unemployed people assessed as having a medium-to-high probability of finding employment will, if still unemployed after nine months, receive a Youth Guarantee Offer"

Despite this not adhering to the Commission's stipulation of a Youth Guarantee offer within four months, the YEI is shaped significantly by developments in the economy and in the labour market, in the period since the publication of the Commission's in March 2015 to the end of October 2015, youth unemployment dropped from just over 22% to 19.7%⁴³. YEI programmes such as JobsPlus, JobBridge and Momentum are designed to deliver employment outcomes to the medium–high PEX cohort to ensure that the numbers still unemployed after 9 months are negligible. We would conclude that the phased implementation approach of the YGIP focussing on those with low PEX as the priority for the 4 month youth guarantee is still valid.

We would also point to the difficulty in implementing absolutely the Youth Guarantee based on the 4 month youth guarantee offer. Ireland has a stock of long-term unemployed youth who were already unemployed for periods longer than 4 months. So, even as the YEI programmes address new entrants under 25 into the Youth Guarantee (including an offer within 4 months), programmes and processes are still required to activate this cohort and this is being done through a structured engagement process for those already unemployed for over 12 months, hence the allocation of places on the YEI programmes that target the long-term unemployed: Tús, SICAP and MOMENTUM.

9.1.3 Efficiency

In the absence of unit costs per operation and per target group, our analysis of efficiency has focused on improving the quality of and levels of innovation within existing provision and optimising partnerships and collaborative working. Many delivery agents are engaging in an efficient use of resources through collaboration with other agencies to ensure additionality through signposting and cross referral. As evidenced below in Figure 5 below, there was a high level of collaboration across all programmes. The agencies with which programmes were most active in collaborating with were:

- Employers

⁴³ Fig 1 Pg 12

- Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, and
- Education and Training Boards.

Data offered by the IGEES Labour Market Synopsis sourced from DSD/FÁS illustrates that in 2012 Tús and JobBridge offered a cost per case of €16,940.50 and €11,605.80 respectively based on a simple -assessment of expenditure and number of

participants. This offers some baseline of efficiency against which 2018 analysis can be judged. It is too early in the implementation of YEI to make even these basic assessments with projects only a few months into provision and requiring this first year to embed the programme, processes and recruitment/activation.

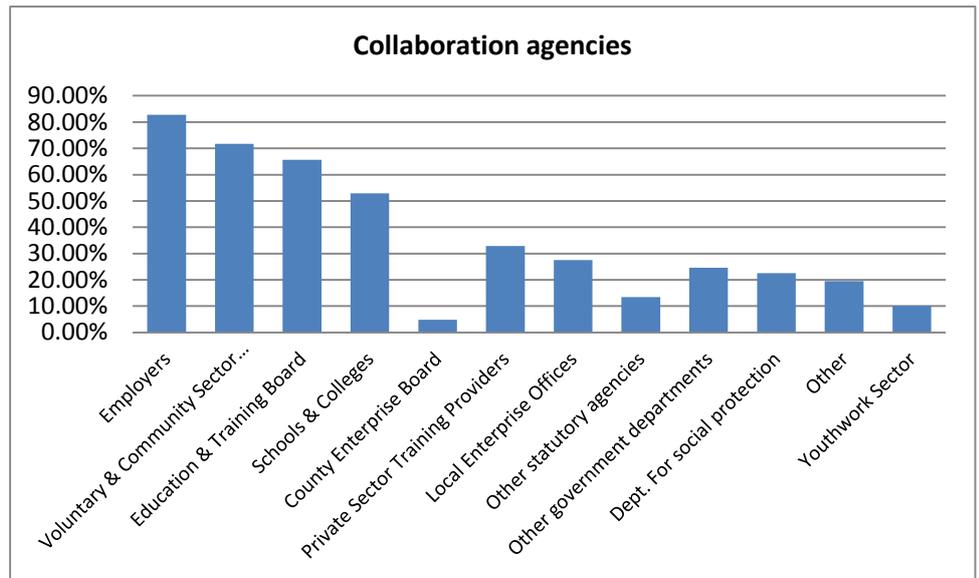


Figure 5: Areas of collaboration

For the proposed 2018 evaluation, consideration should be given to an assessment of efficiency of

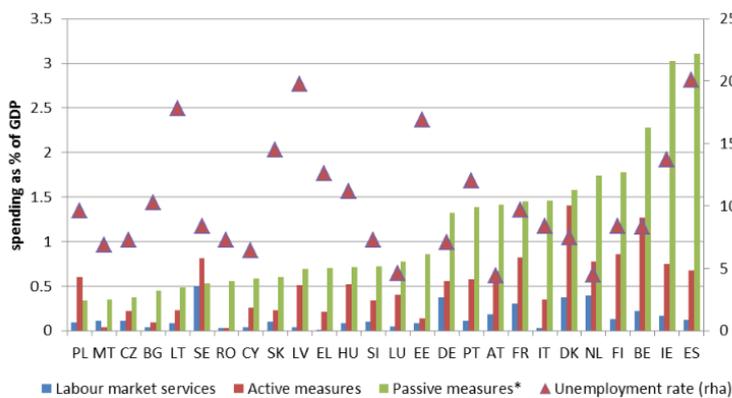


Figure 6: Expenditure on unemployment benefits and ALMP (% of GDP) and unemployment – Source: Eurostat LMP database

performance relative to a control group such as a non-eligible YEI area⁴⁴.

Data from the EU⁴⁵ on active labour market policies across member states shows a relatively effective use of interventions to tackle unemployment, specifically passive measures in Ireland. The report concludes that;

“Higher unemployment rates are generally countered by a mix of passive and active labour market policies. However, as shown, expenditure on active labour market policies is indeed more likely to reduce unemployment with a lower fiscal cost as savings may be generated on passive policies such as unemployment benefits (countries in the left half are suffering from high unemployment rates, while too low investments in active measures are made)”.

⁴⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/24_almp_and_employment_services.pdf

⁴⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/24_almp_and_employment_services.pdf

9.1.4 Impact

In the absence of data on YEI employment outcomes and the resultant impact of YEI support on future employment sustainability, we did consider a range of impacts based on the wider effects of the programme.

The identified and perceived impact for young unemployed people from the YEI interventions, as measured by feedback from 165 Programme Implementers, IBs etc., illustrates the wider effects of the programmes and reflects the opinions of many respondents that there are non-absolute outcomes that should be measured as an indicator of success for the programmes but also of the progression of unemployed young people. As illustrated in figure 7 the most common proposed outcomes were:

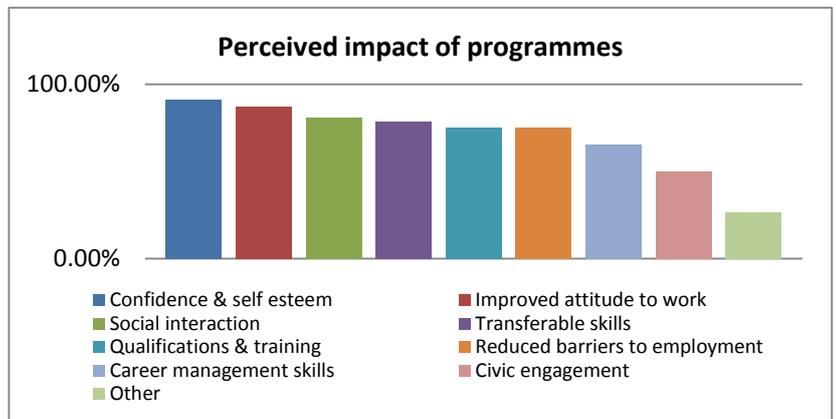


Figure 7: Perceived impact of YEI Programmes

- Confidence and self-esteem,
- Improved attitude to work, and;
- Social interaction.

We have, during the course of our consultations with YEI stakeholders, also sought to evaluate early indications of impact on larger scale policy and structural impact. We are satisfied that there is no evidence of displacement of employment solutions for those over 25 and other targeting segments. The YEI implementation period has witnessed the embedding of larger scale structural change which has impacted positively on the process. In the course of this change the Department of Social Protection took over responsibility for Community Employment and Employment Services. Intreo offices were established as the first point of contact for jobseekers including those under 25, and became the gateway for unemployed learners seeking training support.

SOLAS (the Further Education and Training Authority) replaced FÁS (the National Training and Employment Authority). Former FÁS Training Centres were transferred to the new Education and Training Boards, who took over responsibility for the management of training delivery. This included Contracted Training and funding for Community Training Centres, Local Training Initiatives and Specialist Training Provision.

Whilst the YEI cannot claim a contribution to such structural change, we would contend that the national and local partnership embedded within the YGIP can be attributed to an extent to the YEI; the absolute measure of that extent should be captured in a wider impact assessment within the 2018 evaluation.

Our consultation and stakeholder surveys have identified a range of issues of strategy and implementation of the programme to enable us to conclude that the strategic and operational approach adopted was critical to a successful implementation for the YEI. Whilst it remains too early

in the development and delivery of the programme to make robust assessments of effectiveness, efficiency and impact, there is emerging evidence that YEI programmes are making a collective contribution to the objectives of YEI, the extent and measurability of such should also be addressed in the 2018 evaluation

9.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the evaluation, engagement with key stakeholder of the YEI programmes and the survey results a series of recommendations are offered to inform the future delivery of the programmes.

9.2.1 Funding draw down and reporting

With an array of different tools and systems utilised by each programme it is important that Managing Authority and Intermediate and Beneficiary Bodies utilise the most effective systems to ensure maximum draw down of EU funding, as required by EU regulations;

“In order to ensure that the results of the YEI are clearly demonstrated and communicated, specific monitoring and evaluation, as well as information and publicity arrangements should be envisaged.”

- Regulation (EU) No. 1304/2013 (12)

As such, it is proposed that training on programme monitoring is provided by the ESF compliance unit to relevant DSP staff, delivery organisations and stakeholders especially those agencies with no prior experience of EU funding reporting requirements. Progress on reporting milestones within the PEIL data collection summary action plan and funding drawdown should be tabled and discussed at the twice yearly meeting of the monitoring committee. It must be noted that no timeline was evident to this evaluation for the drawdown of the YEI funding other than that presented by the N+3rule.

9.2.2 Clarity of targets and situation post 2015

Evaluative feedback has illustrated an element of uncertainty regarding targets and timelines for YEI delivery and end dates as per the Activity Implementation Plan for each measure. The YEI programme was frontloaded for delivery in 2014 and 2015, yet many of the programmes only commenced during 2015 and are unsure about the duration of the YEI interventions. We would recommend that the ESF compliance unit issue a circular to all measure managers clarifying the situation regarding YEI delivery and associated targets for 2016.

9.2.3 JobBridge ‘First Steps’

The JobBridge ‘First Steps’ programme for disadvantaged youth launched in 2015, was designed to broaden and deepen the level of supports offered in respect of those young people who continue to be unemployed within an improving labour market. Take up to the programme was slow and the initiative was suspended in the second half of 2015 pending a review. We would recommend that the review considers a community based approach to delivery with dedicated case officer time invested in meeting the more intense support needs of the disadvantaged participants and employer engagement in partnership with community organisations. Should this not be possible within the guidelines of statutory provision, the review team should then consider commissioning specialist community based employment support organisations to deliver this service. A similar function was delivered by the local employment services (LES) prior to Intreo.

This is reflective of the EU Regulation No. 1304/2013 which suggests that;

“The ESF should aim to promote employment, improve access to the labour market, paying particular attention to those who are furthest from the labour market and support voluntary labour mobility.”

This in turn helps to ensure that those most removed from the labour market are targeted and supported by organisations with local knowledge and experience of engaging young people and long term unemployed;

“Early intervention for U25s is hugely beneficial as it can break cycle of long term unemployment and long term social welfare payments, which can have negative consequences on ability, confidence and life chances.

9.2.4 NEETs

The Youth Guarantee country report for Ireland published in March 2015 concluded that;

“Ireland (also) lacks a more comprehensive outreach strategy regarding, specifically, people not in employment, education nor training who are not active in the labour force. The data on involuntary temporary employment as a result of employer uncertainty arising from the financial and economic crisis also shows the importance of providing good-quality offers of employment or education, traineeships or apprenticeships relevant to labour market needs and leading to permanent jobs.”

As such, consideration should be given to commissioning a research programme to present a sound statistical analysis of NEETS under 25 in Ireland including the cohort of so called ‘Hidden NEETS’, their participation levels in employment programmes, the barriers they face in FET and supports required to overcome barriers. It should also explore why young people become NEET given that there does not appear to be a deficit in education and training provision for the under 18s and all can benefit from the universal offer of free post-primary education; the outcomes from this study would also inform the ongoing delivery of the JobBridge ‘First Steps’ programme. The research programme should include a feasibility study on developing an outreach employment based support programme for those most disadvantaged and farthest from the labour market.

9.2.5 Consistency of criteria

It is evident from the evaluation that the reduction in eligibility criteria from 12 months (on the live register) to 4 months for the JobsPlus Incentive Scheme was a key factor in engaging young people and helping to reduce or prevent the likelihood of becoming long term unemployed. We would recommend that programmes such as Momentum, Tús and SICAP be closely monitored to analyse their impact in providing employment outcomes to those unemployed for over 12 months. In the event of their cadre of long term unemployed reducing significantly, consideration should be given to reducing the eligibility criteria to 4 months unemployed for such programmes.

9.2.6 Impact

Based on consistent feedback from programme implementers and delivery agents it is proposed that monitoring should be more cognisant of the relatively softer (non-absolute) outcomes recognising the efforts and activities of those providers engaging with ‘hard to reach’ groups that are more removed from the labour market. This will also inform the impact evaluation scheduled for 2018.

Appendix 1: Irish data on young people “not in employment, education or training” (NEETs)

The data represents averages from the QNHS for the four most recent quarters (ending in Q2 2013)⁴⁶.

ALL						
Category	15-17	18-24	All	15-17	18-24	All
Total population	173300	370700	543900	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
All NEETS, Eurostat definition, of whom:-	13800	83900	97700	7.9%	22.6%	18.0%
Students (self-reported main status)	11300	10500	21900	6.5%	2.8%	4.0%
Unemployed (ILO or self-reported)	1400	58300	59700	0.8%	15.7%	11.0%
Inactive NEETs, of whom:-	1000	15100	16100	0.6%	4.1%	3.0%
Disabled	#	3500	3800	0.2%	1.0%	0.7%
Carers	#	9100	9200	0.1%	2.5%	1.7%
Other	#	2500	3100	0.3%	0.7%	0.6%
All ILO unemployed	3600	59300	62900			
Non-student unemployed (ILO or self-reported)	1400	58300	59700			
Live Register August 2013 excluding those with some work	0	60000	60000			
MALE						
Category	15-17	18-24	All	15-17	18-24	All
Total population	89100	186900	276000	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
All NEETS, Eurostat definition, of whom:-	6900	45300	52200	7.8%	24.2%	18.9%
Students (self-reported main status)	5600	5100	10800	6.3%	2.7%	3.9%
Unemployed (ILO or self-reported)	800	36100	36900	0.9%	19.3%	13.4%
Inactive NEETs, of whom:-	400	4100	4500	0.4%	2.2%	1.6%
Disabled	#	2500	2600	0.1%	1.3%	0.9%
Carers	#	#	#	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Other	#	1300	1600	0.4%	0.7%	0.6%
All ILO unemployed	1900	35800	37700			
Non-student unemployed (ILO or self-reported)	800	36100	36900			
Live Register August 2013 excluding those with some work	0	36200	36200			
FEMALE						
Category	15-17	18-24	All	15-17	18-24	All
Total population	84200	183700	267900	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
All NEETS, Eurostat definition, of whom:-	6800	38700	45500	8.1%	21.1%	17.0%
Students (self-reported main status)	5700	5400	11100	6.8%	2.9%	4.1%
Unemployed (ILO or self-reported)	600	22200	22800	0.7%	12.1%	8.5%
Inactive NEETs, of whom:-	600	11100	11600	0.7%	6.0%	4.3%
Disabled	#	1000	1200	0.2%	0.5%	0.4%
Carers	#	8900	9000	0.2%	4.8%	3.4%
Other	#	1200	1400	0.3%	0.7%	0.5%
All ILO unemployed	1700	23500	25200			
Non-student unemployed (ILO or self-reported)	600	22200	22800			
Live Register August 2013 excluding those with some work	0	23800	23800			

⁴⁶ The registration data here exclude partially unemployed people with part-time or casual employment.

Appendix 2 YEI (Priority 4) Proposed Output Targets

Priority 4(ESF + YEI co-funded)				
Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Measurement Unit	Target Value 2023	Performance Framework ⁴⁷ Targets	
			Target Value 2018	Target Value 2023
OUTPUTS				
The number of YEI eligible participants on training/upskilling/personal development towards employability and work environment (including supports for self-employed) programmes/projects. -The number of participants in YR	Number of YEI eligible participants	5,950	5,950	5,950
Certified Expenditure	€m	80	80	80
RESULTS				
The number of YEI eligible participants completing an training/upskilling/personal development towards employability and work environment (including supports for self-employed) programmes/projects - The number of Youthreach participants successfully completing programme or achieving certification	Number of participants	2,117	2,117	2,117
Inactive participants not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention	Number of inactive participants	2,117	N/A	N/A
Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship, upon leaving		1,397	N/A	N/A
Inactive participants not in education or training who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving		483	N/A	N/A
Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving	Number of participants	995	N/A	N/A
Participants in employment six months after leaving		379	N/A	N/A

⁴⁷ Selected YEI targets are part of the performance framework (if expenditure allocated to activity is > €10m) but not performance reserve in line with Article 20(a) of CPR 1303/2013.

Appendix 3: Electronic Surveys

The surveys developed were focused on the key themes of Implementation, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Impact.

Programme	Survey Link
Youthreach Centres	http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2451878/fa0ccef964a
Youthreach ETBs	http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2451839/41c2391b4246
SICAP Programme Implementers	http://www.surveygizmo.com/collab/2436837/SICAP-Programme-Implementers-Survey
SICAP LCDCs	http://www.surveygizmo.com/collab/2437850/SICAP-Local-Community-Development-Committees-Survey
Tús	http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2442006/T-s-Programme-Implementers-Survey
Momentum	http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2443932/MOMENTUM-Programme-Survey
JobBridge	http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2454560/JobBridge-Case-Officers
JobsPlus	http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2454486/JobsPlus-Case-Officers

Appendix 4: Acknowledgements

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We also thank all of the survey respondents and all organisations that afforded their time to the evaluation team for contributing their experiences of the Youth Employment Initiative.

Stephen McGarry and Finbarr Fitzpatrick

Gauge

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