

5.

WORK, UNEMPLOYMENT AND JOB CREATION

CORE POLICY OBJECTIVE: WORK, UNEMPLOYMENT AND JOB CREATION

To ensure that all people have access to meaningful work

The scale and severity of the 2008-2010 economic collapse saw Ireland revert to the phenomenon of widespread unemployment. Since then, despite the attention given to the banking and fiscal collapse, the transition from near full-employment to high unemployment has been the most telling characteristic of this recession. The implications for individuals, families, social cohesion and the exchequer's finances have been serious and the effects are likely to be felt for many years to come. CSO data and economic forecasts for the remainder of 2014 indicate that unemployment will reach an annual rate of between 11.5 and 12 per cent of the labour force in 2014, having been 4.7 per cent before the recession in 2007. Significant improvements have been achieved over the past two years, but there can be little doubt but that we are in a very challenging period in which a high level of long-term unemployment has once again become a characteristic of Irish society.

This chapter reviews the evolution of this situation and considers the implications and challenges which arise for Government and society.⁴² It also looks at the impact on various sectors of the working-age population and, given this, it outlines a series of proposals for responding to this unemployment crisis. To date, *Social Justice Ireland* considers that the response has been slow and limited. As the chapter shows, the scale and nature of our unemployment crisis deserves greater attention, in particular given the scale of long-term unemployment. The chapter concludes with some thoughts on the narrowness of how we consider and measure the concept of 'work'.

⁴² The analysis complements information on the measurement of the labour market and long-term trends in employment and unemployment detailed in annex 5.

The issues addressed in this chapter principally focus on one pillar of *Social Justice Ireland's* Core Policy Framework (see Chapter 2), 'Enhance Social Protection'.

Recent trends in employment and unemployment

The nature and scale of the recent transformation in Ireland's labour market is highlighted by the data in table 5.1. Over the seven years from 2007-2013 the labour force decreased by just over 4 per cent, participation rates dropped, full-time employment fell by almost 18 per cent, representing some 312,000 jobs, while part-time employment increased by almost 17 per cent. By the end of 2013 the number of underemployed people, defined as those employed part-time but wishing to work additional hours, had increased to 143,300 people – almost 7 per cent of the labour force. Over this period unemployment increased by over 150,000 people, bringing the unemployment rate up from 4.6 per cent to 11.7 per cent.

Table 5.1: Labour Force Data, 2007 – 2013

| | 2007 | 2010 | 2013 | Change 07-13 |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Labour Force | 2,260,600 | 2,168,200 | 2,163,100 | -4.3% |
| LFPR% | 63.8 | 60.2 | 60.1 | -3.7% |
| Employment% | 68.8 | 59.0 | 61.4 | -7.4% |
| Employment | 2,156,000 | 1,857,300 | 1,909,800 | -11.4% |
| Full-time | 1,765,300 | 1,422,800 | 1,453,000 | -17.7% |
| Part-time | 390,700 | 434,400 | 456,800 | +16.9% |
| Underemployed | n/a | 116,800 | 143,300 | - |
| Unemployed% | 4.6 | 14.3 | 11.7 | +7.1% |
| Unemployed | 104,600 | 310,900 | 253,200 | +142.1% |
| LT Unemployed% | 1.4% | 7.9% | 7.2% | +5.8% |
| LT Unemployed | 31,700 | 172,100 | 155,500 | +390.5% |

Source: CSO, QNHS on-line database.

Notes: All data is for Quarter 4 of the reference year.

LFPR = Labour force participation rate and measures the percentage of the adult population who are in the labour market.

Underemployment measures part-time workers who indicate that they wish to work additional hours which are not currently available.

Comparable underemployment data is not available for 2007.

LT = Long Term (12 months or more).

This transformation in the labour market has significantly altered the nature of employment in Ireland when compared to the pre-recession picture in 2007. Overall, employment fell 11.4 per cent between 2007-2013 and table 5.2 traces the impact of this fall across various sectors, groups and regions. Within the CSO's broadly defined employment sectors, industrial employment has seen the biggest fall of over 37 per cent while there has been a small fall in services employment. Agricultural employment records an increase over the period and a significant increase between 2010 and 2013. However, it is likely that the low figure recorded for 2010 was as a result of sampling problems in the CSO Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) and that agricultural employment did not fall to such a low level. A consequence of the correction to this sampling problem over the most recent set of QNHS reports (Q4 2012 to Q4 2013) has been a perceived increase in agricultural employment (and overall employment).⁴³ A large part of this increase is a sampling correction so that a significant proportion of the 26,600 jobs reported to have been created in agriculture between Q4 2012 and Q4 2013 are statistical corrections rather than new jobs. However, overall employment has been growing, representing a welcome recovery.

Overall, job losses have had a greater impact on males than females with male employment down 15 per cent since 2007 while female employment decreased by 6.7 per cent. The proportional impact of the crisis has hit employment levels for employees and self-employed in much the same way; although there are many more of the former and the actual job losses among employees is significantly higher.

The consequence of all these job losses has been the sharp increase in unemployment and emigration. Dealing with unemployment, table 5.3 shows how it has changed between 2007 and 2013, a period when the numbers unemployed increased by over 140 per cent. As the table shows, male unemployment increased by 92,000 and female unemployment by 56,000. Most of the unemployed, who had been employed in 2007 and before it, are seeking to return to a full-time job with approximately 11 per cent of those unemployed in 2013 indicating that they were seeking part-time employment. The impact of the unemployment crisis was felt right across the age groups and it is only over the past year that there has been a decrease in numbers aged above 34 years that are unemployed. Younger age groups have seen their numbers unemployed consistently fall since 2011 – a phenomenon not unrelated to the return of high emigration figures over recent years.⁴⁴

⁴³ See CSO QNHS (2014) for more details.

⁴⁴ See chapter 10 for more information on recent migration trends.

Table 5.2: Employment in Ireland, 2007 – 2013

| | 2007 | 2010 | 2013 | Change 07-13 |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Employment | 2,156,000 | 1,857,300 | 1,909,800 | -11.4% |
| Sector | | | | |
| Agriculture | 114,300 | 85,400 | 116,800 | +2.2% |
| Industry | 551,600 | 355,300 | 347,200 | -37.1% |
| Services | 1,482,900 | 1,409,900 | 1,444,600 | -2.6% |
| Gender | | | | |
| Male | 1,221,800 | 994,100 | 1,038,200 | -15.0% |
| Female | 934,200 | 863,200 | 871,600 | -6.7% |
| Employment Status | | | | |
| Employees* | 1,775,900 | 1,548,900 | 1,571,400 | -11.5% |
| Self Employed | 364,300 | 298,000 | 324,500 | -10.9% |
| Assisting relative | 15,800 | 10,300 | 13,900 | -12.0% |
| Region | | | | |
| Border | 221,100 | 187,400 | 185,800 | -16.0% |
| Midlands | 126,100 | 103,400 | 111,100 | -11.9% |
| West | 206,400 | 181,500 | 185,900 | -9.9% |
| Dublin | 640,000 | 552,600 | 572,100 | -10.6% |
| Mid-East | 251,900 | 226,300 | 225,900 | -10.3% |
| Mid-West | 173,200 | 151,000 | 151,300 | -12.6% |
| South-East | 226,600 | 185,800 | 197,100 | -13.0% |
| South-West | 310,600 | 269,300 | 280,600 | -9.7% |

Source: CSO, QNHS on-line database.

Notes: * Numbers recorded as employed include those on various active labour market policy schemes. See also notes to table 5.1.

Table 5.3: Unemployment in Ireland, 2007 - 2013

| | 2007 | 2010 | 2013 | Change 07-13 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Unemployment | 104,600 | 310,900 | 253,200 | +142.1% |
| Gender | | | | |
| Male | 66,700 | 211,100 | 158,900 | +138.2% |
| Female | 37,900 | 99,800 | 94,300 | +148.8% |
| Employment sought | | | | |
| Seeking FT work | 85,900 | 272,600 | 216,600 | +152.2% |
| Seeking PT work | 16,200 | 23,700 | 27,800 | +71.6% |
| Age group | | | | |
| 15-19 years | 9,400 | 18,300 | 12,300 | +30.9% |
| 20-24 years | 21,700 | 54,200 | 36,400 | +67.7% |
| 25-34 years | 33,000 | 96,800 | 73,300 | +122.1% |
| 35-64 years | 40,400 | 140,700 | 130,500 | +223.0% |
| Region | | | | |
| Border | 14,000 | 29,200 | 29,000 | +107.1% |
| Midlands | 6,500 | 20,300 | 17,600 | +170.8% |
| West | 8,400 | 33,000 | 25,000 | +197.6% |
| Dublin | 30,200 | 82,400 | 63,200 | +109.3% |
| Mid-East | 9,400 | 33,100 | 32,200 | +242.6% |
| Mid-West | 9,500 | 31,100 | 18,200 | +91.6% |
| South-East | 12,100 | 41,700 | 36,200 | +199.2% |
| South-West | 14,400 | 40,200 | 31,800 | +120.8% |
| Duration | | | | |
| Unemp. less than 1 yr | 72,000 | 136,700 | 95,200 | +32.2% |
| Unemp. more than 1 yr | 31,700 | 172,100 | 155,500 | +390.5% |
| LT Unemp. as % Unemp | 30.3% | 55.4% | 61.4% | |

Source: CSO, QNHS on-line database

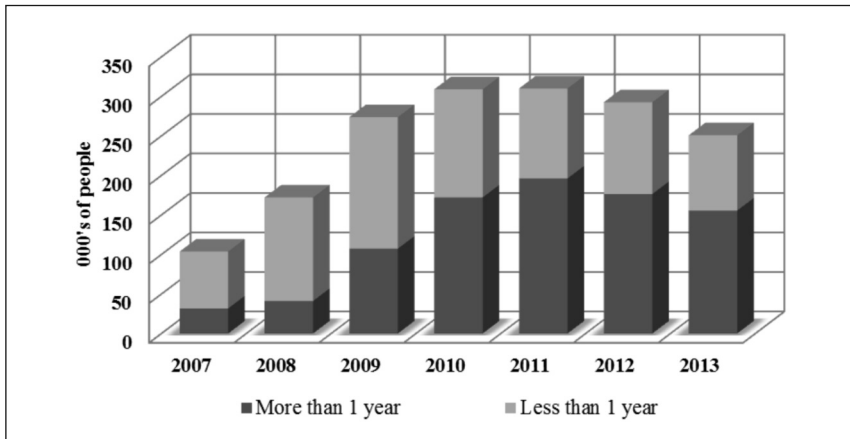
Note: See also notes to table 5.1.

The rapid growth in the number and rates of long-term unemployment are also highlighted in table 5.3 and in chart 5.1. The number of long-term unemployed was less than 32,000 in 2007 and has increased since, reaching 155,500 at the end of 2013. For the first time on record, the QNHS data for late 2010 indicated that long-term unemployment accounted for more than 50 per cent of the unemployed and by the

end of 2013 the long-term unemployed represented just over 60 per cent of the unemployed. The transition to these high levels since 2007 has been rapid – see chart 5.1. The experience of the 1980s showed the dangers and long-lasting implications of an unemployment crisis characterised by high long-term unemployment rates. It remains a major policy failure that Ireland’s level of long-term unemployment has been allowed to increase so rapidly in recent years. Furthermore, it is of serious concern that to date Government policy has given limited attention to the issue.

Addressing a crisis such as this is a major challenge and we outline our suggestions for immediate policy action later in the chapter. However, it is clear that reskilling many of the unemployed, in particular those with low education levels, will be a key component of the response. Using the latest data, for 2011, almost 60 per cent of the unemployed had no more than second level education with 30 per cent not having completed more than lower secondary (equivalent to the junior certificate). At the other extreme, the scale and severity of the recession has resulted in high levels of third-level graduates becoming unemployed.⁴⁵ While Government should not ignore any group in its overdue attempts to address the unemployment crisis, major emphasis should be placed on those who are most likely to become trapped in long term unemployment – in particular those with the lowest education levels.

Chart 5.1: The Increased Presence of Long-Term Unemployed in Ireland, 2007-2013



Source: CSO, QNHS on-line database

Note: Data is for Q4 of each year

⁴⁵ The CSO has not updated its profile of unemployment by completed education level since this data.

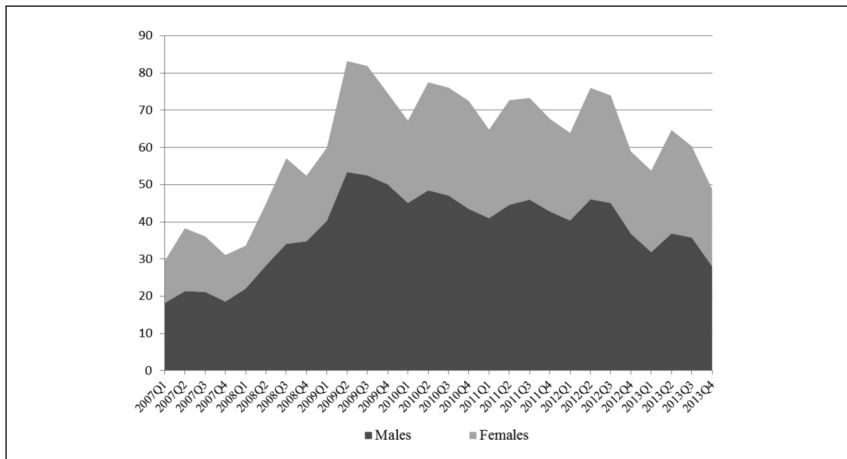
Previous experiences, in Ireland and elsewhere, have shown that many of those under 25 and many of those over 55 find it challenging to return to employment after a period of unemployment. This highlights the danger of the aforementioned large increases in long-term unemployment and suggests a major commitment to retraining and re-skilling will be required. In the long-run Irish society can ill afford a return to the long-term unemployment problems of the 1980s. In the short-run the new-unemployed are adding to the numbers living on low-income in Ireland and this, in turn, will continue to have a negative impact on future poverty figures (see chapter 3).

Two further themes arise from the employment and unemployment data and we address these over the next two subsections: youth unemployment and the increase in precarious work. We then conclude this section by examining trends on the live register.

Youth unemployment

While the increase in unemployment has been spread across all ages and sectors (see table 5.3), chart 5.2 highlights the very rapid increase in the numbers unemployed under 25 years-of-age. The numbers in this group more than doubled between 2007 and 2009 peaking at 83,100 in quarter 2 2009. Since then decreases have occurred, reaching 50,000 in late 2013. Although we have limited empirical knowledge of the reasons for these decreases, a large part of the decrease is probably due to emigration.

Chart 5.2: Youth Unemployment in Ireland, by gender 2007-2013



Source: CSO, QNHS on-line database.

Although youth unemployment represents about one-fifth of the total population that are unemployed, there is merit in giving it particular attention. Experiences of unemployment, and in particular long-term unemployment, alongside an inability to access any work, training or education, tends to leave a ‘scaring effect’ on young people. It increases the challenges associated with getting them active in the labour market at any stage in the future. The latest data on the number of young people aged 18-24 years in Ireland who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) is 23.8 per cent in 2012 (NERI, 2013: 36).

In the short-term it makes sense for Government to invest in the ‘youth unemployed’ and *Social Justice Ireland* considers this to be a central priority of any programme to seriously address the unemployment crisis. At a European level, this issue has been receiving welcome attention over the past year; driven by high levels of youth unemployment in other crisis countries.

Under-employment, Part-time employment and Precarious Work

The figures in table 5.1 also point towards the growth of various forms of precarious work over recent years. Since 2007 employment has fallen by 11 per cent; but this figure masks a bigger decline in full-time employment (18 per cent) and a growth in part-time employment (+ 17 per cent). Within those part-time employed there has also been an increase in the numbers of people who are underemployed, that is working part-time but at less hours than individuals are willing to work. By the end of 2013 the numbers underemployed stood at 143,300 people, about seven per cent of the total labour force and almost one-third of all part-time workers.

While an element of these figures can be explained by the recession, and the suppressed levels of activity in some sectors, they also suggest the emergence of a greater number of workers in precarious employment situations. The growth in the number of individuals with less work hours than ideal, as well as those with persistent uncertainties on the number and times of hours required for work, is a major labour market challenge. Aside from the impact this has on the well-being of individuals and their families, it also impacts on their financial situation and adds to the working-poor challenges we outlined in chapter 3. There are also impacts on the state given that Family Income Supplement (FIS) and the structure of jobseeker payments tends to lead to Government subsidising these families incomes; and indirectly subsidising some employers who create persistent precarious work patterns for their workers.

As the labour market improves, *Social Justice Ireland* believes that now is the time to adopt measures to address and eliminate these problems.

The Live Register

While the live register is not an accurate measure of unemployment, it is a useful barometer of the nature and pace of change in employment and unemployment. Increases suggest a combination of more people unemployed, more people on reduced employment weeks and consequently reductions in the availability of employment hours to the labour force. Table 5.4 shows that the number of people signing on the live register increased rapidly since the onset of the economic crisis in 2007. The numbers peaked in July 2011 and by January 2014 the numbers signing-on the live register had increased more than 240,000 compared to seven years earlier.

Table 5.4: Numbers on the Live Register (unadjusted), Jan 2007 - 2014

| Year | Month | Males | Females | Total |
|------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2007 | January | 95,824 | 62,928 | 158,752 |
| 2008 | January | 116,160 | 65,289 | 181,449 |
| 2009 | January | 220,412 | 105,860 | 326,272 |
| 2010 | January | 291,648 | 145,288 | 436,936 |
| 2011 | January | 292,003 | 150,674 | 442,677 |
| 2011 | July (peak) | 297,770 | 172,514 | 470,284 |
| 2012 | January | 283,893 | 155,696 | 439,589 |
| 2013 | January | 273,627 | 155,769 | 429,396 |
| 2014 | January | 248,723 | 150,907 | 399,630 |

Source: CSO Live Register on-line database.

The live register data offers a useful insight into the skills and experience of those signing on. Table 5.5 presents a breakdown of the January 2014 live register number by people's last occupation and also examines the differences between those over and under 25 years. The figures once again highlight the need for targeted reskilling of people who hold skills in sectors of the economy that are unlikely to ever return to the employment levels of the early part of the last decade.

Table 5.5: Persons on Live Register by last occupation – January 2014

| Occupational group | Overall | Under 25 yrs | Over 25 yrs |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Managers and administrators | 16,795 | 531 | 16,264 |
| Professional | 22,036 | 1,789 | 20,247 |
| Associate prof.& technical | 11,284 | 1,369 | 9,915 |
| Clerical and secretarial | 37,202 | 2,816 | 34,386 |
| Craft and related | 84,437 | 7,502 | 76,935 |
| Personal and protective service | 50,508 | 8,177 | 42,331 |
| Sales | 43,713 | 10,898 | 32,815 |
| Plant and machine operatives | 66,781 | 8,630 | 58,151 |
| Other occupation | 46,276 | 9,678 | 36,598 |
| Never worked / not stated | 20,598 | 9,147 | 11,451 |
| Total | 399,630 | 60,537 | 339,093 |

Source: CSO Live Register on-line database.

Responding to the unemployment crisis

The scale of these increases is enormous and it is crucial that Government, commentators and society in general remember that each of these numbers represent people who are experiencing dramatic and, in many cases, unexpected turmoil in their lives and their families' lives. As Irish society comes to terms with the enormity of this issue, we believe that this perspective should remain central.

To date, the policy response to this crisis has been limited, comprising announcements of apprenticeship schemes, 'Job Initiative' (2011) reforms, annual Action Plans and the 'Pathways to Work' programme. Each of these has targeted small reforms and had limited success given the scale of the unemployment crisis – for the most part the long-term unemployment, skill deficits, under-employment and precarious work issues have been given limited attention.

In responding to this situation *Social Justice Ireland* believes that Government a clear and integrated set of policy priorities. We set these out in detail in the final section of this chapter.

Even the most optimistic economic and labour market projections for the years to come suggest that unemployment will remain a major factor. The Department of Finance's estimates in Budget 2014 point towards a rate 11.7 per cent in 2016; we anticipate this figure will be revised during 2014 to a figure of approximately 10 per cent in 2016. As recovery emerges, it is important that policy focuses on those furthest from being able to rejoin the numbers employed and assist those within employment but struggling as the working poor.

Work and people with disabilities

Results from Census 2011 have provided new data on the scale and nature of disability in Ireland. In a report published in November 2012, the CSO reported that a total of 595,335 people had a disability in Ireland; equivalent to 13 per cent of the population. The most common disability overall was a difficulty with pain, breathing or other chronic illness or condition which was experienced by 46.2 per cent of all people with a disability; this was followed by a difficulty with basic physical activities, experienced by 41.1 per cent. The report found that both of these disabilities were strongly age-related. It also showed that 1.1 per cent of the population were blind or had a sight related disability (51,718 people); 1.3 per cent of the population suffered from an intellectual disability (57,709 people); 2 per cent of the population were deaf or had a hearing related disability (92,060 people); 2.1 per cent of the population had a psychological or emotional condition (96,004 people); 3 per cent of the population had a difficulty with learning, remembering or concentrating (137,070 people); 5.3 per cent of the population had a difficulty with basic physical activities (244,739 people); and 6 per cent of the population had a disability connected with pain, breathing or another chronic illness or condition (274,762 people) (CSO, 2012: 45, 51-53).⁴⁶

The Census 2011 data also revealed that there was 162,681 persons with a disability in the labour force representing a participation rate of 30 per cent, less than half that for the population in general. These findings reflect earlier results from the 2006 National Disability Survey (CSO, 2008 and 2010) and a 2004 QNHS special module on disability (CSO, 2004). This low rate of employment among people with a disability is of concern. Apart from restricting their participation in society it also ties them into state dependent low-income situations. Therefore, it is not surprising that Ireland's poverty figures reveal that people who are ill or have a disability are part of a group at high risk of poverty (see chapter 3).

⁴⁶ Note, some individuals will experience more than one disability and feature in more than one of these categories.

Social Justice Ireland believes that further efforts should be made to reduce the impediments faced by people with a disability to obtain employment. In particular, consideration should be given to reforming the current situation in which many such people face losing their benefits, in particular their medical card, when they take up employment. This situation ignores the additional costs faced by people with a disability in pursuing their day-to-day lives. For many people with disabilities the opportunity to take up employment is denied to them and they are trapped in unemployment, poverty or both.

Some progress was made in Budget 2005 to increase supports intended to help people with disabilities access employment. However, sufficient progress has not been made and recent Budgets have begun to reduce these services. New policies, including that outlined above, need to be adopted if this issue is to be addressed successfully. It is even more relevant today, given the growing employment challenges of the past few years.

Asylum seekers and work

Social Justice Ireland is very disappointed that the government continues to reject any proposal that the right to work of asylum seekers should be recognised. Along with others, we have consistently advocated that where government fails to meet its own stated objective of processing asylum applications in six months, the right to work should be automatically granted to asylum seekers. Detaining people for an unnecessarily prolonged period in such an excluded state is completely unacceptable. Recognising asylum seekers' right to work would assist in alleviating poverty and social exclusion in one of Ireland's most vulnerable groups.⁴⁷

The need to recognise all work

A major question raised by the current labour-market situation concerns assumptions underpinning culture and policy making in this area. The priority given to paid employment over other forms of work is one such assumption. Most people recognise that a person can be working very hard outside a conventionally accepted "job". Much of the work carried out in the community and in the voluntary sector comes under this heading. So too does much of the work done in the home. *Social Justice Ireland's* support for the introduction of a basic income system comes, in part, because it believes that all work should be recognised and supported (see chapter 3).

⁴⁷ We examine this issue in further detail in chapter 10.

The need to recognise voluntary work has been acknowledged in the Government White Paper, *Supporting Voluntary Activity* (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 2000). The report was prepared to mark the UN International Year of the Volunteer 2001 by Government and representatives of numerous voluntary organisations in Ireland. The report made a series of recommendations to assist in the future development and recognition of voluntary activity throughout Ireland. A 2005 report presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs also provided an insight into this issue. It established that the cost to the state of replacing the 475,000 volunteers working for charitable organisations would be at least €205 million and could be as high as €485 million per year.

Social Justice Ireland believes that government should recognise in a more formal way all forms of work. We believe that everyone has a right to work, to contribute to his or her own development and that of the community and the wider society. However, we believe that policy making in this area should not be exclusively focused on job creation. Policy should recognise that *work* and a *job* are not always the same thing.

The Work of Carers

The work of Ireland's carers receives minimal recognition despite the essential role their work plays in society. Recent results from the 2011 Census offer a new insight into the scale of these commitments, which save the state large costs that it would otherwise have to bear.

Census 2011 found that 4.1 per cent of the population aged over 15 provided some care for sick or disabled family members or friends on an unpaid basis. This figure equates to 187,112 people. The dominant caring role played by women was highlighted by the fact that 114,113 (61 per cent) of these care providers were female.⁴⁸ When assessed by length of time, the census found that a total of 6,287,510 hours of care were provided by carers each week, representing an average of 33.6 hours of unpaid help and assistance each. Two thirds of this volume of care was provided by female carers (CSO, 2012: 71-77). Using the minimum wage as a simple (an unrealistically low) benchmark to establish the benefit which carers provide each year suggests that Ireland's carers provide care valued at more than €2.8bn per annum.

⁴⁸ A CSO QNHS special module on carers (CSO, 2010) and a 2008 ESRI study entitled '*Gender Inequalities in Time Use*' found similar trends (McGinnity and Russell, 2008:36, 70).

Social Justice Ireland welcomed the long overdue publication of a *National Carers Strategy* in July 2012 (Department of Health, 2012). The document includes a ‘roadmap for Implementation’ involving a suite of actions, and associated timelines and identifies the Government Department responsible for their implementation. However, these actions were confined to those that could be achieved on a cost neutral basis. The first annual progress report of the strategy was published by Minister Kathleen Lynch in January 2014 (Department of Health, 2014). It points towards some progress on the actions set out, but these are, as a group, limited given the unwillingness of Government to allocate some resources to supporting those in this sector.

Social Justice Ireland believes that further policy reforms should be introduced to reduce the financial and emotional pressures on carers. In particular, these should focus on addressing the poverty experienced by many carers and their families alongside increasing the provision of respite care for carers and for those for whom they care. In this context, the 24 hour responsibilities of carers contrast with the improvements over recent years in employment legislation setting limits on working-hours of people in paid employment.

Key policy priorities on work, unemployment and job creation

- Adopt the following policy positions in responding to the recent rapid increase in unemployment:
 - Launch a major investment programme focused on creating employment and prioritise initiatives that strengthen social infrastructure, such as the school building programme and the social housing programme.
 - Resource the up-skilling of those who are unemployed and at risk of becoming unemployed through integrating training and labour market programmes.
 - Maintain a sufficient number of active labour market programme places available to those who are unemployed.
 - Adopt policies to address the worrying trend of youth unemployment. In particular, these should include education and literacy initiatives as well as retraining schemes.
 - Recognise that many of the unemployed are skilled professionals who require appropriate support other than training.
 - Resource a targeted re-training scheme for those previously unemployed in the construction industry, recognising that this industry is never likely to recover to the level of employment it had prior to 2007.
 - Recognise the scale of the evolving long-term unemployment problem and adopt targeted policies to begin to address this.

- Ensure that the social welfare system is administered such that there is minimal delays in paying the newly unemployed the social welfare benefits to which they are entitled.
- Funded programmes supporting the community should be expanded to meet the growing pressures arising from the current economic downturn.
- A new programme should be put in place targeting those who are very long-term unemployed (i.e. 5+ years).
- Policy should seek at all times to ensure that new jobs have reasonable pay rates and adequately resource the labour inspectorate.
- As part of the process of addressing the working poor issue, reform the taxation system to make tax credits refundable.
- Develop employment-friendly income-tax policies which ensure that no unemployment traps exist. Policies should ease the transition from unemployment to employment.
- Adopt policies to address the obstacles facing women when they return to the labour force. These should focus on care initiatives, employment flexibility and the provision of information and training.
- Reduce the impediments faced by people with a disability in achieving employment. In particular, address the current situation in which many face losing their benefits when they take up employment.
- Recognise the right to work of all asylum seekers whose application for asylum is at least six months old and who are not entitled to take up employment.
- Recognise that the term “work” is not synonymous with the concept of “paid employment”. Everybody has a right to work, i.e. to contribute to his or her own development and that of the community and the wider society. This, however, should not be confined to job creation. *Work* and a *job* are not the same thing.
- Request the CSO to conduct an annual survey to discover the value of all unpaid work in the country (including community and voluntary work and work in the home). Publish the results of this survey as soon as they become available.
- Give greater recognition to the work carried out by carers in Ireland and introduce policy reforms to reduce the financial and emotional pressures on carers. In particular, these should focus on addressing the poverty experienced by many carers and their families as well as on increasing the provision of respite opportunities to carers and to those for whom they care.