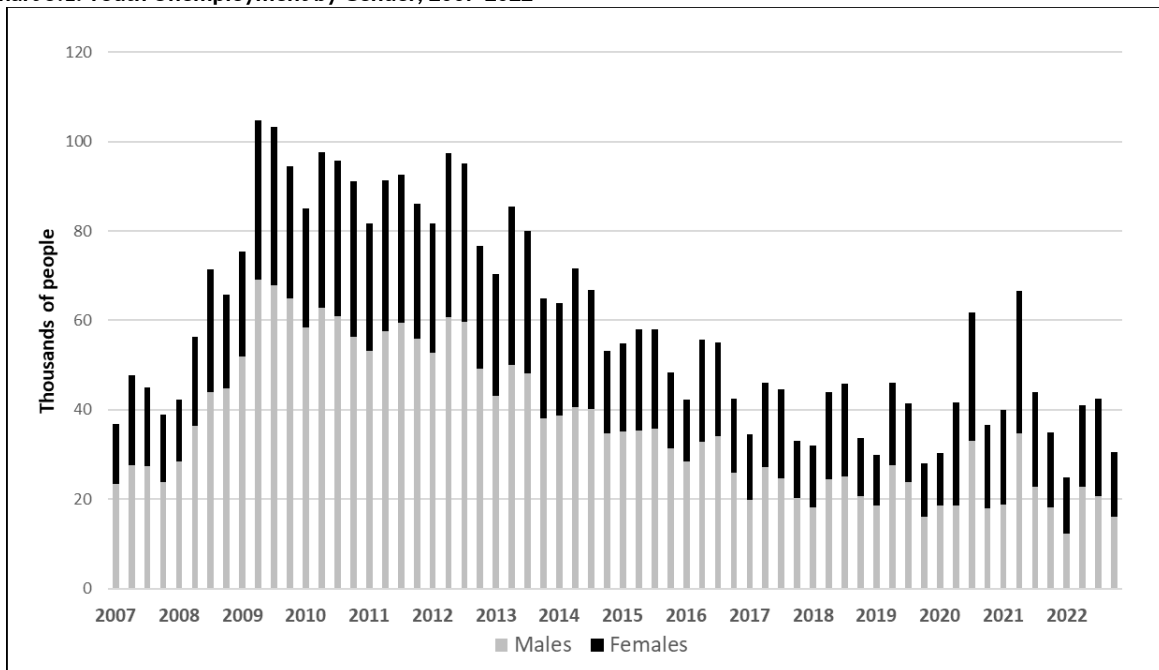


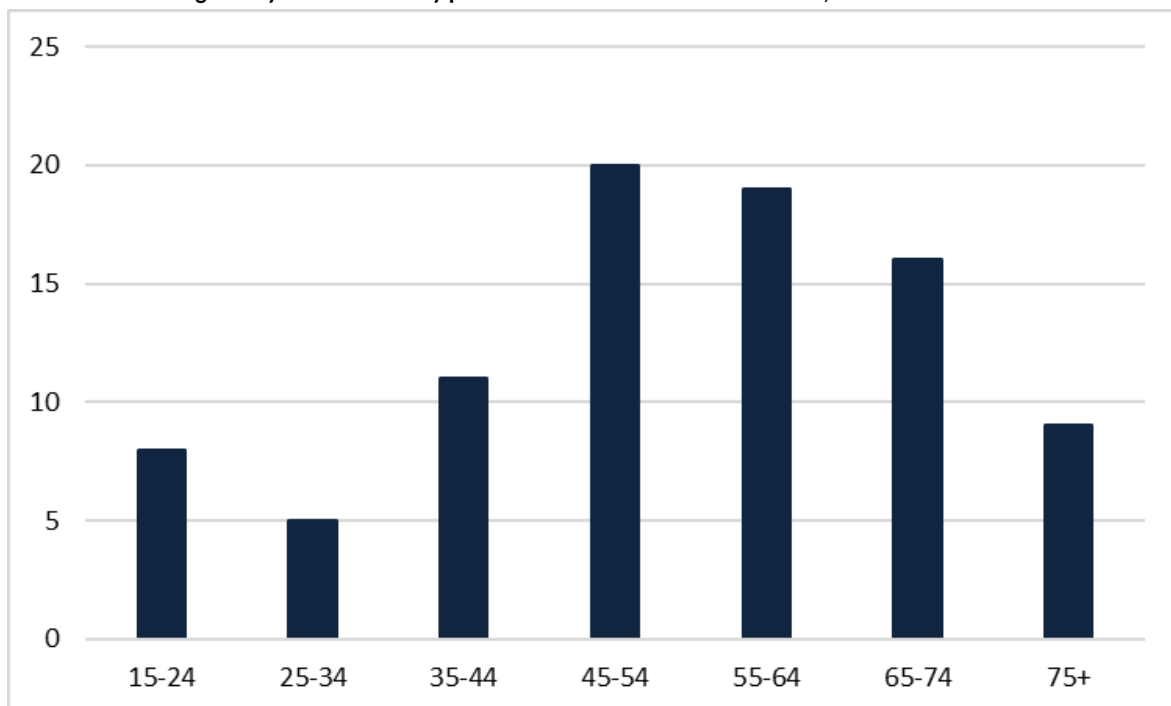
Work

Chart 5.1: Youth Unemployment by Gender, 2007-2022



Source: CSO, LFS on-line database.

Chart 5.2: Persons aged 15 years and over by provision of care at least once a week, 2019



Source: CSO, PxStat (2023)

Work

Minimum Wage

The National Minimum Wage (NMW) is €11.30 per hour for employees aged 20+. For employees aged 19, it is reduced to €10.17 p/h, for 18-year-old employees it is €9.04 p/h and for employees aged under 18, it is €7.91. The NMW is not set based on skills or work performance, but on the assumption that younger employees have reduced living costs. However, people under age 20 have many of the same outgoings such as telephone bills, transport, lunches and so on and, depending on circumstances, may be living away from the family home. This age-based discrimination should be eliminated with the NMW replaced by a real Living Wage.

Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment remains a major labour market challenge. Chart 5.1 highlights the increase in the numbers unemployed aged 25 and under, as the 2008-2013 economic crisis unfolded. The numbers in this group more than doubled between 2007 and 2009, peaking at almost 105,000 in Q2 2009. Since then, decreases have occurred, reaching 39,000 in 2019 before climbing during the 2020 and 2021 COVID-19 lockdowns. By the end of 2022, 30,000 people under the age of 25 were unemployed – 16,000 males and 14,000 females, meaning that youth unemployment accounted for almost three in every ten unemployed people in Ireland.

By the end of 2022 30,000 people under the age of 25 were unemployed, with youth unemployment accounting for almost 3 in 10 unemployed people in Ireland. Experiences of unemployment, and in particular long-term

unemployment, alongside an inability to access any work, training or education, tends to leave a 'scarring effect' on young people. It increases the challenges associated with getting them active in the labour market at any stage in the future.

Young Carers

One in 12 young people aged 15-24 provide care, that is care being provided to someone with a chronic condition or an infirmity due to old age at least once a week¹ (Chart 5.2). A report from March 2023 considered the experience of the 'hidden' population of young carers (defined as children under the age of 18 who provide regular and ongoing care and emotional support to a family member) and found that 80 per cent were at clinical risk of depression, 86 per cent feel stressed, 56 per cent feel like they cannot cope, 32 per cent struggled to balance school with caring, and 27 per cent did not feel that they had adequate time to spend on schoolwork.² A lack of primary care support and supports for carers will have long-term effects on the child's education, work prospects and social abilities.

Policy Priorities

- Replace the NMW with the Living Wage. Remove the inherent age-based discrimination by basing the Living Wage on the real cost of living.
- Adopt policies to address youth unemployment.
- Give greater recognition to the work carried out by all carers and invest in supports for young carers so they can thrive academically and socially.

¹ CSO (2020): Irish Health Survey 2019 – Carers & Social Supports. CSO: Cork.

² <https://www.familycarers.ie/media/2947/sharing-the-caring-young-carers-experiences-and-access-to-supports-in-ireland.pdf>