



WORLD BANK GROUP
Social Protection & Jobs

PES REVIEW

Ireland

Country case studies



Ireland



The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and the Intreo centers
DEASP and Intreo



Intreo is an integral part of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) and it does not have operational autonomy.



The department sustains a wide range of schemes and supports which encourage unemployed people claiming benefits to return to the labor market.



Intreo and its centers are the single points of contact/one-stop-shops for all employment and income supports. The merged services include labor services, community welfare services, etc.



122 Intreo Centres and branch offices
3 Regional centers and 13 divisions



Funded mainly by public sources
and insurance contributions

DEASP and the Intreo centers



Governance

- ▶ All services are designed centrally, the local units are responsible for adapting and implementing them at the local level.
- ▶ The PES is managed by an Administrative Board, for which positions are publicly advertised.
- ▶ Trade unions and employers are represented in the Labour Market Council. This Council advises the PES on the delivery of the Irish government's overarching policy framework for Activation and Employment Policy (Pathways to Work Strategy).
- ▶ The PES works closely with the Social Welfare Offices and Local Employment Services. If a location does not have an Intreo Centre, jobseekers must register at the welfare branch offices.
- ▶ The Department of Education and Skills and its Education and Training Boards are responsible for further vocational training and adult education, including the training of the unemployed. SOLAS is the funding and overseeing body of such training.



DEASP and the Intreo centers



Management by objectives

- ▶ Objectives and the management performance requirements are set centrally and monitored by the managers.
- ▶ The budget is usually allocated according to the number of registered unemployed.
- ▶ The national actors define the outsourcing process, and the service level agreements are drawn by the DEASP.

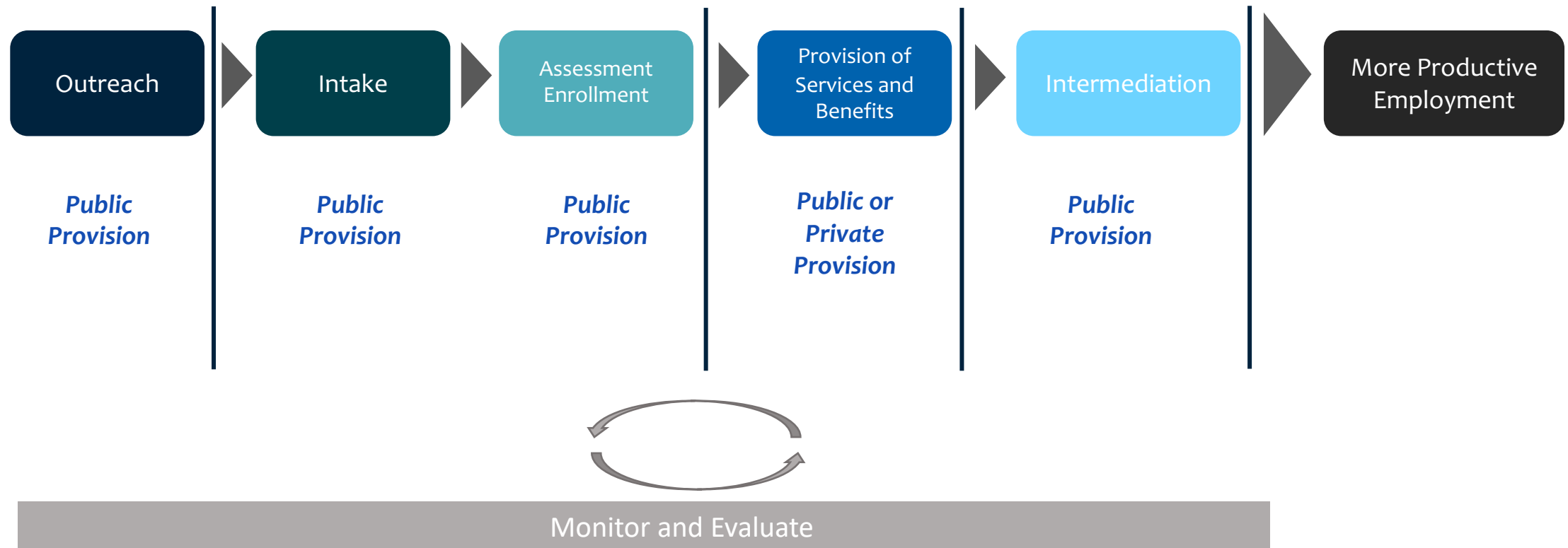
Latest reforms



- ▶ In 2011, the FÁS (national training and employment authority) was abolished. Its functions were dispersed, and a majority of its staff was transferred to DEASP as part of a new strategy to fight Long Term Unemployment, with the new Pathways to Work Strategy. During this process benefit payments were linked to participation in activation through early targeted intervention., requiring services to be fully merged for case management at the same location, creating the new Intreo Centers.
- ▶ In 2014, the revised statistical profiling model was introduced.

A large range of services are provided in house, however, several ALMPs are outsourced.

The Department of Education and Skills is responsible for the further training services.



The PES provides general information, labor market statistics and online guidance.

Outreach

*Public
Provision*



General information is available online or by contacting the call center



Labor market information and statistics are available online and at the Intreo Centers



Advice and information is available online or through one of the service lines, including specific information on living and working conditions.



Outreach to NEETs: virtually all early-school leavers who are unemployed and 18 or over are registered with the PES, making contact automatic.



European Employment Services (EURES) provides information about job and candidate search in the EU and EEA regions.

Intreo centers offer services on a three-stage model.



Assessment
Enrollment

***Public and
Private
Provision***

Three phases for service provision

- ① Stage one: reception and access to services and claims.
- ② Stage two: integrated decision-making, welfare payment claims, and profiling. During this stage, an agreement of the jobseeker's commitments is signed and an appointment for the group information session is scheduled.
- ③ Stage three: group information session and one-to-one activation services, agreement of a 'progression plan', and referral to training or other support programs. Following this, service-users are followed-up at different intervals, dependent on their profiling group.

The PES provides services for jobseekers and employers, benefit claimants must register.

Intake

**Public
Provision**

Clients

- Jobseekers
 - ▲ Mandatory registration for benefit claimants
 - ▲ Jobseekers who are not eligible for a payment can also register; however, priority for service provision is generally given to those claiming benefits
- Employers
 - ▲ No obligation to register. Nonetheless, employers who are planning collective redundancies must consult the PES in advance

Registration of jobseekers

- ▲ To register as unemployed, the person must go to the local Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Branch Office.
- ▲ The DEASP staff will check the person's eligibility for a jobseeker's payment, and an appointment is set to process the claim (within a few days). Each person must fill in the profiling questionnaire to access benefits and services.
- ▲ During the appointment, a DEASP Deciding Officer reviews and processes the application, and the person signs a Record of Mutual Commitments, which explains their rights and responsibilities.
- ▲ Depending on the person's profile, they may be given an appointment for a further meeting with a DEASP case officer, where a Personal Progression Plan is developed.

The PES uses statistical profiling and the caseworker's assessment to segment jobseekers.

Assessment
Enrollment

**Public
Provision**

Statistical profiling + Caseworker-based profiling

- Statistical approach: probit
- Data source: questionnaire (at benefit claim) and administrative data
- Measurement: probability of exit to employment (12 months)
- Outcome: the assessment by caseworker, combined with the results of the statistical profile, leads the classification of the person into one of the three risk groups.
- The questionnaire serves as a basis to estimate the probability of remaining unemployed for more than twelve months.
- The use of the profiling tool is compulsory for caseworkers.



The results of the statistical profiling are delivered to the employment assistant, who is responsible for proposing a personalized action plan for each individual based on the identified needs (holistic case management approach and personal progression plan).

*JobPath providers (cf. ALMPs) conduct separate profiling for people who are long-term unemployed.

The assigned service stream depends on the outcome of the profiling.

Assessment
Enrollment

**Public
Provision**

The jobseeker's profile and the likelihood of becoming long-term unemployed determine the interventions and support to be offered

Individuals at low risk of becoming long-term unemployed are directed towards self-help tools during their initial engagement session. If they remain unemployed after four months, they are invited to meet a caseworker and develop a personalized progression plan.

Individuals at medium risk of becoming long-term unemployed receive group counseling sessions and training opportunities to enhance skills. They also meet with the caseworker within one week following the group engagement sessions and subsequently every three months to review progress.

Individuals at high risk of becoming long-term unemployed receive one-on-one intensive support, help in addressing their immediate needs, and are activated for work-placement measures. They meet with the caseworker within one week following the group engagement sessions and subsequently every two months.

The DEASP is responsible for the payment of unemployment allowances.

Provision
of Benefits

**Public
Provision**

Unemployment insurance (*Jobseeker's Benefit*)

- Contributory, not means-tested, and partly taxable
- Applicant must be between 16 and 66 years old, be registered as unemployed, be capable and actively looking for work, prove unemployment in the prescribed manner, and have suffered a substantial loss of employment and a resulting loss of earnings.
- The person must have paid 104 weekly social insurance contributions since starting work, and have 39 paid social insurance contributions in the last Governing Contribution Year (which is two years before the year in which the claim is made); or have at least 26 contributions paid in both the Governing Contribution Year and the year immediately preceding the Governing Contribution Year.
- Flat rate payments are made for each week or day of unemployment. Increases are paid for dependent children and adults. If weekly earnings in employment were below specific amounts, reduced rates of payment are made.
- The benefit duration depends on the claimant's contribution record. If they have less than 260 paid weekly contributions, the benefit can be paid for a total of 6 months. If they have at least 260 paid weekly contributions, the benefit can be paid for a total of 9 months. Claimants aged 65 can continue to receive benefits until their 66th birthday (once they reach pension age).

The DEASP is responsible for the payment of unemployment allowances.

Provision of Benefits

Public Provision

Unemployment Assistance (Jobseeker's Allowance)

- Non-contributory, means-tested, and not taxable.
- Applicant must be between 18 and 66 years old, be unemployed for at least four days in any period of 7 consecutive days, be registered as unemployed, be capable and actively looking for work, prove unemployment in the prescribed manner, and habitually reside in Ireland.
- Means-test: earnings disregard of €20 per day for a maximum of 3 days per week is allowed per person. The remainder of the earnings are assessed at 60% to give the weekly means amount. The weekly means amount is then deducted from the maximum Jobseeker's Allowance applicable to the person's situation to calculate the appropriate payment.
- The payment is made up of a personal rate with extra amounts payable for a dependent spouse or partner and any dependent children. Reduced rates are payable for those aged under 26 years of age. For those with child dependents, these reductions do not apply.
- No duration limit; the benefit is granted as long as the means-test is satisfied.

A second benefit is in place for lone parents whose youngest child is aged between 7 and 13. This is the Jobseeker's Transitional Payment, which is also non-contributory and means-tested.

  The DEASP is also responsible for the payment of other relevant social benefits.

 Provision of Benefits

Public Provision

Social Assistance (*Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance- SWA*)

- The basic SWA scheme provides financial support to those whose means are insufficient to meet their needs and those of their dependents.
- It is a non-contributory, means-tested, and non-taxable benefit administered by the DEASP.
- It can consist of a basic weekly payment and/or a supplement in respect of certain expenses a person may not be able to meet. The supplements include Rent, Mortgage Interest Supplements, Heating Supplement and Urgent Needs Payment.
- In practice, most people with low incomes are covered by another social welfare benefit. Those claiming SWA fall generally into two categories: 1) people who fail to meet the conditions for entitlement to a weekly social welfare payment, and 2) people who have applied for a social welfare payment and are getting a SWA payment while waiting for a decision.
- There seem to be no ties to activation policies since this tends to be primarily a temporary allowance, and in some cases, a supplement for additional needs. The link to activation is present in the Jobseeker's Allowance, which is the income support for working-age workers without enough insurance contributions.

The obligations of each jobseeker are set in their Mutual Commitment Agreement.

Provision of Benefits

Public Provision

Conditionalities

Fulfill all the obligations listed in their Record of Mutual Commitments, , which usually include:

- Cooperating with the Intreo service in developing a Personal Progression Plan.
- Going to the Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Branch Office, usually every month (but can vary), and declaring that they are still unemployed and looking for work (also known as signing on).
- Attending all meetings and providing all information requested by the Department.
- Accepting ALMPs opportunities and job offers.

Sanctions

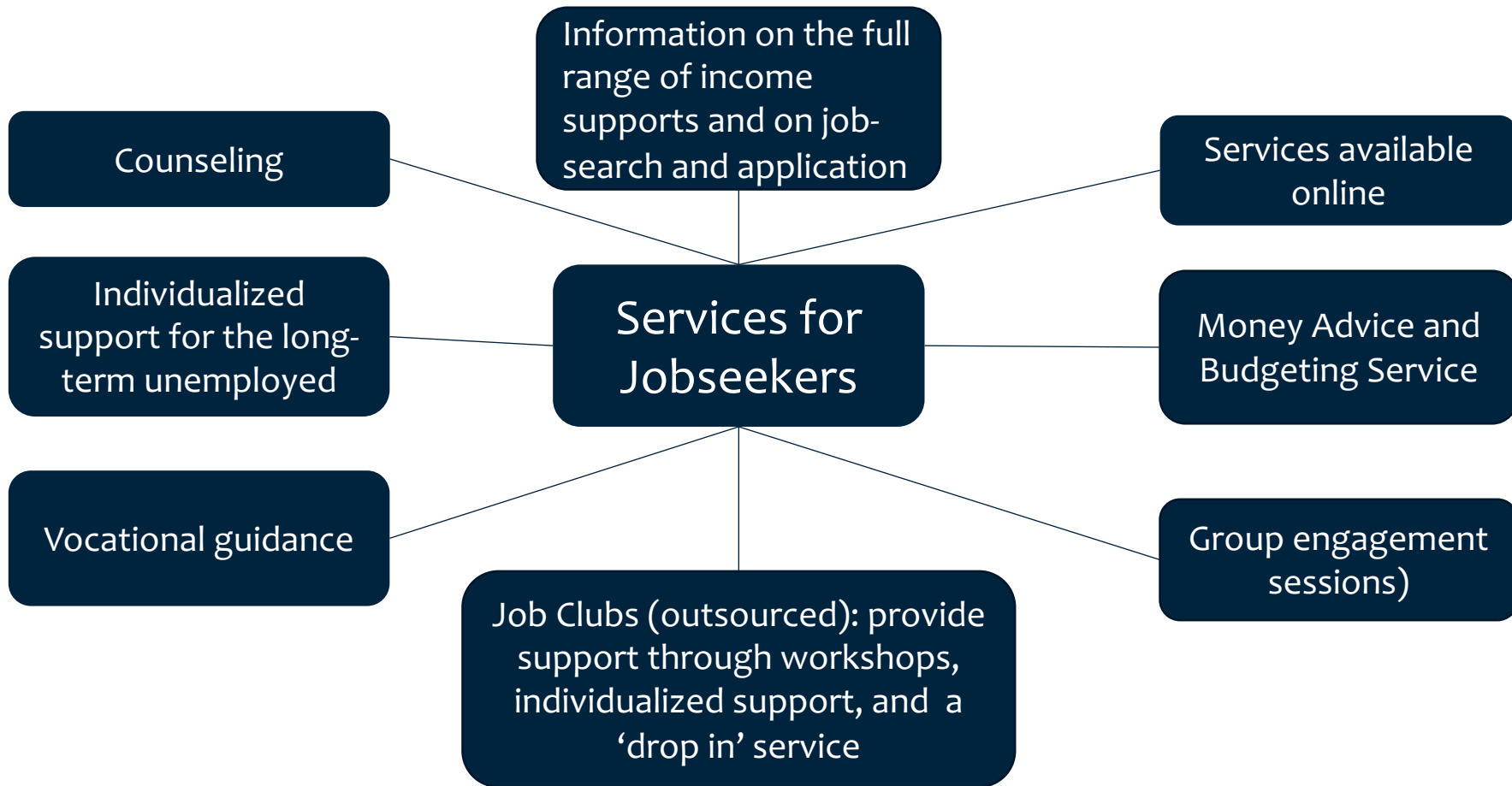
- A penalty of at least 21 days is applied if a jobseeker fails to attend meetings requested by the DEASP or participate in an appropriate employment support scheme, work experience, or training.
- If the jobseeker has been placed on a penalty rate and continues not to meet the conditions, he or she can be disqualified from the jobseeker's payment for up to 9 weeks. The rate of reduction depends on the type of penalty and on the kind of UB (either UA or UI).
- Jobseekers may be disqualified from getting a jobseeker's payment for up to 9 weeks (without previous penalty) if they left work voluntarily and without just cause or if they refused a job offer.



DEASP and the Intreo centers provide a wide variety of services to jobseekers.

Provision of Services

Public and Private Provision



A wide range of services is also available to employers

Provision of Services

Public Provision



Several ALMPs are in place, with young and long-term jobseekers at the center of the provision.

Provision
of Services

**Public and
Private
Provision**

ALMPs

Community and local government work placements

Work experience placements for young jobseekers

Wage subsidies for long-term unemployed

Self-employment schemes

Employee retention grants

JobPath (outsourced): for long-term unemployed or those in need of intense support. Jobseekers are assigned a personal adviser who offers intensive support for a year and helps them find employment.

Internships and voluntary placement programs

Different ALMPs for those with disabilities including wage subsidies, grants to adapt the workplace and support for those needing a sign language interpreter or a reader.

Jobseekers are also referred to training programs offered by the Department of Education and Skills. This includes vocational training programs, apprenticeships, e-learning courses (eCollege), and adult literacy services. The DEASP provides allowances for those enrolled.

Several intermediation services are available

Intermediation

**Public and
Private
Provision**



Online job matching platform JobsIreland (incl. automatic matching technology)



Job fairs



The European Employment Services (EURES) helps jobseekers find vacancies across Europe and supports employers advertising vacancies and finding candidates in other European countries



For Jobseekers

On the JobsIreland platform they can complete their profile, search for jobs, identify suitable positions, get matched with vacancies and apply for them.
Referrals to local placement services



For Employers

Advertisement of vacancies and support with the advertising process
Pre-selection of suitable candidates
Access to applicant databank on JobsIreland
Scheduling and providing facilities for interviews

Outsourcing



Subcontracting is used for providing support to disadvantaged groups in each area. Programs include JobClubs and JobPath.



Results-based contracting managed by the DEASP. Usually, agreements are done with Local Employment Services and local providers.



Relevant client data is shared with providers over a secure data transmission/application program interface, also used for processing transactions between Intreo and the providers.



Contracted parties have the autonomy to introduce specific measures but have to meet the standard minimum service entitlements and outcome objectives. The service agreements specify target groups, the services to be supplied, and the required caseload of a single caseworker.



Protocols are in place with employment services contractors to outline an integrated and coordinated approach, engage with employers, provide mutually supportive placement and recruitment services, mitigate the risk of employer fatigue, overlap, and duplication.



JobPath is one of the major subcontracted services. It offers intensive individualized support to assist clients in finding jobs, including appropriate referrals to education and training opportunities. Two companies, Seetec Ireland Ltd and Turas Nua were awarded the contract in 2014 to provide these services.



Digitalization

The **DEASP** uses emails and shared team sites to communicate internally. It also has databases for specific tasks, such as a database for client records for income support and a database for activation case management system.

Services for Jobseekers

- ✓ Apprenticeships database
- ✓ Jobseekers can apply for unemployment benefits at mywelfare.ie. They can also estimate benefits, change payment method and close claims.
- ✓ The job database JobsIreland.ie offers following services:
 - Automatic job-matching and notification
 - Access to career advice and tips on job applications
 - Information on employment trends and future skills needs
 - Job advertisements under the YESS scheme
- ✓ The online tool Careers Interest (CareersPortal.ie) helps highlight what jobs and educational courses would be most suited to each jobseeker.
- ✓ The further education and training course hub offers a course finder, and information on grants and allowances
- ✓ E-learning platform offered by SOLAS (eCollege).

Services for Employers

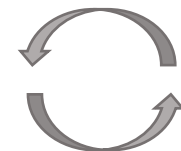
- ✓ Apprenticeship database, employers can complete an Expression of Interest and the approval process online.
- ✓ Advertising job vacancies
- ✓ The job database JobsIreland.ie allows employers to
 - Manage all stages of the recruitment cycle. The automatic job matching technology identifies fitting candidates.
 - Provides tips and guidance for hiring.
 - Create job advertisements under the YESS scheme.
 - Provides videos on how to use the platform.
- ✓ Information on services and subsidies is available at the DEASP website
- ✓ Information on training opportunities for employees and on apprenticeships is available at the SOLAS website.

Monitoring jobseekers



- Unemployment insurance benefits have a maximum duration of 9 months. The Unemployment Assistance support can be given as long as the person needs it, but the means are regularly checked as the person must report their situation to the Intreo center.
- All jobseekers must fulfill the conditionalities included in their Record of Mutual Commitments and, if given, in their Personal Progression Plan.
- Jobseekers are monitored regularly by the caseworkers to ensure they are complying with all requirements. If they fail to meet the conditions, there are progressive sanctions for most non-compliances and strong sanctions for refusing to accept a job offer. The system aims to ensure that the activation measures are met.

Monitor and Evaluate

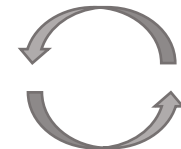


Monitoring the PES



- The progress of Pathways to Work strategy is assessed through nine overarching targets, which are converted to 17 actions and over 45 milestones.
- Targets of this strategy are monitored at the national scale and not broken down to sub-national aggregates. Their goal is to assess the effects of the reform. The Labour Market Council has a role in monitoring performance. The progress on targets is monitored quarterly.
- Local management leads individual staff performance by the annual Performance Management and Development System (PMDS). Here goals and targets are set on a yearly basis, and progress is reviewed periodically throughout the PMDS annual cycle.
- If local offices fail to process claims efficiently and provide the necessary services, penalties may be imposed, and a district manager can intervene.
- There is no performance reward mechanism in place, but poor performance can negatively impact promotional opportunities.
- DEASP reviews the progress towards their targets annually and conducts Customer Satisfaction Surveys of jobseekers and JobPath clients every year. The results are available on the DEASP website.

Monitor and Evaluate



Covid-19 responses



- During the corona virus restrictions, people on jobseeker's payments did not have to sign on at Intreo offices. Moreover, the online learning service, eCollege, was made available free of charge for all users.
- Short-time work: income support payment for employees who have been temporarily placed on a shorter working week. The payment was made with respect to the person's regular salary for the days that (s)he was not working. This support was paid for a maximum of 234 days, and the rate of payment depended on the number of social insurance contributions each person has.
- Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme: for employers who lost at least 25% of their trade. They could claim 70% of the employees' net wage back up to a maximum of €410 per week. For workers earning less than €24,400 per year, the replacement rate was increased to 85%.
- COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment: Payment of €350 per week for employees who lost their job due to the pandemic. Part-time workers and students who lost their employment were also eligible. The payment was put in place for the duration of the crisis.
- Illness Benefit for COVID-19 absences: if a person was diagnosed with COVID-19 or was asked to isolate, they could apply for this benefit. This is a payment of €350 per week (for a maximum of 2 weeks), where the person must be confined in their home or a medical facility.

General observations



Large focus on two target groups, young and long-term jobseekers.



Because the PES is integrated within the DEASP, wider access to services offered by the department are also available to jobseekers, e.g., Money Advice Service for support with their finances.



Profiling based on statistical tool and three phases to the provision of services.



Gradual penalty system is in place to ensure that jobseekers are fulfilling their regular conditionalities. An immediate sanction is enforced in case of major conditionality breaks.