

**That State job activation measures should be available to all who are unemployed, not only to those on the Live Register. That if passed, this motion would be circulated to all local authorities in the country.**

A person who is unemployed can be entered on the Live Register only if that person qualifies under a means test and is in receipt of social welfare payments. If an unemployed person fails the means test, he or she is not registered as unemployed with the Department of Social Protection.

It is largely fair that if one is unemployed and one fails a means test one does not qualify for income support. But what is not fair is that although the Live Register is not designed as a measurement of unemployment, job activation measures are available only to those on the Live Register. So if someone is unemployed and has failed the means test, that person has no access at all to these job activation measures.

Should an unemployed person not on the Live Register wish to retrain, they do not qualify for Springboard, the Momentum programme, Skillnets training or any of the ETB training courses. They do not qualify for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance or the Short Term Enterprise Allowance. But most importantly, should an employer choose to take on an unemployed person who is not on the Live Register for the minimum period specified, that employer cannot avail of the JobsPlus grants. If they take on an approved person from the Live Register, the employer will get these grants.

There is a massive gender-dimension to this issue. Consider a woman who has stayed at home to mind her children while her husband is working. The children grow up and go their way. The mother wants to reskill herself but she cannot. She doesn't qualify for Jobseekers payments because her husband is working and she therefore isn't eligible to take part in either training courses or the back to work schemes.

This system also affects men whose partners are working, the youth who are living at home and the self-employed whose business is no longer viable.

In 2013, the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare issued a report to the Minister which recommended that all job activation measures and training schemes would be extended to the formerly self-employed if they do not qualify for jobseeker's payments. This recommendation was never acted on.

In fact, during 2014 alone, both the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) and the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INO) made presentations to the Joint Education and Social Protection Committee of the Oireachtas on behalf of these unemployed people who, because of the eligibility requirements of current job activation measures, have become the invisible unemployed.

Why does this matter?

It matters because there is a small but very real cohort of unemployed people in our society who are not recognised as unemployed.

It matters because when people are unemployed, being involved in training, being with company and staying alert and active can have a hugely positive impact on mental wellbeing.

It matters because the current system is discriminatory. Nobody who fails a means test can expect an entitlement to a State payment. But they have an equal entitlement to a job. But the current system is organised so that they do not. In fact, the exclusion of those who fail a means test from the State's job activation measures can have a profoundly negative impact on their ability to regain employment.

**And so I ask for your support to ask the Minister that State job activation measures should be available to all who are unemployed, not only to those on the Live Register.**