

Southside Partnership DLR CLG. Tús Community Work Placement Initiative Pre-Budget Submission - July 2018.

In looking at enhancements to the Tús scheme, it is worth noting that our intent is to ensure that the jobseeker is placed at the centre of all actions and policies. Putting the needs of the jobseeker first is a core tenet of our aims.

Community and voluntary organisations provide the human, social and community services in all key areas of our national life. In this work they contribute to the economy as well as create value for Irish society. Many of these organisations are Tús placement providers.

We would seek to keep as many jobseekers as possible gainfully engaged in productive work beneficial to the community and society through these placement providers, as an alternative to paying them a similar sum to remain at home.

To this end our recommendations in support of this are as follows:

Summary Recommendations:

1. Reduce the Inter-Tús Placement qualification period from 3 years to 1 year.
2. Extend employment contracts for participants identified as needing increased support to ensure their eventual progression.
3. Increase access to the Tús programme for more jobseekers.
4. Extend employment contracts for Tús participants aged 62 or over.
5. Provide a basic training budget to facilitate suitable targeted training.

1. Reduce the Inter-Tús Placement Qualification Period

Currently, a jobseeker who has completed a Tús engagement must wait three years before they can qualify to participate again. With the aim of keeping as many jobseekers as possible gainfully engaged in productive work or education it would make sense to reduce the length of this qualification period.

Recommendation:

Reduce the inter-Tús placement qualification period from 3 years to 1 year.



2. Extended employment contracts for Tús participants.

It has become increasingly evident that the 12-month Tús contract for those coming from long-term unemployment is simply not enough time to allow many of the Tús participants to break the cycle of unemployment and fully re-integrate with the open labour market.

Jobseeker's perspective:

For many new Tús participants it takes several months to 're-arrange' their personal circumstances and come to terms with working again after being unemployed for at least a year, or in many cases, substantially longer. They then have a 'learning curve' in their new position and, just as they are settling in and providing value to the placement provider, it is time for them to move on, perhaps with the support of other labour market activation services such as the Local Employment Services. Their time on Tús is too short.

Placement Provider's Perspective:

Placement providers are also finding the speed of turnover to be an issue. Having spent considerable time and effort engaging with, and training, a Tús participant, they often comment on the fact that just when they are starting to get a return on this investment it is time for the participant to move on or return to the live register as their 12-month contract on Tús is finished.

Tús Team Leader's Perspective:

From the Team Leader's perspective, and that of the Implementing Body, it is also felt that 12-months does not give enough time to really build the type of relationship needed to fully engage with someone who has been unemployed for a substantial period of time. The lack of a training budget, such as that available for Community Employment participants is also an issue. Team Leader's work very hard to ensure Tús participants are informed about additional supports available through SICAP, LES, ETB etc. but the time available to explore progression options is short.

Recommendation:

Allow the Implementing Body the option to grant a 1 year contract extension to suitable Tús participants. This would help to ensure that the participants, and the placement providers, both get the most out of the programme.

This to be facilitated for up to 25% of the total allocated placement numbers.



3. Increase access to the Tús programme for more jobseekers.

The current qualifying criteria for Tús is very restrictive. It penalises those who have taken positive actions to progress into employment while encouraging some to 'wait' for longer than is necessary to avail of this effective and successful activation support programme. Jobseekers who have engaged in part-time work, short-term work, casual work or education, can be excluded from Tús simply because they have engaged in these activities for over 4-weeks within the previous 12-months. This marginalises those who have taken some positive steps in their lives whereas we should be facilitating these active Jobseekers to join Tús.

There are others who, whilst not on the Live Register, may become available for work and wish to engage with the programme. For example those who have spent years caring for a now deceased parent or relative, or single parents who can now take on employment, etc. These people deserve access to practical supports without having to wait for long qualification periods. Such individuals should be readily facilitated to pursue a Tús work placement to enhance their progression prospects.

Recommendations:

- a) Reduce the qualifying period for access to Tús to 6-months.
- b) Allow all periods of training, work experience or short-term employment to count towards Tús eligibility.
- c) Extend eligibility to those who are not in receipt of a DEASP payment but who have capacity to join the open labour market if given sufficient work-experience and/or training. This should include those who are coming off a Back-to-Education Allowance, a Carer's Allowance or a Disability Payment and who are now available and capable of taking up employment.

4. Extend employment contracts for Tús participants aged 62 or over.

Many people in their sixties find themselves in a position whereby they cannot find work because, whether we like it or not, their age can be an issue and may count against them. Very often these people return to the DEASP to receive Jobseekers Allowance and often end up languishing at home. Is it not much more desirable to keep such individuals engaged on the Tús programme doing useful work, which they enjoy doing, for placement providers, who appreciate and benefit from such work.

Recommendation:

Tús Participants aged 62 or over should be allowed remain on the programme until:

- (a) They find a suitable full-time role, or
- (b) They retire.

This to be facilitated for up to 10% of the total allocated placement numbers.



5. Provide funding to facilitate suitable targeted training.

It is most difficult to prepare participants for future work opportunities in the absence of a training budget. By providing suitable and specific training for the participants, we would increase their work prospects significantly. If participants could receive both relevant training and work experience while on their Tús placement it would ensure that they are both technically qualified and practically experienced, thus greatly increasing their prospects of employment.

Recommendation:

Provide a small training budget for Tús participants to facilitate suitable targeted training.

Who are Southside Partnership DLR CLG ? :

Southside Partnership DLR CLG is a well-established local development company, supporting people and communities in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown. Established in 1996, we work with a variety of agencies and organisations so that individuals, groups and communities can find ways to bring about positive change and create more hopeful prospects for those experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Our vision is an inclusive and just society where each person is encouraged and enabled to reach their full potential and live with dignity in active, healthy and safe communities.

We implement a range of programmes in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, including the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), the Local Employment Service (LES), Tús and a Community Employment (CE) scheme. We also host HSE funded projects such as the Drug and Alcohol Task Force and the Healthy Food Made Easy programme.

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