



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí Department of Social Protection

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Minister of State Kevin Humphreys meets with local Community Groups which provide supports to jobseekers in Co. Waterford

The Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection, Kevin Humphreys, T.D. is in Waterford today (21st September 2015) where he will meet with Department staff and a number of local groups and organisations which provide employment supports for jobseekers.

In addition to income support, the Department is involved in job activation for jobseekers and people with disabilities. The Department also works with local employers to advise them on the benefits available when they give employment to people who are on the Live Register. There are a number of Community Employment schemes and Tús programmes in place where jobseekers participate in projects that best suit their needs and help them to upskill and become job ready. The Department also manages a number of schemes that support people with disabilities to obtain and retain employment in the labour market.

Minister Humphreys will first visit Mount Melleray, The Hall and Winter Wonderland which collaborates with the Department of Social Protection, through the Tús scheme, to provide a range activities for the local community. Minister Humphreys will also visit Dungarvan Citizens Information Centre and GIY (Grow it Yourself) Carriganore where the Minister will attend a presentation on Grow HQ and take a tour of the Market Garden. On his visit to Dungarvan he will meet with the Department of Social Protection Branch Office staff working in the local office.

Minister Humphreys said: “I am pleased to be in Waterford today and meet with so many local people and groups who give so much of their time to helping improve their communities. We have come through a difficult recession and we can see signs of the recovery. Unemployment in the South East has fallen from a high of 19.1% to 12.6%. This is still high but the strategies put in place by this Government and the co-operation of employers, together with the implementation of Pathways to Work, all play a significant part in getting unemployed people job ready and back into work”.

There are 44 Community Employment projects in Waterford, 20 projects in Waterford city with the remaining 24 spread throughout County Waterford, employing a total of 944 participants and 58 Supervisors. The projects range from community radio, tourism, employment support for people with disabilities and young people.

The Department of Social Protection’s JobsPlus Scheme is another successful initiative to support jobseekers and employers. In Waterford there are 164 jobseekers employed with 97 employers under the JobsPlus scheme. Minister Humphreys acknowledged the continuous efforts being made in tackling unemployment in County Waterford. **“Research shows that the longer you are out of work, the harder it is to get back into a job. That is why one of my priorities is helping the long term unemployed. JobsPlus incentivises employers to hire those out of work for over a year and over 60% of those supported had been two years or more unemployed. In Budget**

2015 we was able to secure funding to double the number of places on JobsPlus to 6,000 which will help a further 3,000 people out of work for over a year back into a job.”

The Department of Social Protection operates from two locations in Waterford, the Intreo Centre in Waterford City and the Branch Office in Dungarvan. The Intreo centre in Waterford provides a one stop shop for employers and jobseekers, with an integrated reception to direct all queries to the appropriate area. The supports now being provided through Intreo will be customised to each customer’s individual skills, experience and qualifications. A tailored progression plan is prepared and agreed between the jobseeker and their Case Officer. This plan helps the jobseeker in deciding the training and development programmes they should pursue to maximise their access to job opportunities. There are some 13,513 people in Waterford currently availing of supports that include the Back to Education Allowance, Enterprise Allowance, TÚS, JobBridge and Community Employment schemes.

ENDS

Note for Editors

Itinerary for Minister of State Kevin Humphreys visit to Waterford

Monday 21st September 2015

10.30am	<p>Mount Melleray – The Hall Tús Scheme and Winter Wonderland <i>The new hall at Melleray is widely used by the community for a range of activities and Tús workers are key to running the facilities. The hall has been refurbished by means of a LEADER Loan. A key fundraiser to service the loan is the ‘Winter Wonderland ‘weekend. A local forest walkway is completely transformed by Tús workers into a Christmas spectacle and the whole community is involved in running the very successful event.</i></p>
12noon	<p>Courtesy call to DSP Branch Office, 3 Friary Street, Dungarvan</p>
12.15pm	<p>Courtesy call to Dungarvan CIC, Scanlon's Yard Car Park, Dungarvan,Co. Waterford, X35 NT68</p>
1.30pm	<p>1. Visit the GIY office and the Market Garden, Arclabs Research and Innovation Centre, WIT West Campus, Carriganore, Waterford 2. Visit the proposed GROW HQ site at Ardkeen</p>