



Our Ref: 093348/TAN

23rd October 2009

Ms. Allyson Rooney
Senior Staff Officer
South Dublin County Council
County Hall
Town Centre
Tallaght
Dublin 24



Dear Ms. Rooney,

Ms. Mary Coughlan TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment has asked me to respond to your representation regarding Community Employment and the Job Initiative Scheme.

Community Employment (CE) is an active labour market programme designed to provide eligible long term unemployed people and other disadvantaged persons with an opportunity to engage in useful work within their communities on a fixed term basis. CE helps unemployed people to re-enter the active workforce by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return to a work routine and to assist them to enhance/develop both their technical and personal skills.

CE remains as an active labour market programme with the emphasis on progression into employment. The programme is managed within this context, with consideration to the availability of resources and the needs of participants and the community.

The Tánaiste has asked me to say that this Government will continue to support the positive role of CE in meeting the needs of long-term unemployed persons while at the same time providing essential services to communities. The operation of the Scheme is kept under constant review in the context of the current difficult unemployment situation.

The Job Initiative Programme (JI) which was launched in July 1996 continues to provide full time employment for people who are 35 years of age or over, unemployed for 5 years or more, and in receipt of Social Welfare payments over that period.

The main purpose of the programme is to assist long-term unemployed people to prepare for work opportunities by providing participants with work experience, training and development opportunities. The programme is sponsored by voluntary organisations and public bodies involved in not-for-profit activities.



Following changes introduced on 10 November 2004 by Minister Micheál Martin no new entrants have been admitted onto the Job Initiative Schemes. However, contracts for existing participants are renewed allowing them the option to continue until they are 65 years of age.

The 2009 budget for the Job Initiative is €39m and there are currently 1,444 participants with this number decreasing annually due to retirement and other reasons. I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Coughlan', written over a horizontal line.

Mary Coughlan TD
Tánaiste and Minister for
Enterprise, Trade & Employment