

did you know. . .

In Ireland for every staff member in the labour exchange and related services there are 660 unemployed persons? In Sweden (with about 2% unemployment) each staff member has on average only 22 unemployed persons to cater for. As far as personal attention goes it looks as though the unemployed Irish person is 30 times worse off than his/her Swedish counterpart. Of course Sweden really is top-drawer when it comes to treating the unemployed as persons with rights and dignity. How does Ireland compare with a country of similar culture like the UK, or of similar wealth-level like Portugal? The UK ratio is 1:193 and the Portuguese ratio is 1:209, in comparison with either of which the Irish ratio of 1:660 is over three times as great.

We're not all bad: as regards expenditure on job-training and unemployment assistance, Ireland rates at about the same as Britain, a fair bit better than the USA and vastly more than Portugal. As regards provision of trained personnel, Ireland rates very badly. Our ratio of 1:660 must surely reflect a lack of real commitment to the unemployed, both on the level of provision of information and re-training, and on the more basic level of respecting the dignity of the unemployed.

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