

# youthreach

A new Government Scheme for unemployed early school leavers has been introduced. This programme, called 'Youthreach' is, in effect, a new version of the 'Social Guarantee' introduced in 1985. The target group of 'Youthreach' is early school leavers. Of the 66,500 who left school in 1986, 15,500 had an Inter or Group cert and 4,400 had no qualification. Of this group, one year later - 9,000 were still unemployed, 3,400 were on training schemes and 4,800 had emigrated.

As with the Social Guarantee, names of early school leavers with no qualifications will be passed on from schools to Fas. Fas will track these young people and after a period, those who remain unemployed may be offered up to two years education and training - one year on a 'foundation programme' run by Community Training Workshops and VEC's, followed by one year on other work experience or training programmes. People on the programme will be paid Fas training allowances.

Also those other early leavers with some qualification, who under the Social Guarantee could be offered 7 months skills foundation in Anco Workshops will now be entitled to a years programme under Teamwork or through a 'New Training Contract'.

'Youthreach' is expected to provide 3,000 places in its first year, possibly with some increase in later years. On the information available 'Youthreach' would seem to be a welcome initiative. The low number of places means that its impact may be useful but limited. Also, because of the low numbers it is not an adequate way of addressing the income needs of unemployed 16/17 year olds and the demand for some kind of social welfare provision to meet the needs of this group remains a priority. ■