

PROGRAMMES FOR THE LONG - TERM UNEMPLOYED

Since the early eighties a number of initiatives to combat long - term unemployment have been introduced:

- **Employment Incentive Scheme** - since 1984 double the normal subsidy has been payable to employers recruiting from among the long - term unemployed (LTU). It is now planned to target this scheme more fully on the LTU. (See 'Subsidising Jobs')

- **Social Employment Scheme** - introduced in 1985, this is a direct employment scheme which provides temporary (one year maximum) half - time work, primarily for the LTU. The average number of SES jobs reached a high of around 11,500 in 1987/88 but then declined again to below 10,000. It is in this context that the recent announcement of an additional 1,000 SES places must be seen. Also the SES has frequently been criticised for the poor quality of work provided and for the poor pay and conditions it offers participants.

- **Alternance Programme** - is a six month training course, also introduced in 1985. The Department report a 'throughput' for Alternance of 2,800 people in 1988. But this figure includes people who do not finish the course. Also, however measured, the numbers on Alternance have declined over the last year.

- **National Jobsearch Programme** - introduced in 1987 provides four week courses in jobseeking techniques. Also places on other schemes and training programmes are allocated through the Jobsearch Programme. There is considerable doubt as to whether Jobsearch has increased the allocation of training places to the LTU. Not all allocations made through Jobsearch are to the LTU and it is unclear to what extent the figures under the programme simply reclassify existing allocations under a new heading.

- **Part-time Job Incentive Scheme** - introduced in November 1988, is an income supplement paid to long - term unemployed persons who take on part - time work. It only covered 230 people up to mid - October 1989.

- **Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme** - will offer educational courses to the LTU while they continue receiving welfare payments. The target is only 200 places.

- **a pre - retirement allowance** - for LTU persons over sixty years old is planned. This will result in 6,000 LTU persons being removed from the register. The allowance will be at the same level as unemployment assistance, so while it will mean less hassle for the people concerned it is unlikely to change their material position significantly.

Also the long - term unemployed may participate in other State training programmes. However in general they tend to be under - represented in these areas. Access for the LTU to mainstream training programmes should receive greater emphasis. This could be achieved by setting aside a quota of places for the LTU on all such programmes.