

**Labour Market Advisory Council**

**Inaugural Meeting: Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

**11am - Remote Access**

*In Attendance:*

Minister Regina Doherty, Denise Duffy (Adviser)

**Council Members:** John Martin (Chair and Former OECD Director), Angela Smith (CEO, Dress for Success), Frank Gleeson (President, Aramark Northern Europe), Terry Corcoran (Former Chief Economist, D/EASP), Ade Stack (MD, Stacks Pharmacy), Bríd O'Brien (Head of Policy and Media, INOU), Kara McGann (Head of Social Policy, IBEC), Ger Gibbons (Policy Officer, ICTU), Sinead McSweeney (MD, Twitter Ireland), Susan Hynes (VP, Takeda Dunboyne Biologics), Dr. Philip O'Connell (Geary Institute, UCD).

**Ex-Officio Members:** John Conlon (D/EASP), Dermot Coates (D/EASP), Jenny Connors (D/PER), Andrew Brownlee (CEO, SOLAS)

*Apologies* were received from: William Beausang (D/ES), David Hegarty (D/BEI) and John Shaw (D/Taoiseach) who were replaced by Phil O'Flaherty, Kevin Daly and Nigel Clarke, respectively.

**D/EASP Officials:** John McKeon (Secretary General), Jacqui McCrum (Deputy Secretary General), Hugh Cronin (Economist), Ailbhe Brioscú (Economist)

**Secretary:** Louise Kavanagh (D/EASP)

**i. Minister Doherty's Opening Remarks:**

Minister Doherty welcomed and thanked the members of the group for agreeing to participate on the Labour Market Advisory Council (LMAC). Council membership brings together a strong blend of skills and relevant experience. Against the ongoing backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council will play an important role over the coming weeks and months in shaping the policy response and programmes that are needed to support economic recovery. Given the urgency of the economic situation, the Minister requested that the Council meet frequently and publish a paper on options to assist the labour market and support economic recovery as quickly as possible.

**ii. Chair's Introduction**

The Chair thanked the Minister for her opening address and noted the urgency of the response that she has tasked the Council with. He welcomed all participants to the meeting before inviting everyone to introduce themselves briefly.

**iii. Secretary General's Remarks:**

John McKeon welcomed and thanked all participants for their attendance. The COVID-19 pandemic marks the largest, deepest and broadly spread labour market shock in modern times. The Irish

labour market has transitioned from almost full employment to unprecedented levels of temporary unemployment in just four weeks. The situation continues to evolve at a national level and the rate of getting workers back into employment and economic recovery is dependant on the easing of public health restrictions. It is imperative over the coming period to: maintain links between firms and their workers, address work incentive challenges and provide upskilling and retraining opportunities to displaced workers. This may include redeployment to other sectors.

#### **iv. Terms of Reference**

The Council adopted the Terms of Reference and agreed, in response to a suggestion from Ger Gibbons, to include a reference to UN Sustainable Development Goal No. 8 (Decent Work) in the opening paragraph.

#### **v. Lobbying Regulations: Transparency Code**

The Council agreed to operate under the Transparency Code. Minutes of meetings and publications emanating from the Council will be made publicly available on a Gov.ie landing page.

#### **vi. Draft LMAC Working Paper *'The Initial Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Ireland's Labour Market'***

Work is ongoing by D/EASP officials in partnership with the Central Bank Ireland. The Chair recommended publication and invited comments on the latest working draft, via the Secretariat, no later than COB, Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April. Publication is expected quickly thereafter.

#### **vii. Discussion Themes:**

The Chair facilitated an extensive roundtable discussion on: short-time working supports and wage subsidies; targeting of supports by sector/region (supports & challenges).

#### Key discussion points:

- Continuing to assess the package and balance of household income and enterprise supports in tandem with the resumption of economic activity
- Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on different sectors and regions and the need for a differentiated approach having regard to likely speed with which sectors and regions can recover
- Building on strong stakeholder relationships that exist at a national and local level
- Future of Work: Emergence of new sectors and innovative ways of working will continue to be an ongoing focus
- The requirement for upskilling and retraining opportunities to affected firms/workers and those who have been displaced as a result of the pandemic, including the use of innovative training platforms

**Discussion themes for carry over to the next meeting:**

- ✓ Active Labour Market Policies: the role of internships & contracted services
- ✓ The future of work & digital services delivery

**Action Points**

- ❖ Council and Ex-Officio members to provide a short bio and photograph to the Secretariat
- ❖ Obs. welcome until COB 29<sup>th</sup> April on the draft working paper *'The Initial Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Ireland's Labour Market.'*
- ❖ SOLAS to share the SMLRU paper on the regional impact of COVID-19 ,via the Secretariat
- ❖ Secretariat to circulate a consolidated contact list to all members

**Date of Next Meeting:**

Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020 @ 10.30am (Remote Access)