

Baseline Analysis Report – Youth Unemployment Tipperary



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tipperary regional youth service

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Tipperary Youth Unemployment Baseline Report – Executive Summary

Nationally

- Following the recession of 2008, Ireland's youth employment levels dropped by 60%.
- Prior to the crisis, Ireland's youth unemployment rate averaged at 9%. It presently stands at 20.7%.
- Initially youth unemployment affected mainly males, but in recent years females have been adversely affected also.
- As of August 2015, the unemployment rate for young (15-24 years) males is 22.7% and females 18.5%.
- Approximately 38, 800 young people without jobs in Ireland today.
- Approximately 49, 912 young people on the Live Registrar nationally.
- 19, 000 young people on the Live Registrar for a year or longer.
- NEET (Not in Employment/Education/Training) rate nationally is 18%.
- 8,000 young people leave school without completing Leaving Certificate each year.
- The number of apprentices available yearly has dropped from 8,000 before the crisis to 1,500 presently.
- Since the financial crisis began 223, 600 young Irish people have left our shores – 50% of these are third level graduates.

Tipperary North

- There are currently 6, 475 unemployed people (of all ages) in Tipperary North, an increase of 163 people since January.
- 51.9% of the youth population live in areas that do not border towns or urban electoral divisions.
- 1 in every 5 young people aged between 17 and 25 has left the county since 2006.
- In educational terms, boys are far more likely than their female counterparts to cease education early.
- Presently, 1 in every 10 students who enter the Junior Certificate cycle in North Tipperary do not remain on to complete the Leaving Certificate.

- 394 young people in North Tipperary left school after lower second level.
- There are 680 young people currently living in poverty in North Tipperary and a further 1, 460 at risk of entering poverty.
- 63.5% of 15-19 year olds in the area and 40.7% of 20-24 year olds were unemployed, as of the 2011 Census.
- There are presently 548 males and 398 females under 25 years old on the Live Registrar in North Tipperary.

Tipperary South

- There are currently 7, 957 unemployed people (of all ages) in Tipperary South, an increase of 93 people since January.
- 54% of Tipperary South's young people live in a rural area, 21.8% live close to a town and 24.1% actually reside in a town.
- It is estimated that one-quarter of young people aged 18-23 years have left Tipperary South since 2006.
- Males in South Tipperary are twice as likely as their female counterparts to cease education early.
- 645 young people in South Tipperary have finished school at lower second level.
- There are 870 young people currently living in poverty in South Tipperary and a further 1, 840 at risk of entering poverty.
- . There are currently 726 males and 519 females under 25 years on the Live Registrar in South Tipperary.

Issues Facing Young Unemployed People in Tipperary

- Transport – As a rural hinterland, transport services within the county are limited. Young people can find themselves caught in a cycle of rural disadvantage when it comes to accessing services/getting to employment.

- Negative effect of unemployment on people's wellbeing – Often young unemployed people began to lack confidence in themselves and their own abilities.
- Lack of skills in the area of computer competence and access to the internet – young people are often lacking basic computer skills, e.g. CV creation, and internet usage skills.
- Lack of employability skills –skills that are typically garnered through immersion in working environments.
- Acute lack of training and qualifications – early school leavers are at a particular disadvantage. Financial issues present here also in covering the cost of courses etc.
- Lack of appropriate work experience – An entire cohort of young people are entering the labour market each year with no work experience, even casual/part-time work can be difficult to locate, and essentially very little to make them attractive to potential employers.

The National Context

In 2008, Ireland and much of the world began a spiralling descent into recession and financial crisis. This occurrence changed the landscape of youth employment in Ireland. By the end of 2008, youth employment levels in Ireland had suffered a national drop of 60%. Prior to the crisis, Ireland's youth unemployment rate averaged at 9%. However by 2012, this figure had dramatically risen to 33%. Presently, in 2015, it stands at 20.7%, still alarmingly higher than it was before the financial crash. Initially, the rise in youth unemployment levels occurred at a far more rapid rate for males than females, reflecting the particular problems pertaining to the construction industry. However, this gender gap has narrowed in recent years as a lack of employment opportunities infiltrated all labour sectors. Currently, as of August 2015, the unemployment rate for young males and females (aged 15-24 years) is 22.7% and 18.5% respectively. Effectively, this means that there are approximately 38,800 young people without jobs in Ireland today. Consequently, from June to August 2015, there was a small but significant rise in the number of young female unemployed people. This figure rose from 17.6% to its present standing of 18.5%. This demonstrates that unemployment among young Irish people is effecting both our male and female populations.

Ireland's Live Registrar statistics are released once monthly, and can also illuminate the area of youth unemployment. The Live Registrar figures include anyone registering for unemployment assistance or benefit. Essentially, this means that people working casual or part-time hours and also claiming welfare assistance will also be included in these figures. As of August 2015, 18.8% of the overall Live Registrar population were casual and part-time workers. These people are essentially, not unemployed, but it can be viewed as a suggestion that full-time and permanent work is difficult to secure in contemporary Ireland. The percentage of persons aged under 25 years on the Live Registrar presently stands at 13.9% (or approximately 49,912 people), which is a 1.5% drop on the same period last year. Statistics gathered in 2008 illustrate that less than 20% of young unemployed persons had been out of work for a year or more. However, as of June 2015, 19,000 young people had been on the Live Registrar for a year or longer.

Unemployment within Ireland's youth population is higher for young people with lower levels of qualifications than for their counterparts who have progressed to third level. Of those aged 20-24 years with no more than lower secondary education, the unemployment rate is over 50%, as compared to 30% for those with higher secondary education, and 20% for third level graduates. Ireland's overall NEET (Not in Education or Training) rate for young people aged 15-24 is 18%. There are approximately 8,000 young people each year who leave school before completing their Leaving Certificate. Of these 8,000 early school leavers, 13% remain disengaged from employment or second chance education or training. There are 52,000 young people who complete second level education each year in Ireland, and of this number, 32,000 progress to third level education, 13,000 enter vocational training courses and 1,500 find training as apprentices. However, it is crucial to note that prior to the recession, the number of apprenticeships available per year, within Ireland, was 8,000 in comparison to the 1,500 now available.

An analysis of Irish youth unemployment cannot be completed without referencing recent youth emigration trends. Since the financial crisis began 223, 600 young Irish people have left our shores. Of these emigrants, young people with third level qualifications make up almost 50%. This has lead experts to comment that Ireland is experiencing a 'brain drain' where some of our brightest and highest qualified people are leaving for new lands. This in turn, affects Ireland's long term recovery as a pool of well-educated and skilled people is needed to attract investment and stimulate and sustain economic growth.

Tipperary County Baseline

North Tipperary

In Tipperary as a whole, youth unemployment reached 20% in March of this year. As of August 2015, figures released by the Central Statistics Office show that general unemployment (of all ages) has increased in North Tipperary between January and August of this year. There are currently 6, 475 unemployed people in Tipperary North, an increase of 163 people since January. This increase is spread throughout the region, with Thurles having the highest ascent of an additional 95 persons.

North Tipperary is largely a rural area, with just over half (51.9%) of the youth population dwelling in areas that do not border towns or urban electoral divisions. Only one-third of young people reside in North Tipperary's urban centres. Again, this can be linked to unemployment levels as some young people have no access to services and employment supports when they dwell outside the hub of urban areas. Emigration is also a trend in the area, with 1 in every 5 young people aged between 17 and 25 leaving the county since 2006. Evidently, not all these young emigrants deserted Ireland because of unemployment but large numbers of them have.

In educational terms, boys are far more likely than their female counterparts to cease education early. Presently, 1 in every 10 students who enter the Junior Certificate cycle in North Tipperary do not remain on to complete the Leaving Certificate. A study carried out by the Department of Education aimed to test school retention rates countrywide of the 2008 cohort who entered second level education. This cohort of young people should have sat their Leaving Certificate exams in either 2013 or 2014. Tipperary's 2008 cohort consisted of 2, 234 young people. 97.14% of these young people completed Junior Certificate and 92.87% completed Leaving Certificate.

Persons aged between 15 and 24 years, who have ceased education by highest level of education completed and gender.			
Age at which education ceased	Males	Females	Total
No formal education	15	6	21
Primary education	45	30	75
Lower secondary education	263	131	394
Upper secondary education	905	649	1, 554
Third level, non-degree	25	54	79
Third level degree or higher	144	280	424
Not stated	54	59	113
Total:	1, 451	1, 209	2, 660

15 to 24 year olds by sex and education status				
	Males	Females	Total	Overall percentage
Education ceased	1, 451	1,209	2, 660	33.1
Education not ceased	2, 669	2, 716	5, 385	66.9
				100.0

In 2016, there are expected to be 13, 592 young people between the ages of 10-24 years living in North Tipperary. This number is predicted to rise to 14, 568 by 2021 and 15, 082 by 2026. The social class of young North Tipperary people (or the social class of those they are dependent on i.e. guardians) can be defined as follows; 5.5% professional workers, 23.5% managerial and technical, 19% non-manual, 15.6% skilled manual, 11% semi-skilled, 4% unskilled and 21.4% are other or unknown. There are 680 young people currently living in poverty in North Tipperary and a further 1, 460 at risk of entering poverty.

As of 2011 figures, 63.5% of 15-19 year olds in the area and 40.7% of 20-24 year olds were unemployed. There are presently 548 males and 398 females under 25 years on the Live Registrar in North Tipperary.

Live Registrar Youth Figures			
	Nenagh	Roscrea	Thurles
Males	210	114	224
Females	162	84	152
Total:	372	198	376

South Tipperary

In Tipperary as a whole, youth unemployment reached 20% in March of this year. As of August 2015, figures released by the Central Statistics Office show that general unemployment (of all ages) has increased in South Tipperary between January and August of this year. There are currently 7,957 unemployed people in Tipperary South, an increase of 93 people since January. This increase is spread throughout the region, with Clonmel having the highest ascent of an additional 106 persons.

South Tipperary towns have a below county average of 10-18 year olds living in urban areas. In particular Cashel and Tipperary Town show a markedly low proportion of young people aged 10-18 years. 54% of Tipperary South's young people live in a rural area, 21.8% live close to a town and 24.1% actually reside in a town. Emigration is also a trend in the area. Population projections from 2004 stated that in 2011 there would be 5,944 young people aged 20-24 years in South Tipperary. However, in reality, this figure arrived at less than anticipated with only 4,957 20-24 year olds. This has been attributed to the emigration of young people out of Ireland in this age cohort. It is estimated that one-quarter of young people aged 18-23 years have left Tipperary South since 2006.

In educational terms, males are more likely than females to end their education earlier than females. They are two times more likely to finish education at lower second level. Between 2006 – 2011, the number of 15-25 year olds with no formal education tripled within South Tipperary. 1 in 5 young people, within South Tipperary, who are no longer in education has not completed their Leaving Certificate. 40% of those no longer in education have not completed lower second level. Research carried out by the Department of Education aimed to test school retention rates countrywide of the 2008 cohort who entered second level education. This cohort of young people should have sat their Leaving Certificate exams in either 2013 or 2014. Tipperary's 2008 cohort consisted of 2,234 young people. 97.14% of these young people completed Junior Certificate and 92.87% completed Leaving Certificate.

15 – 24 year olds in South Tipperary by highest educational attainment and gender			
Education Level	Males	Females	Total
No formal education or training	21	8	29
Primary Education	115	60	175
Lower Secondary	442	203	645
Upper Secondary	908	727	1, 635
Technical or Vocational qualification	154	284	438
Advanced Certificate/ Completed Apprenticeship	188	101	289
Higher Certificate	37	76	113
Ordinary Bachelor Degree or National Diploma	41	78	119
Honours Bachelor Degree, Professional Qualification or both	104	242	346
Postgraduate Diploma or Degree	30	46	76
Doctorate (Ph.D) or higher	61	55	116
Not stated	77	73	150
Total	2, 178	1, 953	4, 131

15 – 24 year olds in South Tipperary whose highest educational attainment was lower second level in both 2006 and 2011		
	2006	2011
No formal education	11	29
Primary education	216	175
Lower secondary education	1, 217	645
Total	1, 444	849
Percentage of 15 – 24 year olds	12.6%	8.0%

In 2016, there are expected to be 17, 370 young people between the ages of 10-24 years living in South Tipperary. This number is predicted to rise to 18, 603 by 2021 and 19, 273 by 2026. The social class of young South Tipperary people (or the social class of those they are dependent on i.e. guardians) can be defined as follows; 4.9% professional workers, 19.5% managerial and technical, 18.7% non-manual, 15.7% skilled manual, 12.4% semi-skilled, 4.6% unskilled and 21.4% are other or unknown. There are 870 young people currently living in poverty in South Tipperary and a further 1, 840 at risk of entering poverty.

As of 2011 figures, 65% of 15-19 year olds in the area and 39.6% of 20-24 year olds were unemployed. There are currently 726 males and 519 females under 25 years on the Live Registrar in South Tipperary.

Young people under 25 years on the Live Register by location					
	Cahir	Carrick-On-Suir	Cashel	Clonmel	Tipperary
Males	96	138	94	254	144
Females	60	94	69	187	109
Total:	156	232	163	441	253

Issues Facing Young Unemployed People/Early School Leavers

There are a myriad of issues facing young people in County Tipperary who are unemployed, have dropped out of school or at risk of dropping out of school and face multiple barriers to access the labour market. Research on this topic, pertaining to Tipperary County in particular, is limited. Therefore, I will be referring to national and internationally based research and reports and linking them to both qualitative and quantitative data garnered directly from young Tipperary people who have experienced unemployment and/or early school leaving, and also from Tipperary Regional Youth Services youth unemployment staff. This data was collected by Tipperary Regional Youth Service as an analysis of their own youth unemployment initiative, 'The Work Winner' programme.

Tipperary County is both a landlocked and rural hinterland, dominated by raised bogland, especially the Littleton Bog which divides the county in two. As is frequently the case in rural areas, internal transport links within the county are substandard and leave a lot to be desired. Despite having rail links with Dublin, Cork and Limerick, public transport services outside the county's main towns are often non-existent. A recent Pobal report (2013) explicitly makes the connection between rural isolation, a lack of services and unemployment. *"There is a perceived absence of choices or lack of flexibility as people find themselves unable to access training or suitable employment"* (Walsh and Harvey, 2013:15). This view is similar to the findings of TRYS' Work Winner analysis. It was discovered that the median distance people within Tipperary travel to work is 10 kilometres. This demonstrates that a mode of transport is generally an essential consideration to gaining employment or attending training/interviews. Furthermore, only 2% of participants used public transport when they commenced the Work Winner programme, again effectively showing the lack of public transport available within the County. At the closure of the programme, 55% of participants required vehicular transportation to work. With a lack of public transport options, many young people in Tipperary unfortunately are in a position where without transport they can't access employment services or jobs, and without a job cannot afford a car. It appears therefore, that young people in rural areas are caught in a cycle of rural disadvantage, without the means to improve their prospects.

The National Youth Council of Ireland's (2010) research entitled 'Youth Employment in Ireland- The Forgotten Generation', stated that a key issue facing young unemployed Irish people is the negative effect that unemployment can have on a person's sense of wellbeing. Again, this position is supported by Tipperary's unemployed youth. This sense of damaged well-being manifests itself in various ways, and frequently mentioned is its link to the development of poor self-esteem and limited self-belief. One expert consulted by the National Youth Council of Ireland (2010) stated that *"a period of unemployment has the potential to have a most significant, detrimental effect on the life of a young person as they can lose their sense of confidence so easily"*. This sentiment emerged through consultation with young unemployed people in Tipperary also. They spoke of how they began to believe that they weren't good enough to secure work and how they had a lack of belief in their own abilities. *"I didn't think I would be able to do the job. Afterwards I was proud I could. I realised how anti-social I was but after that I was able to open up more"* (Sean, Participant on Work Winner programme). It was also something that was noticeable to TRYS' youth employment staff also. *"Confidence for participants is an enormous part of the programme because nobody will ever chase anything unless they have the confidence to chase it"* (Laura, Work Winner programme worker). Ongoing rejection and long periods without gaining employment can leave young people feeling down in themselves and feeling as if they haven't got what it takes or that they aren't good enough to gain employment. This can then turn to apathy, where young people begin to accept their circumstances and give up the fight to change them. *"I got out of that mind frame of "I'm going to be sitting here forever and not going to be doing anything. It just got me out of the frame of mind and now I really love working and I enjoy myself too and not feeling like a failure anymore"* (Aine, Participant). Worryingly, this lack of self-worth can often develop into serious mental health concerns such as depression or anxiety. 65% of those interviewed by the National Youth Council agreed that the experience of unemployment was having detrimental consequences for their psychological health and sense of well-being. This view was supported by young Tipperary people with some speaking of the 'rut' they found themselves stuck in. They also confided of how worthless they felt and the hours spent at home doing nothing. *"It had been so long waking up and not even wanting to get up because I didn't see a point I could stay in bed like, and you know I feel so lazy saying that"* (Aine, Participant). A lack of aspiration to locate work was frequently referenced by the young people interviewed by

TRYS. *“Yes I definitely got out of that mind frame of I’m going to be sitting here forever and not going to be doing anything”* (Aine, Participant). The Journey to Employment (JET) Framework (2013) links young people’s aspirations to their chances of becoming early school leavers and part of the unemployed youth cohort. *“More than two-fifths (42%) of 14 year olds who disagree strongly that having a job or career is important are NEET four years after”* (JET, 2013 :10). Essentially, aspiration drives a person forward and without it young people lose their direction. Again, young unemployed people appear to be in a damaging cycle of hopelessness and self-loathing, which then transports them to a place where they no longer have the aspiration or self-belief to continue in their quest for work.

Computer competence and internet access is something often taken for granted in contemporary Ireland. Certainly, computer proficiency is expected in a large proportion of today’s workplaces. However, TRYS’ youth employment staff have found that young unemployed people are often lacking even basic computer and internet usage skills. Despite using the internet frequently on their phones for social media etc., young people often lacked basic things such as email addresses or the ability to search for and apply for jobs online. *“We try and support them to learn to use computers for job searches, applying for JobsBridge...all that stuff. Most of them would not have known how to do this even though they all have Smartphone’s....they don’t know how to do it”* (Donal, Work Winner Coordinator). This was similar to the findings of the National Youth Council’s (2010) youth unemployment research. The young people interviewed for their research stated that there are certain skills needed to be prosperous in job searching, with CV and cover letter creation a key factor. Again, these are skills that many take as a given but in reality, many unemployed and early school leavers have missed out on opportunities to develop computer and employment skills such as those tended to through Transition year, Leaving Certificate Applied and attendance with career guidance teachers.

According to the JET (2013) Framework, *“skills such as team working, communication, problem solving, and self-management, are highly valued by employers, often far more than educational qualifications”*. These skills are often referred to as employability skills; the skills that allow a person to navigate through the working world. Long periods of workplace absence or no experience whatsoever with workplace existence means that frequently, young unemployed people are lacking these essential employability skills. This was certainly

how it appeared to TRYS' youth employment staff. *"If they are not used to getting out of bed, having structure to the day, they may have never worked or know anyone who works, they don't have the basic things like personal hygiene or the idea that 9 o'clock means 9 o'clock not 10.30 or that when you go for a cigarette break you don't stay outside for 35 minutes on your phone...things like that. Because they've never worked...These are things many people take for granted...dress code"* (Donal, Staff). This issue can pertain particularly to those who have left school earlier than their peers. According to the National Youth Council (2010), *"leaving school early may prevent the development of specific skills that will allow a person to function within certain environments...such as how to work and function within a group environment, and how to behave within pre-existing social and institutional boundaries"*. It is therefore clear to identify that a key issue facing early school leavers is that they have missed out on the formation of these valuable skills; skills not only valuable in the quest for employment but also valuable in relation to maintaining their position or progressing in the workplace.

The most frequently cited issue facing young unemployed people and early school leavers in relation to employment was an acute lack of training/qualifications and appropriate work experience. Not only does early school leaving impact on a person's employability skills once they have secured employment, it actually severely lessens a young person's chance at gaining employment at all. *"Achieving qualifications is linked to employment prospects and earning potential... The higher an individual's qualifications, the more likely they are to be in employment"* (JET, 2013:12). When addressing this issue with young people in Tipperary, it emerged that money can often be problematic here too. Employers frequently require particular training courses to be covered in order to commence employment. This was found in both the male and female sphere and respondents reported that without the financial assistance from TRYS, they would simply not have been able to afford the trainings. One employer providing work placement for the Work Winner programme stated, *"So I said get him Safe Pass, get him Manual Handling and get him First Aid and I'll take him on for a couple of weeks and I'll see. So I said I'll take him on for the 4 weeks but he has to have these before I take him on. Otherwise he's not covered with my insurance etc."* (Mark, Employer). As consecutively appears to be the pattern here, young people are trapped in a cycle of needing money to secure work, but also needing work before they have money. A further

concern in this area, is that 'low' skilled young people are steadily becoming completely isolated from the workplace and face a future of long-term unemployment. *"These young people with relatively low skills and no real experience of the world of work are effectively unemployable in a knowledge economy. If we desert them at this point, they are liable to drift indefinitely on the unemployment scrap-heap"* (National Youth Council, 2010:32). In an Ireland where increasing numbers of people are attaining high levels of education and qualification, we have an entire population of young people with low education and skills level that are essentially being left behind.

Through the responses from the young Tipperary group, it was clear that work experience was seen by the young people as the essential thing they had been missing when applying for jobs. *"They all see the value of the work experience"* (Laura, Staff). Concurrently the JET (2013) Framework also articulates the link between relevant work experience and gaining employment. *"Work experience gives an important signal to potential employers, particularly if it is paid"* (JET Framework, 2013:12). Having work experience on your CV obviously demonstrates to employers that a person is capable of holding a position over a period of time and beyond that, it supplies potential employers with referees to contact in order to query about potential employees. *It's a buyers-market and when you have no experience you will lose out"* (National Youth Council, 2010:28). Unfortunately, since the crash of 2008, job opportunities have been less available in Ireland, particularly to young people with no previous experience. This present generation has missed the avenues of part-time and weekend jobs, which was previously available to their age range. This now creates an entire cohort of people who emerge into the adult world looking for work but have no previous experience and essentially no CV to supply to employers. When participants spoke of the Work Winner programme, it was evident that this was the facet of the programme that they found most useful in their jobs quest. *"It was to get some work experience because before that I had no experience at all. Something to put on the CV"* (Sean, Participant). This is an area that needs to be addressed before young people can smoothly transition into the working world.

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