

PRESS RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT’S NEW REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE A BAD DEAL FOR JOBLESS IN SOUTH KERRY

South Kerry Development Partnership a member of the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) have criticised the Government’s proposal to replace the employment service delivered by Local Employment Services (LES).

The new Regional Employment Service which seeks to replace existing Jobs Clubs and Local Employment Services which have been assisting those out of work in Communities for 25 years is being initiated in four Regions across the Country ahead of a national rollout.

Outlining their concerns, Noel Spillane, CEO of South Kerry Development Partnership said; *“The new Regional Employment Service the Department of Social Protection are tendering for will instantly close Jobs Club in these areas and later in 2021 will inevitably lead to the closure of vital Local Employment Services and Jobs Clubs across the remainder of the Country. The timing of this could not be worse as Communities face into a post pandemic unemployment crisis. This move will deprive those unemployed due to COVID, the long-term unemployed, carers, women and other cohorts removed from the jobs market of access to a walk-in, person centred, community-based employment services and all the supports that such services provides. Instead, jobseekers will be faced with a centralised profit-driven, results-based process which will not be accessible to all jobseekers.”*

Commenting on the success of existing South Kerry Local Employment Services, Noel Spillane continued; *“The community-based South Kerry Local Employment Services have supported those without work in a comprehensive, person-centred way for the past 25 years. Research commissioned by the Department of Social Protection and carried out independently by Indecon indicated that attendance with a Local Employment Service had been beneficial to those who used the service. Local Employment Services have also been endorsed by employers who engage with the service.”*

Concluding, Noel Spillane commented; *“It beggars’ belief that the Department would move to dismantle such important services for those without work at such a critical time. ILDN have proposed the extension of the current LES model across its 49 members in order to provide a nationwide service. Such a model would give an efficient accessible service to jobseekers as well as transparency and value for money for the taxpayer. The Minister and the Department must revisit this decision.”*

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