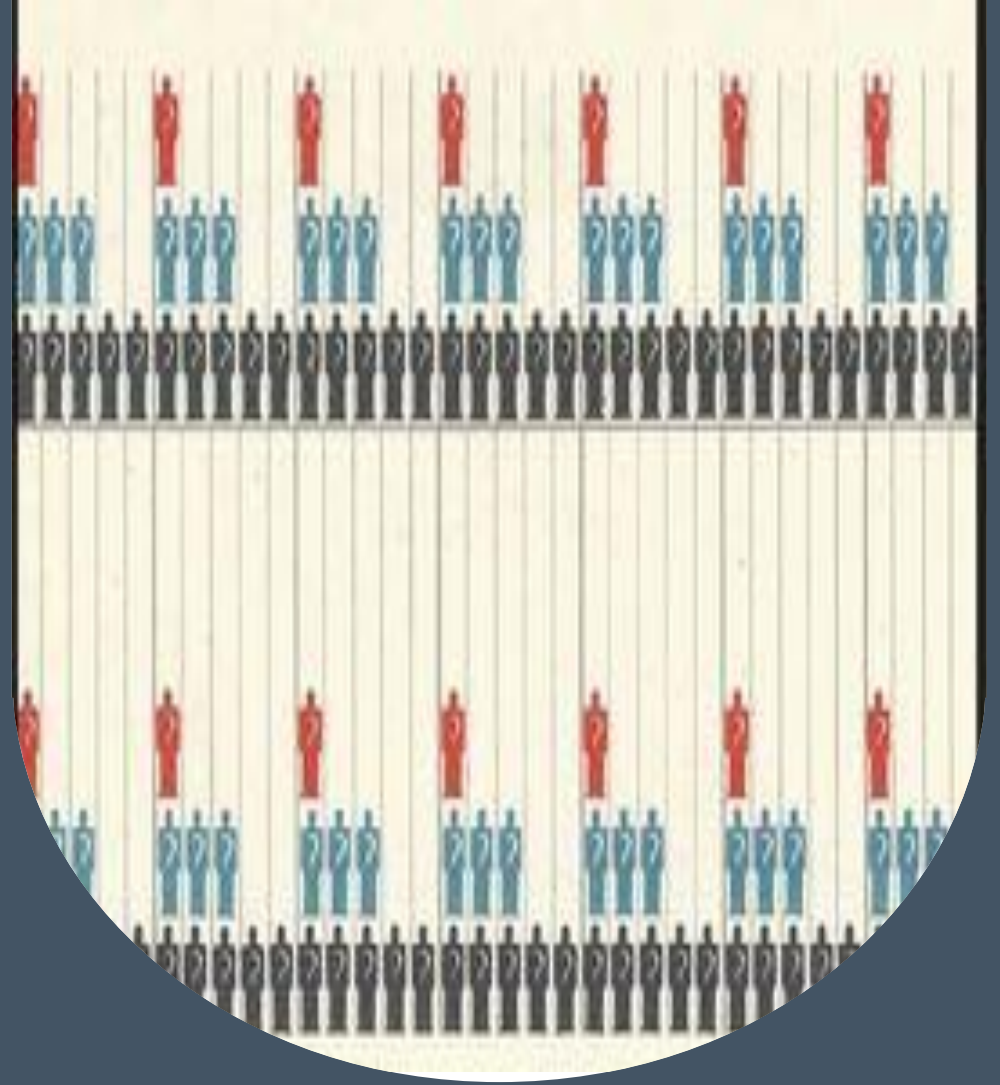


Social Policy Kills: the absence of Lived Experience in Irish Labour Market policy

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Faculty of Business, SETU



setu.ie
INSPIRING FUTURES



*13th Annual NERI Labour Market Conference
29th May 2025, Ulster University, Belfast*

Data in labour market policy

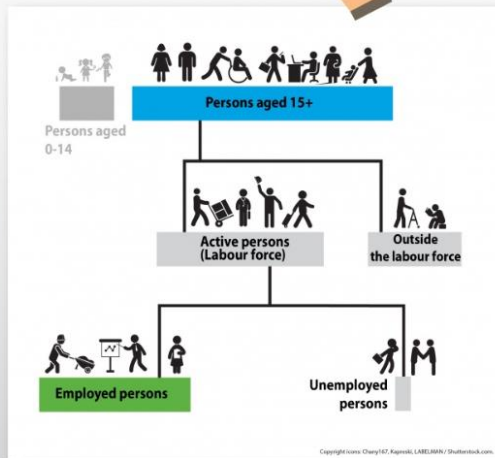
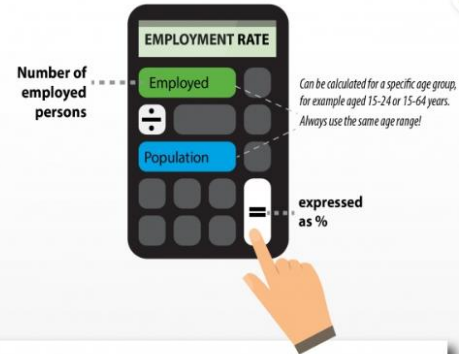
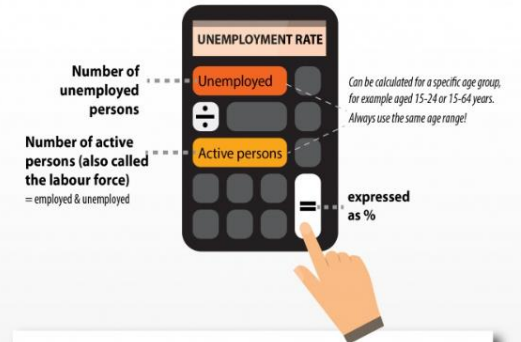


Figure 1: The latest NI unemployment rate remains historically low

Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (Age 16 and over), Jan-Mar 2010 to Jan-Mar 2025



The inclusion of lived experience in policymaking



Chairman

I thank Dr. Griffin and Dr. Boland for their presentations. I shall ask them general questions about their research before handing over to committee members.

I am not wearing my glasses so I cannot read the figures but I think they said that their research, since 2012, involved interviews with 121 unemployed people of whom 25 subsequently had experience or contact with JobPath. How valid is it to compare their findings with a national programme that involved thousands of people? Is a sample pool of 25 people appropriate for making broader findings? Is the sample pool representative in terms of age, gender and geographic location? I am not criticising the research and ask my questions in order that this committee can understand the profile. **The research referred to 25 people, and their experiences were recorded in great detailed.** In terms of their age, profile, gender, education and geographic location, how can one apply that information and make comments and recommendations on a national programme? The information would help the committee.



Dr. Tom Boland

We appreciate that there are different strengths and challenges with quantitative, statistical and qualitative work. Not all of the people we spoke to were aware that they were dealing with JobPath or Turas Nua. People do not always distinguish between Intreo and Turas Nua.

Our research is ongoing. We have a PhD researcher who is currently conducting our research, and we have specifically built in gender, age and rural or urban weightings as per the composition of the research.



None of the interviewees reported positive experiences, with the researchers clarifying to the committee that they did not seek positive or negative experiences, rather just authentic accounts. - *The Journal*, 17 January 2019

What counts as data in social policy?

1901 Census, Ireland



unemployed

Unemployed (36097) ☐

Carpenter Unemployed (301) ☐

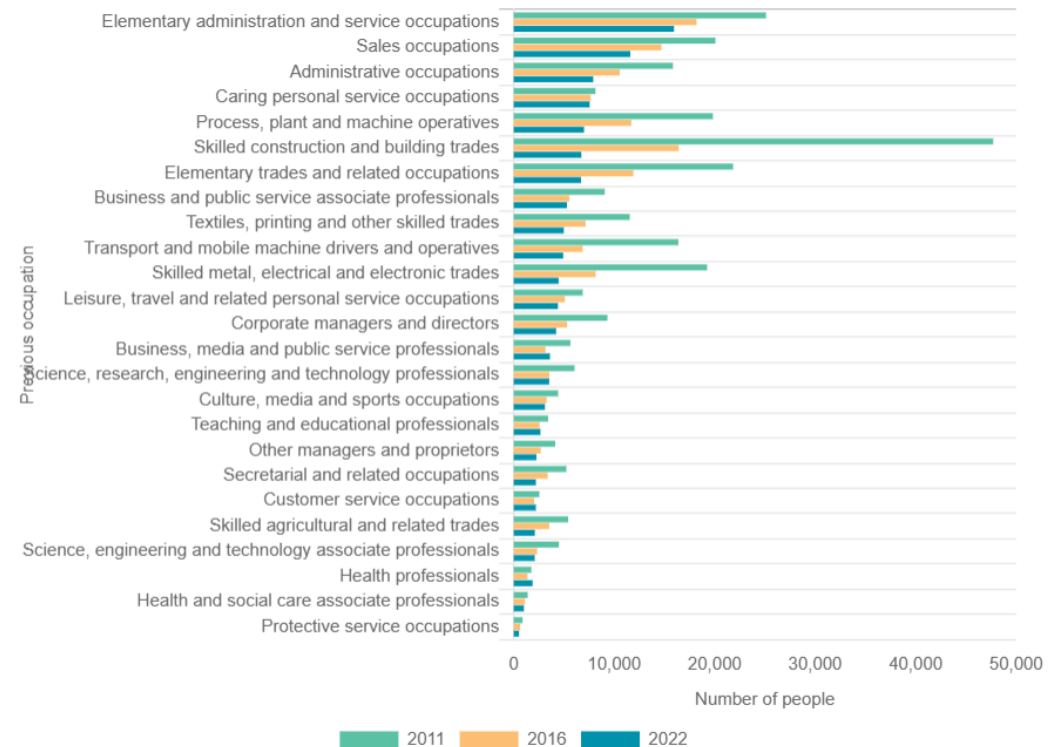
Domestic Servant Unemployed (229) ☒

General Labourer Unemployed (217) ☐

Labourer Unemployed (195) ☐

2011 2016 2022 Census, Ireland

Figure 3.4 Unemployed population aged 15 years and over excluding first time job seekers by previous occupation, 2011 to 2022



What counts as data in social policy?

Administrative data? Application forms? Census?
Labour Force Survey? Lived experience?



Person 1 See Explain

28 How would you describe your present principal status?
Mark **one** box only

- 1 ☐ Working for payment or profit
- 2 ☐ Looking for first regular job
- 3 ☐ Short-term unemployed (less than 12 months)
- 4 ☐ Long-term unemployed (12 months or more)
- 5 ☐ Student or pupil
- 6 ☐ Looking after home/family
- 7 ☐ Retired from employment
- 8 ☐ Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability
- 9 ☐ Other, write in

Application form for **Intreo Centre/Branch Office** **UP1**
Jobseeker's Allowance or Benefit

17. When were you last in paid employment or self-employed?

- ☐ Still in employment (go to 17a)
- ☐ In the last month (go to 17b)
- ☐ In the last year (go to 17b)
- ☐ In the last 5 years (go to 17b)
- ☐ Over 5 years ago (go to 17b)
- ☐ Never (go to 19)

Page 6

Part 3 (continued) **Jobseeker's Claim**

17a. If you are still in employment how long are you in your current job?

☐ Less than 1 month	☐ 1 - 2 years
☐ 1 - 6 months	☐ 2 years or more
☐ 6 - 12 months	

17b. If you are no longer in employment, how long did your last job last?

☐ Less than 1 month	☐ 1 - 2 years
☐ 1 - 6 months	☐ 2 years or more
☐ 6 - 12 months	



Question

Hello, my name is ... I am from the Central Statistics Office. I am carrying out the Labour Force Survey which is the official measure of employment and unemployment in Ireland. Your household has been selected as representing this area. Is it convenient for me to carry out the interview now?

Choices

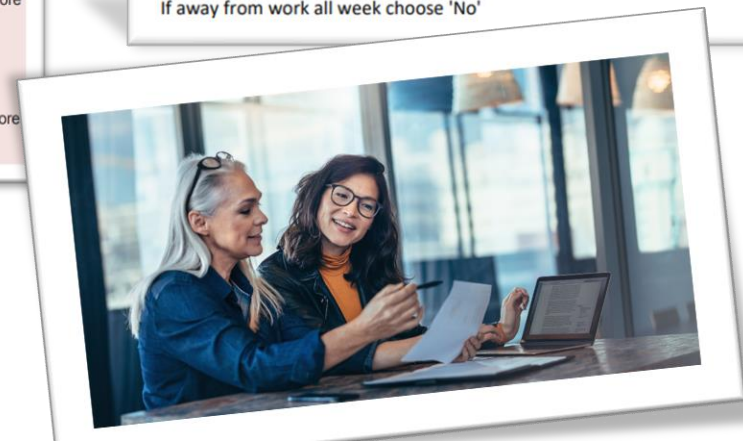
1	Yes
2	No

Question

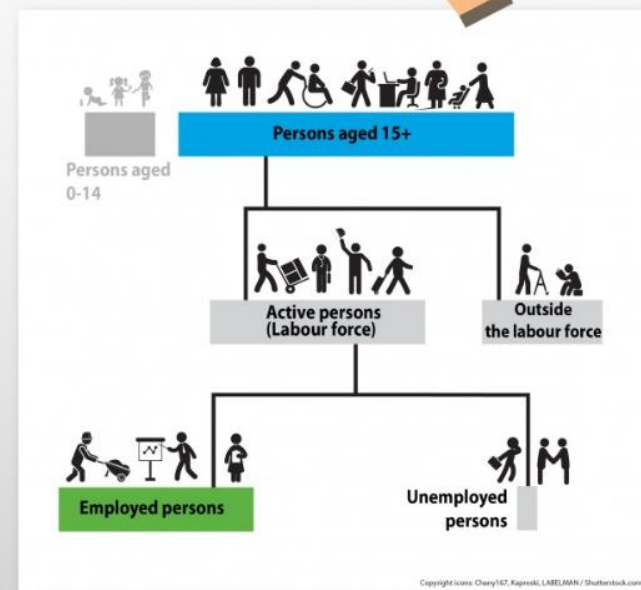
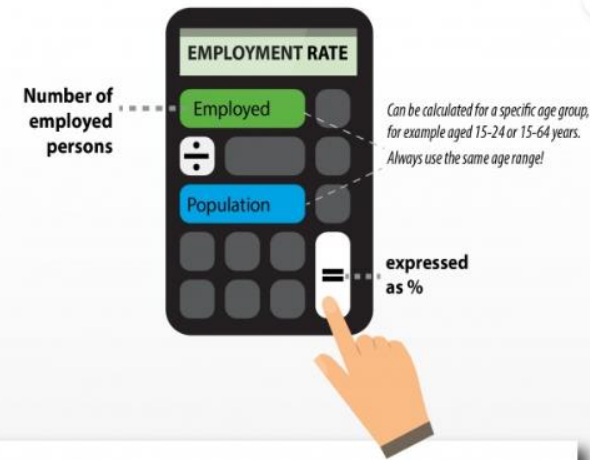
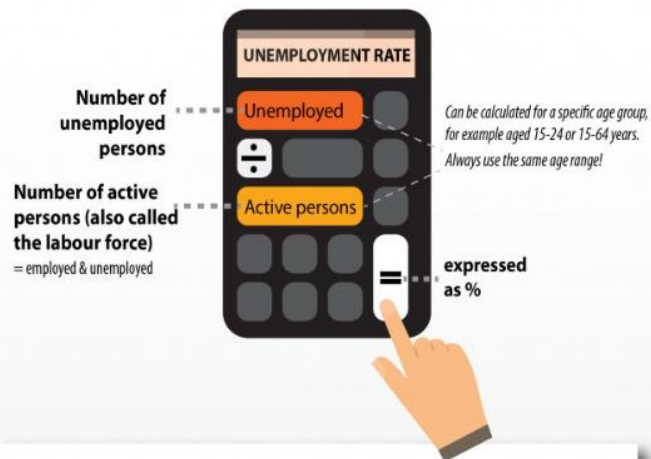
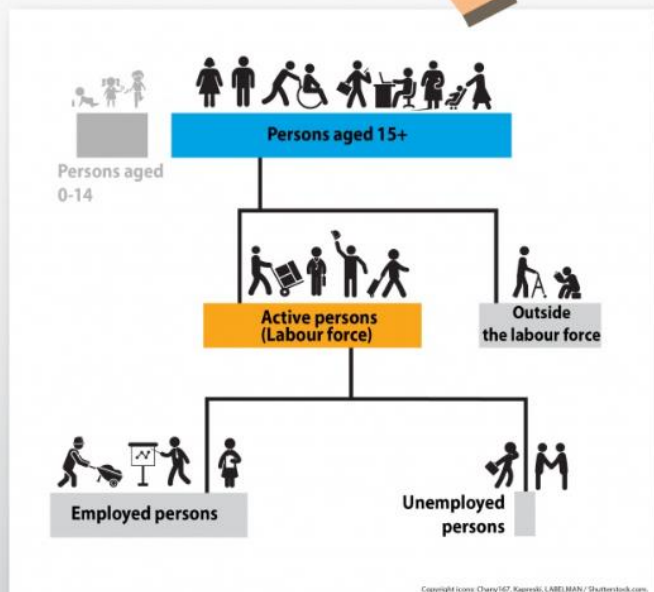
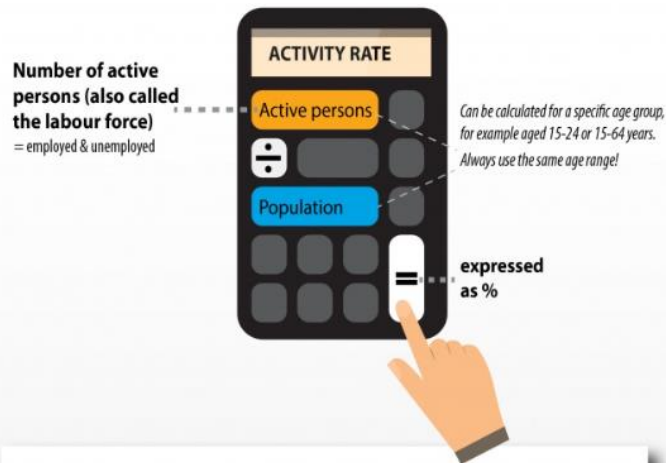
Did you do any work for payment or profit in the seven days ending Sunday {{refweek}}, even if it was just for one hour?

Instructions

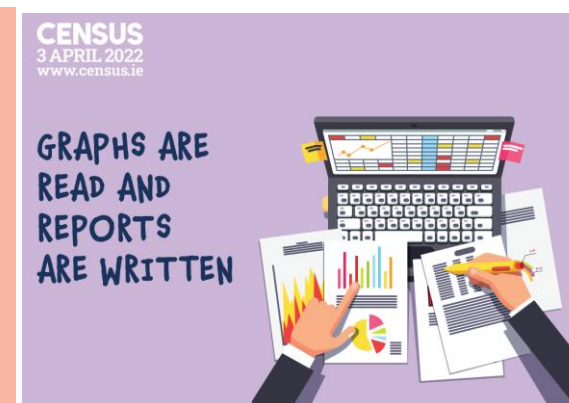
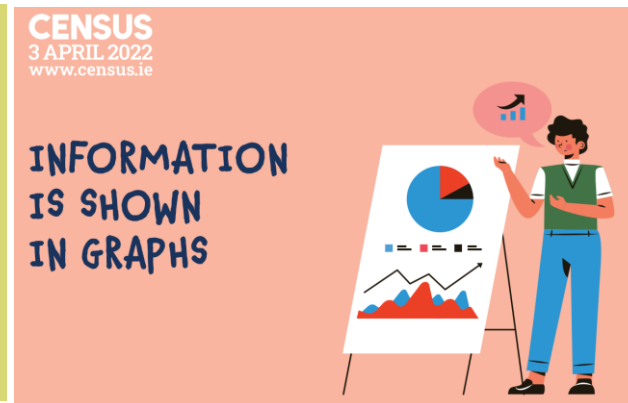
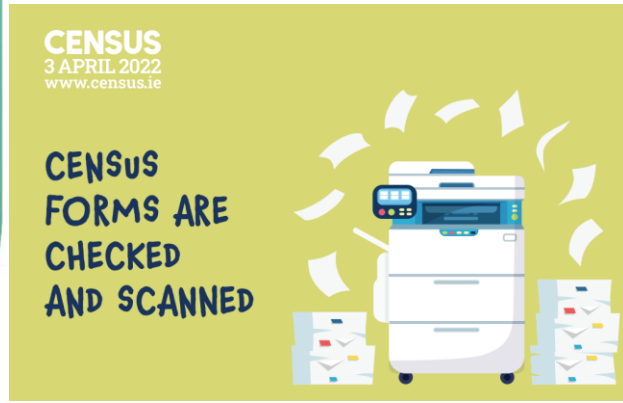
Respondent must have worked at least one hour in reference week.
If away from work all week choose 'No'



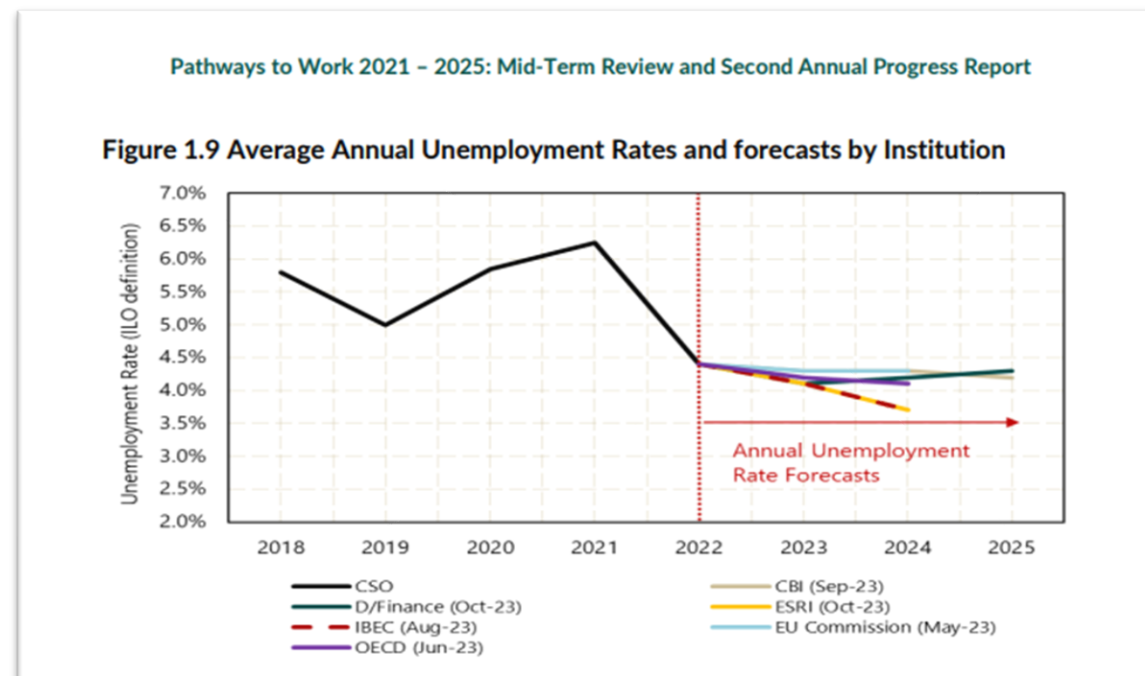
Labour Force Survey



Lived experience in the policy cycle

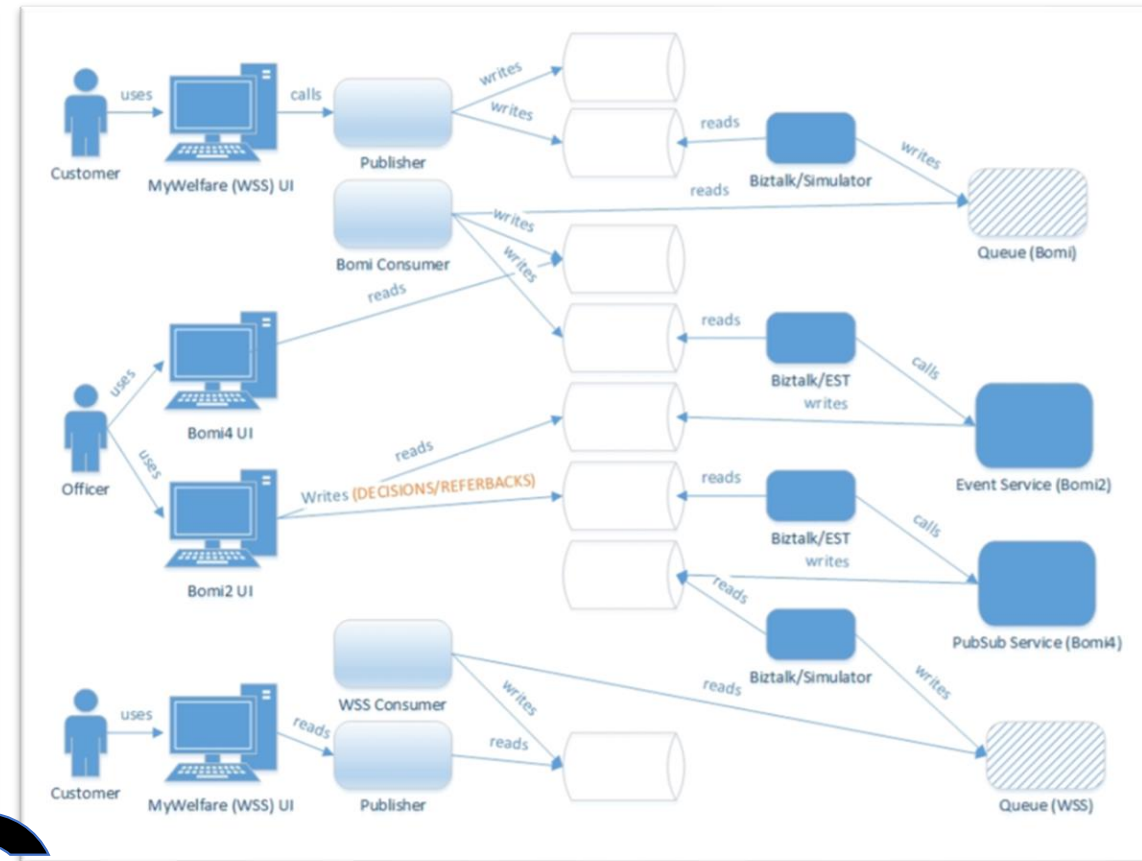


Howlett et al., 2009

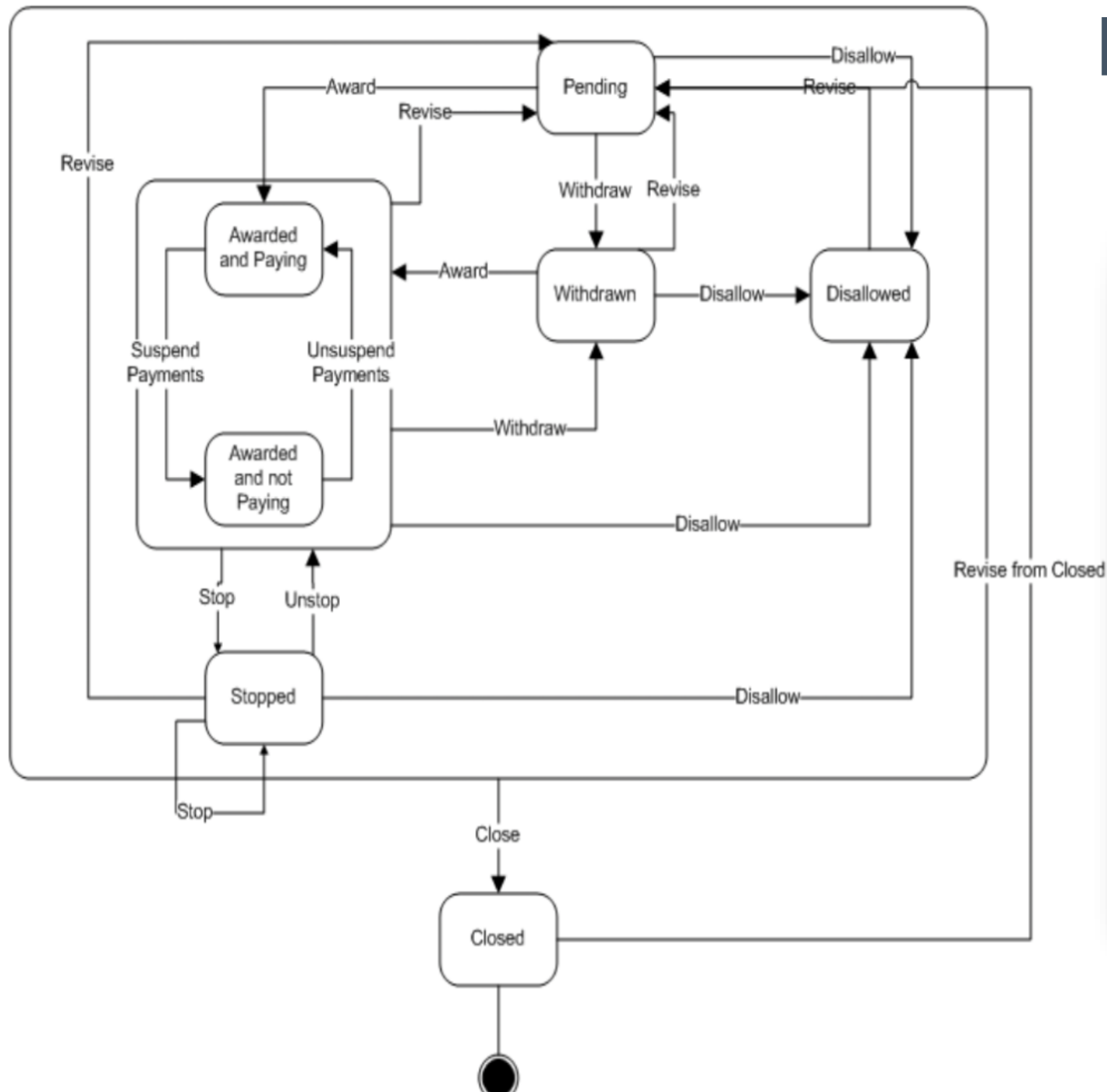


Extracting data from people

Quality Management / Metadata Management							
Specify Needs	Design	Build	Collect	Process	Analyse	Disseminate	Evaluate
1.1 Identify needs	2.1 Design outputs	3.1 Build collection instrument	4.1 Create frame & select sample	5.1 Integrate data	6.1 Prepare draft outputs	7.1 Update output systems	8.1 Gather evaluation inputs
1.2 Consult & confirm needs	2.2 Design variable descriptions	3.2 Build or enhance process components	4.2 Set up collection	5.2 Classify & code	6.2 Validate outputs	7.2 Produce dissemination products	8.2 Conduct evaluation
1.3 Establish output objectives	2.3 Design collection	3.3 Build or enhance dissemination components	4.3 Run collection	5.3 Review & validate	6.3 Interpret & explain outputs	7.3 Manage release of dissemination products	8.3 Agree an action plan
1.4 Identify concepts	2.4 Design frame & sample	3.4 Configure workflows	4.4 Finalise collection	5.4 Edit & impute	6.4 Apply disclosure control	7.4 Promote dissemination products	
1.5 Check data availability	2.5 Design processing & analysis	3.5 Test production system		5.5 Derive new variables & units	6.5 Finalise outputs	7.5 Manage user support	
1.6 Prepare business case	2.6 Design production systems & workflow	3.6 Test statistical business process		5.6 Calculate weights			
		3.7 Finalise production system		5.7 Calculate aggregates			
				5.8 Finalise data files			



Boundary cases



Labour market statistics in Northern Ireland

- Ongoing work to transform the Labour Force Survey (LFS)
- New NI Labour Market Survey (LMS)
 - A locally tailored and shortened NI questionnaire
 - Closely aligns with ONS Core Transformed Labour Force Survey for GB
 - NI LMS could represent 47% increase in cases compared to LFS



Labour Market Statistics
Transformation In Northern
Ireland

Published 10 April 2025

In the field since October 2023

*This data is being used to ... examine ...
level of representativeness with the
characteristics of the population.*



So, what is the lived in **lived experience**?

The State Of Global Youth Unemployment

Global youth unemployment and unemployment rate (1995-2015)*

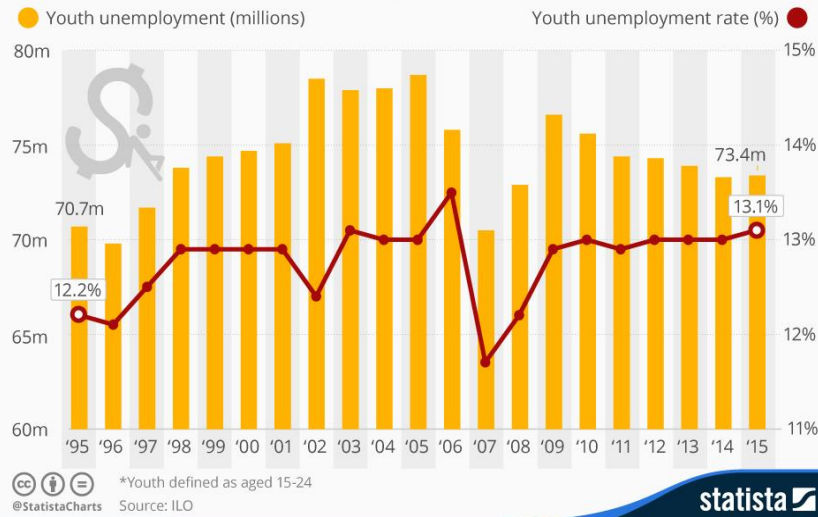
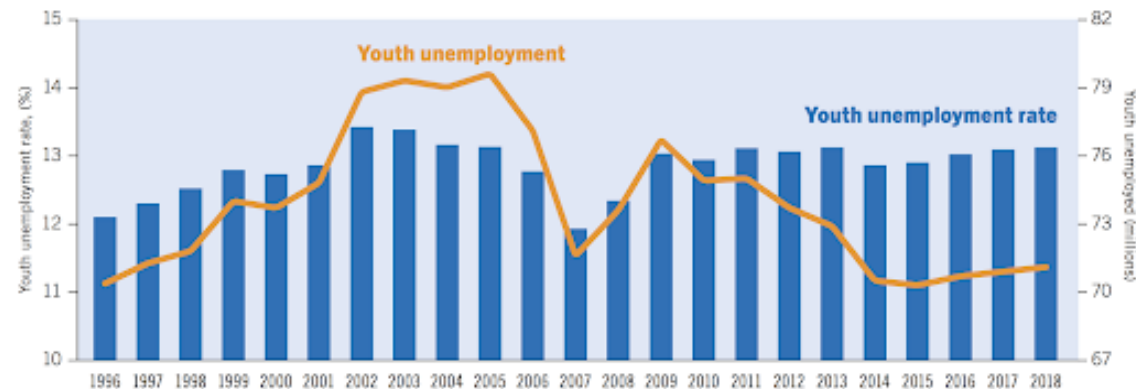
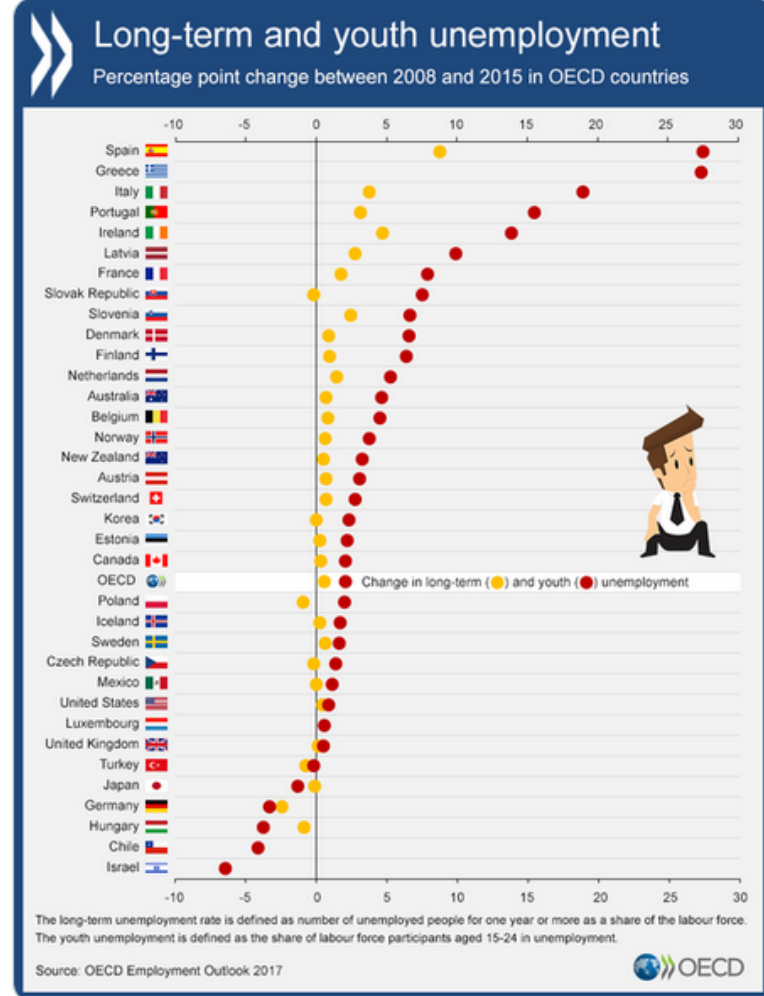


Figure 2.4 Global youth unemployment and unemployment rate, 1998–2018

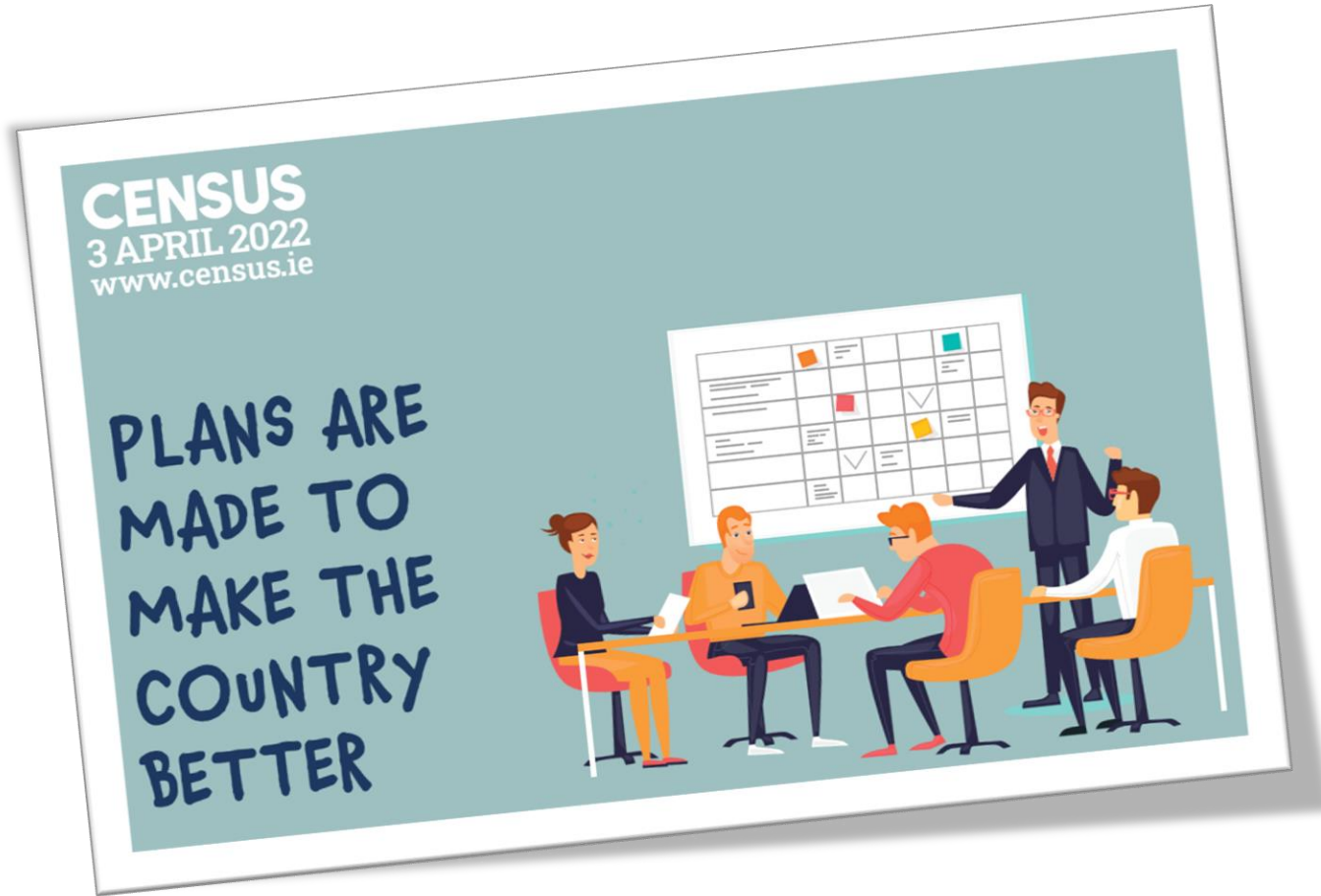


Source: Calculations based on ILO Trends Econometric Models, April 2017.

Youth [#unemployment](#) is 3x higher than for working-age adults & can have a lifelong impact. Read more bit.ly/2tHBo5h [#employment](#)

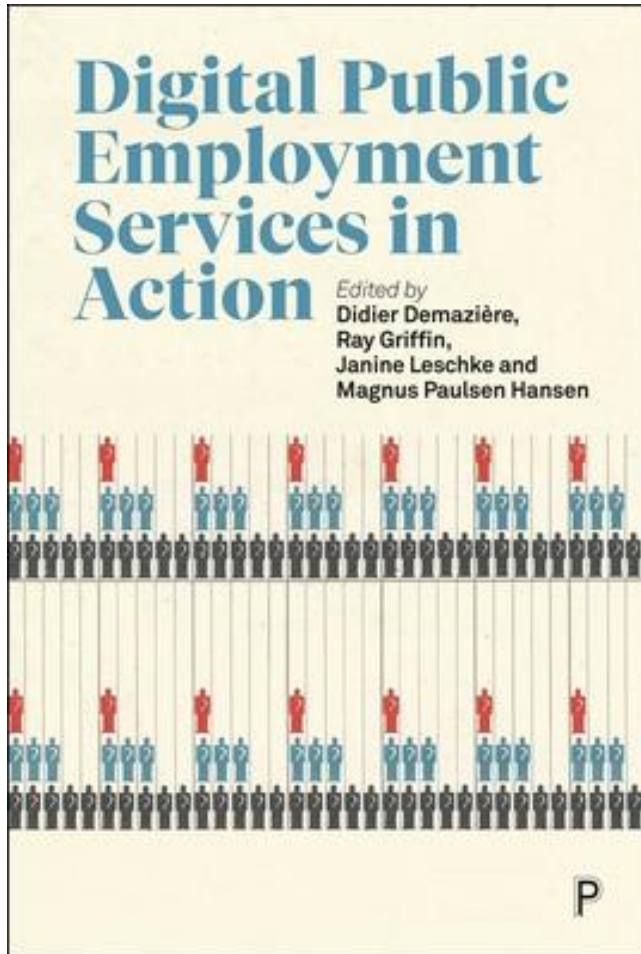
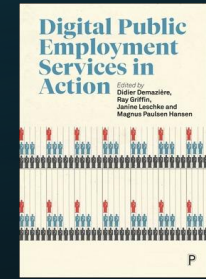


The absence of lived experience in Irish labour market policy



Howlett et al., 2009

Further reading:



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