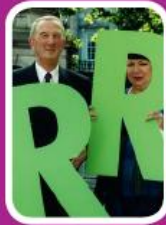
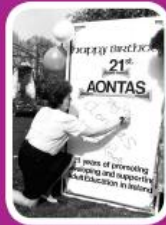


“Many Happy Returns!”

AONTAS Policy Positions
Briefing Paper May 2009



“Many Happy Returns”

‘Many Happy Returns’

AONTAS Local and European Elections Campaign 2009

What informs our Campaign?

- **Unemployment** figures of 37,1271 –an increase of 11%. ESRI predict unemployment will reach 17% by the end of 2010.
- **Increased demand for information-** 47% of people contacting AONTAS in the first quarter of this year were newly unemployed. Numbers of people contacting Adult Guidance in 2009 have increased by 25% from 2008.
- **Membership** – ‘Increased demand for services with fewer resources’.

Changes in the Supplementary Budget

Some Features:

- Joint approach from DSFA and DES.
- 6910 places in further education (almost 3,000 in full time third level).
- Additional places on FÁS Training courses (14,000).
- Pilot training scheme for workers in vulnerable employment (277 places).
- Changes in qualifying criteria for BTEA.

Cutbacks in the Supplementary Budget

- A recruitment embargo on staff within local VECs.
- Cutbacks to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.
- Cutbacks to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform – National Women’s Strategy and Equality for Women measure.

Campaign Issues

- Increased interest in education and training - measures in the Supplementary Budget do not go far enough.
- Delivery of information about adult learning needs to be co-ordinated.
- No more cutbacks to VTOS or BTEI.
- Recruitment embargo within VECs should not apply to ringfenced initiatives such as the AEGI.
- Community education needs to be resourced.
- Cuts to the National Women's Strategy will impact on women's participation in employment, education and society.

Campaign Strategies

- **Election Toolkit** – birthday card, press release, briefing paper.
- **Meetings** with Education/DSFA Spokespersons.
- **Dissemination of materials** – Senior Learner Manifesto, CEN Manifesto and Birthday Card.
- **Regular updates** – website, public meetings, Twitter.
- **Promotion** and media awareness.

How you can get involved

- On the doorstep – question the candidates about their party line.
- Attend a public meeting in your area and ask a question.
- Distribute copies of materials through your own networks.
- Write a letter to your local candidate.
- Issue a press release to local media from your organisation.

For more information visit

- www.aontas.com
- www.twitter.com/aontas/