

Peer Review on 'PES approaches for sustainable integration of long-term unemployed (LTU)

The National Employment Agency (NEA) of Bulgaria hosted the first Peer Review of 2014. 14 countries come to Sofia to discuss and share practices around the service concepts and active labour market policies measures used for the labour market integration of the long-term unemployed (LTU). Early messages from the Peer Review include:

PES focus on individual needs and most successful services are individualised and 'person-centred'

- An increasing number of PES offer intensified case management as a special working method for the hard-to-place.
- Several PES use in-depth profiling systems to identify those at risk of long-term unemployment and segment customers into categories of support, or distinguish between 'standard' support and 'case management'.
- An increasing number of PES offer intensified case management as a special working method for the hard-to-place.

Effective Active labour Market Policies (ALMP) are small-scale, individualised and carefully targeted.

- Risk factors potentially leading to LTU and affecting LTU are numerous, diverse and often complex for each individual jobseeker.
- Systematic evidence on the effectiveness of ALMP for particular sub-groups of LTU is scarce, but tentative conclusions highlight that effective programmes also reflect the complexity of problems facing the LTU.

Assisting the LTU requires a mix of measures which recognise and seek to address all challenges

faced in achieving labour market integration.

- ALMP for disadvantaged groups tend to be more effective if the jobcentre has close contacts with employers and can develop mutual trust, but capacity constraints often make this difficult.
- For people with disabilities and certain hard-to-place groups, work experience in a sheltered working environment can offer a pathway, especially if working conditions in social sector and in social enterprises are similar to the 'open' labour market.
- Flexible support schemes, mobility grants, and cooperation with local governments and social work agencies are also used by some PES to tackle the external barriers faced by many LTU.

The innovative use of partnerships can help ease resource constraints.

- Municipalities, youth services, family services and other social services are the most common partners for PES, when working to support the LTU.
- However, the nature of collaboration can vary significantly, depending on the division of roles (in activation and benefit administration) between local authorities and the PES and the tradition (or lack of tradition) in local

partnership working.

Further action is required to ensure that PES work more closely with employers to improve the placement of LTU.

- Several PES currently have a dedicated employer service or specialised counsellors working with employers, but their role is not restricted to promoting LTU into jobs as they also work with other customers.
- Some PES are exploring the use of innovative approaches beyond wage subsidies, such as combining subsidies with skills development, actively encouraging and appealing to the Corporate Social Responsibility (SCR) commitments of employers, cooperating with NGOs, job fairs or offering help with recruitment so that firms can meet legal obligations with respect to hiring certain disadvantaged groups

More information on the Peer Review, including the executive summary is available [here](#).



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PES to PES events coming up

Peer Review in Amsterdam, Netherlands, 5-6 June 2014

The Dutch PES, UWV Werkbedrijf, will host the second Peer Review of 2014 on the theme of 'Blended service delivery for jobseekers'. This Peer Review will examine key considerations in determining how far a PES can go in steering jobseekers to online services, covering the personalisation of service delivery via digital channels and implications for face-to-face counselling. It will also discuss quality assurance, including staff competences, monitoring and evaluation with a view to increase and understand customer satisfaction

Dialogue Conferences

The Dissemination Conference will take place in Brussels, Belgium, on 9-10 October 2014. A save the date will go out in the early summer.



Toolkit from the Dialogue Conference on ‘targeted services for employers’

The 7th Dialogue Conference (11-12 March 2014), brought together senior practitioners from 27 PES and a range of employers and employer representatives. The toolkit summarises key insights from the conference and highlights practical examples from participating PES on guiding topics. The toolkit has now been published – it highlights the following key messages:

Service concepts and approaches to delivery of recruitment services

- Although universal provision is the general rule, PES tend to deliver recruitment services by informally targeting or prioritising certain types of employer.
- Local and regional-level customisation and business knowledge are fundamental for employer engagement.
- Service delivery for large companies often entails the identification and organisation around ‘priority customers’ at the national level.
- It is important to organise service delivery around the specific recruitment service needs and constraints of SMEs.
- Small and micro firms (less than 50 and 10 employees) tend to have more intense and earlier recruitment needs that PES need to address.

Optimisation of service delivery channels

- PES tend to offer a combination of online and face to face channels tailored to employers’ needs.
- Customer satisfaction surveys play an important role in determining the optimum combination of channels.
- Online channels and automated matching services are effective for large companies.
- Special assistance can help smaller companies to enhance their use of online services.
- Outreach and networking activities can be particularly useful for SMEs.

Employer relations through formal and informal agreements

- Formal and informal PES agreements are mainly used by larger companies.
- Agreements are most effective when they are as specific, tailored and

succinct as possible.

- There can be value in promoting and incentivising the use of agreements.
- To reach SMEs, agreements with intermediary organisations are an option – some PES have established agreements with small business federations, alliances and other intermediary organisations.

Employer relations through corporate social responsibility (CSR)

- Collaboration with civil society and charitable organisations can help PES to be seen as a typical CSR partner.
- It is important to develop the CSR knowledge and competence of PES staff.
- CSR engagement needs to take account of business needs, which can often be centred around specific target groups or diversity plans.
- CSR is not always explicit in SMEs, which means that PES tend to adopt a more informal and localised approach.
- Intermediary organisations can serve as a focal point and platform for CSR activities with SMEs.

More information on the Dialogue Conference, including the full toolkit is available [here](#).



Publications

European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors (June 2014)

- This Analytical Paper will define a set of core competences, building on results from a previous survey, research and workshops, to be endorsed by the European network of Heads of PES. These competences can be used by PES HR managers as a reference tool to shape recruitment and training concepts, taking into account national circumstances.

Competence-based profiling and matching techniques (late summer)

- This Analytical Paper will look at current developments in skills based profiling and matching in PES, outline lessons for effective practices and draw out key considerations of such matching techniques for counsellors and jobseekers.

Local autonomy and central steering (early autumn)

- This Analytical Paper will look at trends in decentralisation of PES across member states and outline the level, scale and form of shifting competences to the local level that is taking place. It will look at the issue of PES finding the right balance between flexibility and accountability and the degree to which decentralisation within a national PES helps to effectively meet local needs.

PES partnership management (autumn)

- The aim of this Analytical Paper is to provide an overview of how PES manage the partnership arrangements they have with other employment services. It should cover the different management approaches and the interaction between the strategic and the operational levels across PES to detect the potential for mutual exchange and learning.