



The European Commission Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services

Newsletter 3/2012

Peer Review: PES and older workers

Bundesagentur für Arbeit, the German PES, hosted the fourth Peer Review of the PES to PES Dialogue in Nürnberg on 10-11 May 2012. Representatives from ten PES attended the meeting with the aim of identifying good practice in delivering services and measures to retain and re-integrate older workers. The key messages from the Peer Review include:

Being age positive whilst avoiding labelling: awareness-raising activities require careful design

The Peer Review demonstrated a range of proven operational practices on how best to cope with existing stereotypes. Examples include cards which counsellors share with key stakeholders in order to dispel myths about employing an older worker (e.g. Austria, the Netherlands). PES also emphasised the role of profiling and counselling to highlight older workers' strengths rather than their weaknesses. However, it has also been shown that awareness-raising about stereotypes has not yet become part of standard PES practice. The approaches need to be well designed in order to be effective and not to backfire on other groups of workers.

Demographic changes contribute to a shift in emphasis towards prevention in PES work

A limited number of PES have started to offer human resources advice on age or diversity management (e.g. Germany, Belgium) and qualification counselling targeted mostly at SMEs who often do not have sufficient internal capacity.

Where prevention is currently part of the PES brief, the most widely used tool is in-work training. While such measures are largely considered to be successful, questions remain about the respective role of PES and employers in the provision of such training. Some PES address this by limiting in-work training support to SMEs who are less able to afford such measures. Health

promotion and risk prevention in the workplace is also an emerging field of activity for some PES (e.g. Austria, Estonia).

Activation and placement of older unemployed: individual action planning is the key, while targeted group activities are also effective

As the older unemployed are far from a homogeneous group, there is a widespread consensus that the best route towards achieving reintegration is through competent individual action planning based upon resource-oriented profiling. A number of PES also use group activities to overcome some of the issues specific to this target group. For example, group counselling in self-help groups (e.g. the Netherlands and Germany) helps tackle social isolation, deliver job search skills and source 'hidden' vacancies. Employment subsidies are widely used as an incentive for employers to hire older workers; personal services to jobseekers and employers are considered to be essential to their effectiveness.

To conclude, the **mainstreaming of demographic and age-sensitive topics into the services for employers and jobseekers** appears to be an effective approach for the future. More information on the Peer Review is available [here](#).





Activation and integration: working with individual action plans – toolkit for PES

A *practical toolkit* for PES has been published based on the Dialogue Conference “Activation and integration: working with individual action plans”, held in Brussels on 8-9 March. Based upon a wide range of PES examples, as well as academic research, the toolkit provides practical insights into the key aspects of the individual action planning process, from the initial design and development to the ongoing monitoring and follow-up. It places particular emphasis on the effective methods, skills and organisational frameworks underpinning the relationship between the employment counsellor and jobseeker and the impact of different approaches – especially the role of sanctions, online monitoring and partnerships with specialist services – on activation and integration in the wider labour market.

What’s next on PES to PES?



Analytical papers

Performance management and PES – June 2012

This paper will explore the different approaches used for performance management in PES and the benefits and drawbacks of these approaches. It will outline the factors that policy makers and practitioners should consider in developing performance management in PES.

Organisational development and innovation management in PES – June 2012

This paper will provide a review of the literature on

what works best in innovation management in PES; models for quality management and continuous improvement such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and effective approaches used to generate and manage innovation and organisational development.

Outcome oriented sub-contracting – August 2012

This paper will identify the advantages and risks associated with ‘black box’ subcontracts where the PES pay external providers on the basis of their success in securing job outcomes and give providers significant operational flexibility. It will review evaluation findings on the service delivery strategies and supply chains associated with these systems and will highlight the practical policy implications arising from the findings.

Job profiles and training for employment advisors – September 2012

This paper will examine which core competences are needed to offer quality services to jobseekers and employers within PES and what are the basic elements of training to develop these competences. The paper will explore the further training and supervision mechanisms to maintain and further improve the competences and to keep motivation in a job that can be difficult to do.

Follow up study visit

Agreements with large companies, practices and offers for these companies’, Paris, France, 8 June 2012 – the participating countries will be Belgium (ACTIRIS), Hungary, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK. The visit report will be published in June.

Dialogue Conferences

Dissemination conference, Brussels, Belgium, 19 - 20 September 2012. The conference is dedicated to the presentation and discussion of results from the second year of activities of the *PES to PES Dialogue* programme to PES strategic managers and a wider policy audience. The conference programme and invitations will be made available in June.