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**EUROPEAN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES
AND LIFELONG GUIDANCE**

Analytical Paper

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European Commission:

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Unit C.3 Skills, Mobility and Employment Services.

Authors: Tibor Bors Borbély-Pecze and A.G. Watts

in collaboration with GHK Limited and the Budapest Institute

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FOREWORD

A policy of "Making Transitions Pay" will be a cornerstone in achieving the employment rate target set by the Europe 2020 strategy, implying an enlarged and integrated vision of "flexicurity"¹. Rapid technological, demographic, environmental and social changes are triggering frequent, faster and more complex labour market transitions between different jobs, occupations, sectors and employment statuses. While transitions offer new opportunities for skills development and enhanced employability, they also bear new risks, potentially leading to loss of income, periods of unemployment, deskilling and social exclusion. Therefore **an approach of "Making Transitions Pay" is essential to sustain employment security and provide careers security**, fostering simultaneous and explicit management of all kinds of transition during a life cycle, ensuring sustainable moves towards better job and life quality and the proper development of labour markets².

While the joint engagement of all relevant market stakeholders and social partners is vital in the management of transitions, lifelong guidance policies are considered as one of the key elements in making such an approach a reality. In this respect, a comprehensive set of interlinked conditions is needed, including

- labour market transparency and accessibility of information for all,
- enabling individuals to make informed training, job search and career choices,
- accessible intermediation and career guidance services,
- appropriate training opportunities for all, including the low skilled,
- flexible work organisations capable of both quickly satisfying production needs and allowing the work and private responsibilities of workers to be reconciled,
- secured and adequate social rights during periods of transition and
- progress of workers into decent and quality work as an important principle for effective activation.

EMCO having invited the Commission to embrace fully the objective of making transitions pay, the European Commission and the network of Heads of Public Employment Services (HoPES) have agreed that an analytical paper should be produced by renowned experts. This paper will feed into a future policy implementation debate linked to the Europe 2020 flagship project "Agenda for New Skills and Jobs". The analytical paper: "PES and Lifelong Guidance" aims to give an overview of the current situation, highlighting some key issues such as the range of guidance services offered, the diversity of business models, challenges and ways forward. It also enlarges on previous activities such as the large-scale study dedicated to PES and career guidance in Europe and the project "Lifelong guidance for jobseekers"³.

We are glad that the paper produced was not only received very positively, but has already stimulated a first debate in the network of Heads of Public Employment Services. This debate has highlighted how much the world of Public Employment Services has changed during the past decade creating new chances and challenges with regard to lifelong guidance provision.

¹ Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security (COM (2007) 359 final).

² EMCO Opinion for EPSCO: Making Transitions Pay (14479/10, Brussels 7 October 2010) on the basis of the Commission Discussion Paper: Making Transitions pay, Brussels, September 2010 (EMCO/XX/160910/EN);

³ European Commission (R. Sultana/A. Watts), 2005: Career Guidance in Europe's Public Employment Services, Brussels; European Commission, 2009: Project report "Lifelong Guidance for Jobseekers", Brussels.

The ongoing Public Employment Services shift from an administrative unemployment authority to a service and customer-oriented agency calls for a broadening of the range of quality information, advice and guidance provided, including international mobility and new target groups such as the inactive. However, a stricter outcome orientation together with increasing budget constraints, presents PES with the challenge of doing more and better for less.

Therefore it is of increasing importance not only to prove the added value of guidance services in terms of evidence-based results, but also to further develop the key issue of new channels and forms of cooperation between labour market brokers and career guidance providers. The question is how to make the best use of e-services and how best to combine these with other forms of delivery to provide quality information, advice and guidance at lower costs. Another question is how to develop partnerships with other employment and career guidance services systematically in order to offer a broad range of services whilst effectively sharing tasks. For this reason the gap which often exists between the different work cultures and concepts of Public Employment Services and the field of education-based career guidance services has to be bridged.

It is planned to continue the debate both in the network of Heads of Public Employment Services and within the European Commission's specific mutual learning programme for Public Employment Services – the PES to PES Dialogue. The paper will feed into the discussions of the PES working group "PES 2020" which will elaborate how PES aim to implement the Europe 2020 employment guidelines, how they see their strategic positioning for the next ten years and which role PES can play in making transitions pay. The results of the current paper will also be used to enrich the debate in the planned PES to PES Dialogue activities, and notably in the conference on "Profiling Systems for effective labour market integration" which will take place in May 2011 and a Peer Review at the end of June 2011, which will be devoted to e-services and strategies for integrated multi-channelling.

Altogether, the joint Commission/PES activities aim to strengthen personalised services provided by PES for jobseekers and employers, to increase overall PES service capacity to meet quickly changing labour market needs effectively and to deliver appropriate services while remaining customer-oriented despite increasing pressure for cost-efficiency. However, the effects go further: **By reflecting the evolution of the PES role and services, PES and the Commission can give an impetus to the development of comprehensive, well coordinated lifelong guidance policies all over Europe.**

Wallis Goelen

Head of Unit

European Commission

General Directorate for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Employment Services and Labour Mobility

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Some European Public Employment Services (PES) are strongly engaged in providing career guidance services and in providing labour market information themselves; others may have service agreements for these purposes. However, the main focus of PES work is still mainly on registered job-seekers, the unemployed and collecting vacancies. This has been accentuated by the recent economic crisis.

At the same time, the Europe 2020 Strategy requires European policies in different sectors to be more strongly co-ordinated in order to produce a smart and competitive Europe. For PES, this requires stronger relationships between employment policies and lifelong learning, social cohesion and economic policies, as emphasised in the new EU employment guidelines. The new approach to career guidance, called lifelong guidance (LLG), is potentially a strong bridge between these policies, both at governmental level and at the level of the individual citizen. The range of lifelong guidance activities in which PES may engage include employment counselling, career counselling, rehabilitation counselling, career and labour market information, and other activities. The distinctions between employment counselling and career counselling are related to PES organisational goals. Some of these services may be provided in-house; others may be outsourced, or purchased from external suppliers.

All of these services provide added value in relation to the short-term placement goals of the PES. Accordingly, lifelong guidance services can be identified as one of the most flexible means through which PES services can support the implementation of the new Europe 2020 Strategy. PES should make the description of such services, their quality assurance and their impact measurement more concrete and customer-friendly in order to achieve cross-policy, cross-sectoral co-operation with all educational sectors and with social services.

Four main trends and challenges can be identified at the interface between PES and lifelong guidance:

- The move to self-service approaches, linked to e-services and customer segmentation/profiling. This offers potential both for extending services and for focusing intensive services on those who need them most.
- The growing attention to quality assurance, including staff competencies. More attention is needed to linking PES competencies to broader professional competence frameworks.
- The recognition of the need for stronger performance measurement and impact measurement. More work is needed on standards and indicators.
- The roles of PES in the development of national lifelong guidance strategies. These are likely to vary considerably. In all cases, however, it is important that PES are an integral part of such strategies, that they form closer relationships with other organisations and other policy areas in this respect, and that they review their own role in the light of the developing strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to stimulate discussion across Europe on the role of Public Employment Services (PES) in relation to lifelong guidance, and to provide a basis for such discussions.

The core roles of PES are to help people to find employment and to help employers to fill their vacancies, in the most efficient and effective manner (EU/EEA PES Network, 2006). At the same time, they commonly play important roles in managing benefit system and active labour market measures (training programmes, public work programmes, entrepreneurship support, wage subsidies) for unemployed individuals. In these and possibly other respects, they have a significant role to play in the implementation of national employment policies.

The relationship between PES and career guidance is a long-standing one. In some European countries, PES have been the main provider of career guidance to young people as well as to adults. They have also played an important role in the collection and dissemination of labour market information, and sometimes of broader career information (which includes information on learning pathways and their relationships with occupations). In other countries, their direct role in relation to career guidance has been more limited, but they have incorporated some guidance elements in their personalised employment services.

The level of policy attention to what is now widely referred to within Europe as 'lifelong guidance' has increased considerably in recent years. The definition of lifelong guidance adopted in the Resolution of the Council of the European Union (2004) is:

'A range of activities (examples include information and advice-giving, counselling, competence assessment, mentoring, advocacy, teaching decision-making and career management skills) that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.'

A broadly similar definition was adopted by OECD (2004) and ILO (2005). The breadth of this definition is linked with the recognition that all citizens should be encouraged to develop such life paths (careers) in a well-informed and well-thought-through way, linked to the changing needs of the labour market. Providing such support is a public as well as a private good, and accordingly an important goal of public policy.

The case for strengthening the relationship between PES and lifelong guidance is strong. This was acknowledged in the 2006 EU/EES PES Network Mission Statement:

'Demographic changes and the ageing of the population mean that fewer workers are supporting large numbers of retirees. Older people must be prepared to stay in work longer, younger people must have the proper qualifications, and adults must be prepared to participate more actively in

the labour force during their life cycle. The changing nature of working age concepts results in people finding employment opportunities at every phase of their working lives. The recognition of prior learning i.e. non-formally acquired competences, lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will play an increasingly significant role in the response to the challenges posed through globalisation and demographic change' (EU/EEA PES Network, 2006, pp.3-4).

The need for career development support for older workers (aged 50-74) has been emphasised in a recent report by CEDEFOP (2010a). At the other end of the age-cycle, a further report by CEDEFOP (2010b) has pointed out the importance of career guidance for all youth and especially for hard-to-help groups. Other recent CEDEFOP reports have indicated the growth of guidance services in workplaces (CEDEFOP, 2008a; CEDEFOP, 2011). Career guidance is thus identified as a tool for helping better learning and working choices through the life-cycle.

The need to move towards a lifelong approach is reflected in the inclusion in some national PES 2020 vision statements of the aspiration to move from the traditional profile of periodic interventions related to unemployment and placement to a more comprehensive role as a universal lifelong service (EC, 2010c). This is linked to the notion of PES moving from the traditional employment service model to a 'labour market conductor' role. However, this does not mean that PES will deliver all services themselves. In some cases, they will operate through outsourcing and/or through partnerships with others (EC, 2010c).

The case for stronger links is strengthened in the Europe 2020 Strategy, which emphasises the need for cross-cutting approaches across different policy areas. This is reflected in the new guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States (EC, 2010b), especially in Guideline 7 (Increasing labour market participation of men and women, reducing structural unemployment and promoting job quality), which emphasises the role of personalised services; and in Guideline 8 (Developing a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs and promoting lifelong learning), which mentions improving access to career guidance.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that PES operate within strong resource constraints, which may restrict what they are able to do. This has been exacerbated by the recent economic crisis, which has resulted in increased unemployment levels. In many European countries the effect has been to increase substantially the case-loads of employment advisers. Combined with budget cuts in the public sector, this has reduced the amount of time available for longer interventions.

2. CAREER GUIDANCE AND PES: PROVISION AND ADDED VALUE

Within the broad definition of lifelong guidance provided in Section 1, the definitions of specific guidance activities in the PES context vary across countries. This is evident, for example, in the case studies provided in the Annex to this paper. The report on career guidance in European PES by Sultana & Watts (2006), which is the most extensive analysis of such activities carried out to date, distinguished a wide range of activities reported by members of the European PES Network:

- Assessment/screening (e.g. of individual attributes, competences, and preferences; of psychological state; of employability; of informal and non-formal learning).
- Career management planning (e.g. helping individuals develop a Personal Action Plan; assistance in managing job changes).
- Individual intensive employment counselling (e.g. through a case-management approach to employment assistance).
- Personality development (e.g. promoting self-esteem in clients; coaching in social skills).
- Specialised employment counselling (e.g. addressing problems that are obstacles to re-employment, such as disability, drug/alcohol addiction, homelessness, child-care or debt problems; and offered to particular groups of disadvantaged job-seekers, including, for instance, immigrants, asylum-seekers, ex-offenders).
- Job-broking (e.g. help clients in clarifying what their job aspirations are, and possibly evaluating the likelihood that such aspirations will be fulfilled, given the client's profile and the structure of employment opportunities; creating networks with employers, on a general or sectoral basis; maintaining a talents bank; matching and placing).
- Job-search assistance activities (e.g. job-search techniques; job-application training; writing CVs; preparing for selection interviews; work tasters; supported induction into employment).
- Group programmes (e.g. help in exploring appropriate training paths and options; job clubs).
- Services offered to students (e.g. information sessions about the structure of employment opportunities; preventative guidance; working with drop-outs; school to-work transition guidance; assisting in the use of occupational information).
- Providing labour market information (e.g. managing a job information resource centre; managing labour market databases; managing a job bank, or career database; communicating labour market trends to clients; supporting clients in the use of self-service facilities).

The report grouped these activities into three categories:

- *Personalised employment services*, and especially the career guidance elements within the processes that PES staff use in working with, in particular, unemployed/registered persons (including the initial diagnostic and action-planning process, and job-search assistance activities). These actions mainly refer to information provision, advice and a limited focus on guidance.
- *Specialised career guidance provision* to unemployed customers and other clients, where the intervention has a stronger counselling component which indicates a more professionalised staff.
- *Other career guidance provision* (including services for students, and support for career guidance through career and labour market information).
- For our purposes, we propose to distinguish in particular between:
 - *Employment counselling*, which focuses mainly on assessment and on developing and implementing an agreed action plan focused mainly on a pathway for rapid labour market integration.
 - *Career counselling*, which focuses on longer-term career goals and is more client-centred in nature. This may be offered to some unemployed individuals and job-seekers, but may also be offered to students and to employed individuals, or to individuals thinking of returning to the labour market.
 - *Rehabilitation counselling*, which focuses on wider issues relating to help those with special needs or disabilities to gain employment. Rehabilitation counselling may be viewed as a specialisation within career counselling.
- Collecting and disseminating *career and labour market information*. This may be a service not only to direct clients but also to the public as a whole, either directly or via other lifelong guidance services. It may be limited to information on supply and demand in particular occupations and sectors within the labour market. But in some cases it may involve working with partners in the education system in developing web portals that integrate such information with broader information relating to education, training and occupations. Dissemination activities may include Career Information Centres, publications in various media, and websites. Some PES are responsible for Euroguidance centres concerned with providing information to their citizens on learning and employment opportunities in other European countries (as well as information on opportunities in their own countries to citizens from other countries). In addition, the EURES network provides information and job-placement services to support job mobility within Europe (Ertelt & Kraatz, 2011).
- *Other outreach activities* with guidance elements, including Job and Career Fairs, and short-term work-experience programmes for orientation purposes.

Some of these services may be provided in-house; others may be outsourced, or purchased from external suppliers.

In addition, some PES deliver or outsource psychological services (often including psychometric tests) related to selection processes linked to active labour market measures. These should, however, be viewed as selection rather than guidance activities.

All of the guidance services above can be subsumed within the concept of 'lifelong guidance'. Some, though, have a narrower frame than others. For example:

- The focus of employment guidance and labour market information tends to be strongly on the *labour market*. These could be viewed as forming an 'employment guidance' sub-set within lifelong guidance.
- In contrast, career counselling and career information focus strongly on the *interface between learning and occupations*.

In addition, employment counselling interventions can be distinguished from career counselling in a number of further respects:

- Employment guidance or employment counselling in PES services tends to focus on *short-term outcomes* related to immediate entry into employment; whereas career counselling tends to focus on *longer-term outcomes* related to sustainable employability (including employability skills and career management skills) and a lifecycle approach.
- Employment guidance is more often linked to *sanctions* related to claiming unemployment benefits (i.e. that clients only retain the right to claim such benefits if they attend employment counselling sessions and carry out agreed action plans) and to *gatekeeping* roles in relation to training or other provision supported out of public funds (clients deemed to have sufficient training to find a job may be denied access to further training designed to secure a better job); whereas career counselling tends not to be constrained in these ways.
- For both of the above reasons, employment guidance tends to be more immediate *activation-oriented and directional* in nature – i.e. getting the client to consent to an agreed action plan; whereas career counselling tends to be more *client-centred* in nature – i.e. helping the client to set their own goals, in a well-informed and well-thought-through way.
- Employment guidance tends to be focused on *particular target-groups*, particularly the unemployed; whereas career counselling may be made available to much *broader groups*, including students and those already in employment who may want to consider career changes.

These distinctions are evident in three of the case studies in the Annex:

- In Belgium (VDAB), the distinction between 'pathway guidance' (employment counselling) and 'career coaching' (career counselling).
- In Germany, the distinction between 'orientation counselling' (career counselling) and 'integration counselling' (employment counselling).

- In the UK, the distinction between the work-based interviews provided by PES staff (employment counselling) and referrals to external careers services (career counselling).

At the same time, particular countries may frame the distinction in somewhat different ways. In Germany, for example, integration into apprenticeship instead of a job is viewed as a desirable outcome; and integration counselling can in some cases take an intensive form, using case-management approaches adapted from social work.

The extent to which PES provide career counselling themselves depends on their remit and the resources available to them:

- In some cases (e.g. Germany) they may be the main provider of career counselling for students and for adults in general.
- In some cases they may provide a more limited career counselling service, with restricted access to it.
- In some cases (e.g. UK) they may not provide a career counselling service themselves but may refer core clients who need career counselling to an external service for this purpose.

This may be linked to wider issues relating to the extent to which the PES is viewed more generally as:

- The major service provider in the labour market.
- The major strategic agency but not necessarily the main service provider (i.e. with a strong policy of outsourcing services where appropriate).
- A residual public-service provider to compensate for market failure on the part of private-sector employment agencies. The Netherlands and Switzerland, for example, tend to lean towards this view (EC, 2010c).

Beyond this, some PES play an important strategic role in relation to lifelong guidance services in general. This may range from being the major supplier of career and labour market information (e.g. Germany) to providing the secretariat for national lifelong guidance councils or similar mechanisms (e.g. Hungary) (see Section 3.4).

From the viewpoint of PES, the added value of lifelong guidance includes:

- Strengthening their customer focus and their capacity to meet the needs of their clients.
- Securing a better fit between clients and job/training opportunities.
- Leading to more sustainable integration of clients into the labour market, including special support for vulnerable groups (e.g. youth, migrants, citizens in disadvantaged regions).
- Helping PES to move from a remedial to a preventive approach to unemployment.

More broadly, In a PES perspective, the payback for its front-line work from investment in lifelong guidance services is that citizens will be able to develop and maintain their own career plan through the lifespan. This should diminish the administrative burden on the PES front-line staff, since more clients will be aware of their career goals and the necessary learning and working pathways to achieve these goals.

3. CHALLENGES, TRENDS AND WAYS FORWARD

In addition to the points already made, four major trends can be identified in the interface between PES and lifelong guidance:

1. The move to self-service approaches, linked to e-services and customer segmentation/profiling.
2. The growing attention to quality assurance, including staff competencies.
3. The recognition of the need for stronger performance measurement and impact measurement, related to sustainable labour market integration and efficient allocation of resources.
4. The involvement of PES in the development of national lifelong guidance strategies.

3.1 Self-service, e-services and customer segmentation/profiling

The move to e-service approaches is well-advanced in PES as in most public services. This includes using technology in three different ways (Hooley, Hutchinson & Watts, 2010):

- To provide information.
- To provide an automated interaction: for administration of self-assessments, for example, or for matching individuals to vacancies. In relation to the latter, a number of countries are trying to refine and improve their e-matching systems, to base them on more sophisticated criteria related to skills and competences.
- To provide a channel for communication: engaging with clients through the telephone, email, web chat, chat rooms, SMS messaging, and the like, possibly using call centres for this purpose.

Other developments include:

- Some PES have established electronic kiosks or work stations offering remote video counselling in remote areas where there are not enough clients to justify running an office.
- Some PES (e.g. Hungary) are encouraging the development of e-portfolios, which clients can use in a password-protected way to collect and update personal and career information as a tool for managing their own career.
- Some PES (e.g. Germany, Finland, Hungary) are developing lifelong guidance portals not only for end-users but also for the professional lifelong guidance community. The Hungarian PES has established a national portal where one channel is dedicated to semi-skilled guidance staff (e.g. social workers, teachers, HR specialists) as well as to trained career counsellors. This can be used as a hub for the service providers and also as a “yellow pages” of the different services for customers.

Such uses of technology extend the range of services that can be provided. They also potentially enable more intensive face-to-face services to be reserved for those who need them most. Accordingly, they are often linked to customer segmentation/profiling, distinguishing between:

- Clients who can be left to use resources on a self-help basis.
- Those who need short interventions (either face-to-face or at a distance).
- Those requiring sustained support (some of it probably face-to-face).

Attention needs to be given to groups which have no access to ICT, or no skills in using it, e.g. some older workers (CEDEFOP, 2010a).

A recent study (Borbély et al., 2008) reviewed 28 national career guidance portals worldwide. The study concluded that the most developed portals not only link self-knowledge and opportunities but also link the databases of the labour administration and education authorities (e.g. CareerOneStop/CareerInfoNet in the USA; O*NET in the USA; Choices Online in Canada; the national LLG portal in Hungary). The further development of such portals cannot be effective – in terms of both cost and reliability – without strong co-operation between the labour and education authorities. The new technology tools accordingly provide not only cost-effective one-stop solutions for career information provision but also a good basis for cross-cutting policy approaches and cross-sectoral co-operation (see Section 1 above).

3.2 Quality assurance

There is growing interest in the need for quality assurance. In particular, it is widely recognised that the development of staff competencies is critical to the quality of PES services. A particularly strong model is Ireland, where all PES staff who work with clients, ranging from front-desk clerical offers to employment officers, complete a 100-hour in-service Certificate in Adult Guidance and Counselling; more advanced training is also available for those providing employment counselling (see Annex).

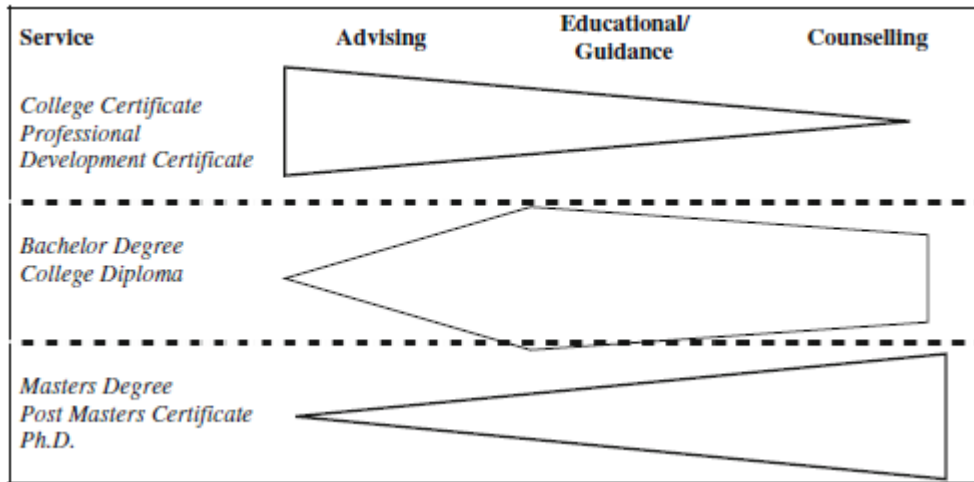
A study commissioned by CEDEFOP (2009) developed a competence framework for career guidance practitioners, distinguishing three types of competences: foundation; client-interaction; and supporting (see list below). A higher level of qualification is likely to be needed for those offering career counselling.

PRACTITIONER SKILLS AND VALUES	1	FOUNDATION COMPETENCES
	1.1	Ethical practice
	1.2	Recognise and respond to clients' diverse needs
	1.3	Integrate theory and research into practice
	1.4	Develop one's own capabilities and understand any limitations
	1.5	Communication and facilitation skills
	1.6	Information and computer technologies
WORKING WITH CLIENTS	2	CLIENT-INTERACTION COMPETENCES
	2.1	Undertake career development activities
	2.2	Enable access to information
	2.3	Conduct and enable assessment
	2.4	Develop and deliver career learning programmes
	2.5	Make referrals and provide advocacy
	2.6	Facilitate entry into learning and work
SYSTEMS AND NETWORKS	3	SUPPORTING COMPETENCES
	3.1	Manage opportunity information services
	3.2	Operate within networks and build partnerships
	3.3	Manage own caseload and maintain user records
	3.4	Design strategies for career development
	3.5	Engage with stakeholders
	3.6	Engage in research and evaluation
	3.7	Update own skills and knowledge

The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance has developed international competencies and a credential system for educational and vocational guidance practitioners (Repetto, 2008). Hiebert (2009) suggests that in linking these with credentials, it is helpful to distinguish between three main activities:

- Advising: providing general, 'non-personalised' information..
- Guidance: gathering information about a client, and meeting their needs.
- Counselling: helping clients to explore their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and behaviours to arrive at plans for action.

A model based on this distinction is used in the PES in Hungary (see Annex). Hiebert indicates the relationship with credentials through a diagram:



It would be useful to explore the application of this model from a PES perspective, in distinguishing between such roles as case managers, placement officers, employment advisers and career counsellors.

3.3 Performance measurement and impact measurement

The interest in quality assurance is closely linked to performance measurement and impact measurement. A model developed by Careers Scotland (see ELGPN, 2010, p.54) distinguishes between three main kinds of outcomes and impacts from lifelong guidance:

- *Learning* outcomes (greater access to learning and training; greater participation; improved retention rates; greater attainment and higher-level skills; improved motivation and hence attainment) and impacts (higher wage levels through gaining higher qualifications).
- *Economic* outcomes (higher levels of participation in employment; lower levels of unemployment; improved job tenure through increased motivation at work; more responsive and flexible workforce; improvements in employability) and impacts (higher wage levels; improved productivity).
- *Social* outcomes (increased confidence; increased well-being and health benefits; reductions in crime and offending behaviour; greater levels of social inclusion) and impacts (reductions in lost earnings and lower productivity; reductions in social security, public health costs and other public costs).

Evidence is stronger on some of these than on others: it tends to be stronger on short-term learning outcomes than on longer-term economic and social outcomes (largely because of the costs and difficulties of carrying out such longer-term studies) (see OECD, 2004; Magnusson & Lalande, 2005) .

On some of these criteria, there is evidence on the relative effect of different interventions. For example, Tyers & Sinclair (2005) found that those who had received

advice and guidance were significantly more likely than those who had received information only to report work and learning outcomes and changes in levels of confidence, motivation and opportunity awareness. On cost-effectiveness, meta-analyses in the USA indicate that in terms of client time, individual counselling is the most cost-effective; but that in use of counsellor time, computer-based interventions and classroom-based interventions are more cost-effective (for a summary, see Watts & Dent, 2006).

Many of these studies are not directly PES-related. There is evidence, however, on the impact of quality processes within PES. An evaluation study on the integration of long-term unemployed in Germany showed how good-quality case management contributes to a smoother and faster pathway back to the labour market, while mistakes due to low levels of professionalism in employment counselling can hinder the integration process (Baethge-Kinsky et al., 2007).

More work is needed on standards and indicators relating to lifelong guidance activities in PES. Although EUROSTAT collects much data in the field of employment policies, no comparative data are available on lifelong guidance activities in PES. More data are needed on inputs, including the intensity of service delivery, which can then be related to outcomes. Fruitful collaboration might be established here with the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (see Section 3.4 below), one of whose thematic activities is concerned with the development of indicators linked to quality assurance.

Hughes & Gratton (2009) developed a five-level model to evaluate studies measure the effects of career guidance:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Opinion studies involving small-scale qualitative in-depth interviews or larger-scale quantitative surveys	Outcome measurement studies with no counterfactuals	Outcome measurement studies with weak counterfactuals	Outcome measurement studies with control by calculation	'Classical' experimental studies

The Employment Committee (EMCO) has suggested the number of young people who are NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) as an indicator. But this is more likely to be affected by wider economic factors than by the outcomes of the work of career guidance services.

3.4 PES involvement in national lifelong guidance strategies

Most European countries have recently been involved in the development of national lifelong guidance strategies, with encouragement from the EU. Two Resolutions of the Council of Ministers (CEC, 2004; 2008) encouraged Member States to strengthen the role of guidance within their national lifelong learning strategies. The 2008 Resolution

also invited the Member States and the European Commission, within their respective competences, to strengthen European co-operation in this area, particularly through the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network. Four themes were identified in particular for such collaboration:

- Encouraging the lifelong acquisition of *career management skills*.
- Facilitating *access* by all citizens to guidance services.
- Developing the *quality assurance* of guidance provision.
- Encouraging *co-ordination and co-operation* among the various stakeholders.

In 22 of the 27 ELGPN member countries, the ELGPN national delegations have included representatives of the ministry of labour/employment or of the PES⁴ (ELGPN, 2010, annex 1). They have also been closely involved in the steps being taken in all ELGPN member countries to develop national lifelong guidance forums or other co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms (CEDEFOP, 2008b; ELGPN, 2010). A review by ELGPN (2010) indicated that national guidance forums had been established in 17 European countries⁵, and alternative national mechanisms in 3 others⁶; similar structures were in process of being established in 10 further countries⁷ (ELGPN, 2010, annex 4).

Such developments are linked to the development of European taxonomies and tools. These include the European Skills, Competencies and Occupations (ESCO) taxonomy, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the Europass portfolio and APEL (accreditation of prior experiential learning) processes.

All of these have potential for improving the quality of lifelong guidance provision, as well as harmonising such provision across Europe.

The roles of PES in relation to national lifelong guidance strategies are likely to vary considerably. In all cases, however, it is important that they are an integral part of such strategies, that they form closer relationships with other organisations and other policy areas in this respect, and that they review their own role in the light of the developing strategies.

⁴ Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Netherlands.

⁵ Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, United Kingdom.

⁶ France, Poland, Sweden.

⁷ Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Lifelong guidance has an important role to play in relation not only to lifelong learning (schools, VET, higher education, adult learning) but also to employment and social inclusion. In principle, it is an integrative concept and 'translation tool' across these different policy sectors. In the past, PES have tended to view career guidance as a service. Now, however, lifelong guidance needs to be viewed as a policy and therefore as part of the PES service model. If the EU and its member states are to develop effective lifelong guidance policies, PES need to be a core player.

Ongoing changes in the global economy and problematic demographic trends in European member states are requiring strong changes in European employment policies. The current economic crisis has intensified these drivers. The new Europe 2020 strategy emphasises that such policies need to be smart, inclusive and sustainable.

Key issues for PES to consider in relation to lifelong guidance services delivered by themselves and in co-operation with others (taking into account resource constraints and pressures for cost-efficiency) include:

- The ways in which lifelong guidance can help to strengthen the personalisation of their services and their capacity to meet both their organisational goals and the needs of their customers.
- The scope for e-services in relation to face-to-face services and customer segmentation.
- The need to improve staff competencies in relation to lifelong guidance activities.
- The need to identify gaps in performance data and impact research that need to be filled.
- The roles that PES can play in relation to wider national lifelong guidance strategies.

ANNEX: CASE STUDIES

A Belgium (VDAB)

The Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service (VDAB) has drawn a distinction between two services: 'pathway guidance' for unemployed clients; and career coaching for working clients (see VDAB, UPSVAR, FOREM & ÁFSZ, 2009).

Pathway guidance is a methodology through which a job-seeker is helped to develop and implement a structured pathway to sustainable employment. It comprises three phases:

- The *intake interview*, in which the pathway guidance professional, with the aid of an 'intake manual', assesses the client's competences and labour market situation. This includes assessing their chances of finding a job, and the factors that may obstruct or promote this process. It could in some cases include specialised screening, e.g. medical and/or psychological examination, observation and orientation modules, and short exploratory work-experience placements.
- Developing a *pathway plan*. This involves a concrete and realistic action plan designed to lead the client to gain a job within a short period of time. It may include some training. The plan needs to be jointly agreed by the pathway guidance professional and the client, and to be realistic both in terms of the client's competencies and needs and of the state of the labour market. It is then the basis of an agreement which is signed by both parties. Clients entitled to unemployment benefits only retain this entitlement if they sign the agreement.
- The *realisation* phase, in which the pathway guidance professional contacts the client at least once a month to check their progress in relation to the agreed action plan, including following up of job vacancies notified weekly through the automatic matching system. In some cases, the plan may be adjusted with the agreement of both parties. If clients on unemployment benefit do not follow up vacancies provided, they may receive a sanction.

Career coaching is available to people who are already in employment but want help in planning their career. It usually consists of between 6 and 18 hours' individual counselling; for particular target-groups, it may extend to 25 hours. There are 24 VDAB across Flanders, where 24 career guidance professionals receive clients during the day, on evenings and on Saturdays. Their role is to help clients develop a Personal Development Plan.

B Germany

The modernisation of the German PES, the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (BA), has included the development of a differentiated guidance concept for the different services offered in the BA which links legal regulations and organisational processes with a theory-based understanding of counselling. The counsellor-client relationship is based on a working alliance between counsellor and client, with defined principles of action: this is viewed as an important precondition for the acceptance and implementation of guidance results by clients, especially in settings where the client is expected to act according to certain legal constraints. A distinction is drawn between two counselling formats (Rübner, 2011):

- *Orientation counselling (for career guidance specialists for young)*, designed to support the processes of career choice and career development of young persons (including school and university students) and adults. The aim is to support the client's decision-making process regard choices of education, occupation and jobs, and to control their career.
- *Integration counselling (for employment advisers / placement officers)*, designed to integrate clients into work or apprenticeships. The aim is to secure a sustainable placement in a job or apprenticeship, so as to reduce unemployment and shorten the period of unemployment payments. Initial assessments are designed those needing little or no support, those requiring 'activation', those requiring 'assistance', and those requiring 'strong support'. Support may include addressing barriers to placement and developing readiness for training. For some, it may involve case-management methods (adapted from social work). It continues until the client is successfully integrated.

C Hungary

In Hungary, under the leadership of the Hungarian PES, a brand new cross-sectoral lifelong guidance network, methodology and website have been established (see Borbély-Pecze, 2010; Watts & Borbély-Pecze, 2011). The project, funded with support from the European Social Fund, includes mapping the current guidance professionals in all sectors (schools, VET, higher education, PES, and community-based services), extending existing training provision for such professionals, establishing a new 'sector-blind' network of career guidance professionals, and developing a national lifelong guidance portal. The PES also provides the secretariat for the National Lifelong Guidance Council.

The model underlying this work is based on a distinction between three levels of provision:

- *Career information/advice*. This can be provided not only by qualified counsellors but also by adult training counsellors/consultants, placement officers and other practitioners with short-term (30-120 hours) career guidance training and by teachers social workers and placement officers without qualifications in career guidance.

- *Career guidance.* This is a non-directive process designed to address career management or career change issues. It begins with problem definition and ends in an agreement. It is provided by qualified career guidance professionals, consists of several individual or group guidance sessions, and is directed at matching the client's personality with the right job/career. The number of guidance sessions is single-digit and the timeframe of group sessions is a few days.
- *Career counselling.* This level is more intensive, includes the use of psychometric tests, and requires a degree in psychology including some elements of psychotherapy and specific training in career counselling.

D Ireland

In Ireland, the PES is part of a wider training and employment agency (FÁS). Since 1998, in-service training in guidance and counselling has been provided for all PES staff who work with clients, ranging from front-desk clerical offers to employment officers. All such staff complete a 100-hour in-service Certificate in Adult Guidance and Counselling course run by the National University of Ireland Maynooth. In addition, employment service officers can undertake the Diploma and Higher Diploma in Adult Guidance and Counselling (428 hours). The training focuses particularly on the guidance interview, and adopts an active applied-psychology approach, in contrast to the humanistic counselling theories that tend to underpin training for school-based guidance counsellors (Kavanagh, 2011).

E United Kingdom

Within the UK, education and training policy are devolved to the separate administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; but employment policy is not. Accordingly, the PES – Jobcentre Plus (JCP) – operates across the UK, but in relation to skills policies has to make different partnership arrangements in England and in each of the other 'home countries'.

Front-line staff in JCP offices perform a basically administrative role (the average time per interview is 5-10 minutes). The 'hard to place' are however allocated to Personal Advisers (PAs), who have lower caseloads and more time to spend with individuals. PAs are responsible for building good working relationships with these customers, for conducting work-focused interviews which include assessment and drawing up agreed action plans, and then for helping individuals to implement these plans. These include guidance-related activities: notably, information, advice and signposting.

PAs do not offer in-depth career guidance (which requires a longer interview and more professional skills to help individuals with job/career choice and/or to overcome personal barriers). For this they are expected to refer customers to separate careers services: Next Step in England (soon to become part of an all-age careers service); Skills Development Scotland; Careers Wales; and the Careers Service in Northern Ireland.

To develop a more integrated system of employment and skills support, a series of trials was established from September 2008 to test key elements of the proposed integrated service. This included some co-location of careers service advisers in JCP offices on a largely part-time basis. It also included referral of some JCP customers to the careers services for a Skills Health Check: an in-depth interview designed to identify skills and qualification needs and to support progression into learning, employment and careers.

An evaluation of the integrated employment and skills (IES) trials (Levesley et al. 2009) indicated some difficulties in establishing effective partnership arrangements. Many of these seemed remediable. There was however a difference of culture between the organisations, relating to the extent to which they were customer-led. JCP staff were often more instructive in their dealings with customers (e.g. identifying a skills need and suggesting a particular course to meet that need), whereas Next Step advisers tended to be led by customers' goals and to provide more general help to support customers in making their own decisions about which training to follow).

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