



Learning Exchange on 'Service differentiation– tailoring online services for the unemployed'

04-05 December 2017, Manchester (UK)

Executive Summary

With the introduction of Universal Credit in the UK, the delivery model for financial support to the unemployed is radically changing. To ensure that this new delivery model maintains its current performance, it will increasingly have to rely on automation and a more effective diagnostic approach for caseworkers. All while providing a tailored service to an increasing amount of clients without additional resource. Effective and efficient segmentation will thus be key to deliver this increasingly automated yet tailored approach.

The Learning Exchange was used to discuss particular components of this new delivery model, including mixed-channel (digital, remote, face-to-face) delivery tailored to the individual and the test and learn approach of the UK Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

The DWP hosted this event and looked to learn from the Dutch and Belgian experiences, both of whom have implemented such automated systems under similar budget constraints and with an interest to improve the service delivery.

The key learning messages from the Learning Exchange can be summarised:

- Delivering PES services via digital channels increases the **accessibility of the service** and **enhances PES capacity** to deliver services to a larger number of clients.
- **Leadership, political will and commitment play an integral part in driving transformation** in PES. These elements are essential to implementing a joint cooperation strategy which cuts across hierarchical and sectoral lines and creates a shared ownership.
- The necessity of having a **joined-up vision for the digitalisation** is important to ensure clarity for staff.
- The use of digital solutions and blended services are expected to lead to **cost-savings** through the automation and standardisation of work processes. However, this also **requires** both **investment in PES technical systems** and the **training** of staff.
- Involving front line staff as soon as possible and positioning implementation as a series of small steps rather than a large system overhaul **reduces** the **natural resistance to change**.
- Developing a digital journey involves **not only digitalising your current processes** but allows you to **review them** and to **ensure that they are still fit for purpose in the long-term**. This includes not only building proper IT platforms but being clear about the preferred channel approach and the role of caseworkers in the future.

- The **customer perspective** is **essential**. It is important to make the digital approach more human by listening to customer feedback and understanding how the changes will positively impact on the customers' experience.
- From a technical perspective, digital capabilities should be measured against how well PES could **read the digital behaviour of their customers**. That is how PES can build up digital capability from a data-driven approach.
- Having the **authority to fail** is a positive way **to work towards continuous improvement and to foster innovation** and changes in an organisation.
- To drive change forward it is important to **be bold but to keep things simple**. There is a wealth of experiences and evidence across Europe to inform the development and drive change.
- Building proper **evaluation plans to inform implementation** is important. Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) help in gaining some long-term knowledge but in a rapid changing environment large scale RCTs might present some challenges. Introducing small changes, evaluating these and acting on the results might be more appropriate.

Further information

Full report, presentations and background paper will be available on the Mutual Learning Programme (MLP) website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1070&langId=en>