

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

Views and comments can be made to EmployabilityinScotland@scotland.gsi.gov.uk by 9th October 2015.

1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

Dyslexia Scotland

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3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual

/

Group/Organisation

Please tick as appropriate

(a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes No

(c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

(b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes **No**

(d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes **No**

CONSULTATION PAPER QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

What types of employment support services work best in Scotland, reflecting the very different needs of individuals who are unemployed?

Comment

It is crucial for those unemployed individuals who have additional support needs, especially hidden disabilities such as dyslexia, that the employment services are sufficiently flexible and sensitive to be able to a) understand the nature of the difficulties faced by their clients and b) ensure that their clients can access the support on offer and are not directly or indirectly discriminated by the very employment support services that are meant to help them.

As outlined in paragraph 3.10 of the discussion paper, 'there are also strong elements of public service obligation, social justice and inclusion in helping unemployed people into work, particularly people who face a number of barriers to work'

We would therefore recommend that employment support services which are either run by, or, working in close partnership with, third sector organisations, are likely to be better placed to support disabled individuals who are unemployed. An approach as outlined in para 4.5 that 'gives jobseekers with a disability a wider and **more intensive range** of support to help them become and remain economically independent' as well as a 'client centred approach' which 'includes elements of third sector provision', is likely to be the most effective.

Dyslexia Scotland, which aims to inspire and enable people with dyslexia, regardless of age and abilities, to reach their potential in education, employment and life, is well placed to advise and work with employment support services, to ensure that the staff working with clients with dyslexia (whether or not their dyslexia has been assessed) can understand the impact of dyslexia on a client's ability to organise their time, manage appointments, complete application forms and perform to their fullest potential in interviews.

Dyslexia Scotland can help in a number of ways, including through our Helpline, membership services, dyslexia awareness training, a range of [publications on our website](#) about dyslexia and employment. We have also piloted an intensive careers adviser service specifically for adults with dyslexia.

QUESTION 2

How best can we ensure the needs of different businesses and sectors in Scotland, are aligned with employment programme outcomes?

Comment

This could be done in a range of different ways, including:

Strengthening links between businesses and all sectors with:

- the Third Sector Employability Forum
- STUC and other Unions, including Scottish Union Learning
- Scottish Government building on and promoting existing forums for employment support services/employers and businesses to work in partnership and access information, advice and networking opportunities with specialist organisations working with people with disabilities (e.g. Dyslexia Scotland for job seekers with dyslexia)
- exploring the benefits to employers of recruiting people with disabilities and highlighting examples in case studies, building on existing websites/programmes such as My World of Work, Modern Apprenticeships

QUESTION 3

What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing employment support programmes and delivery mechanisms in Scotland?

Comment

Generally, in Dyslexia Scotland's experience (based on feedback from our Helpline callers, members, people taking part in our national and local events and in our Adult Networks and our careers service pilot), for people with dyslexia the strengths and successes of employment support programmes depend on the quality of the individual advisers and their knowledge/understanding of dyslexia.

Similarly, the weaknesses generally stem from the lack of understanding amongst advisers (e.g. Job Centre Disability Advisers who, if not adequately trained, refuse to recognise dyslexia as a 'disability' and therefore refuse to offer any specific, tailored support with applications; work programme advisers who penalise clients with dyslexia by failing to understand that e.g. changing appointment times or not calling at allocated times may have a significant impact on that person's ability to deliver the agreed goals that week). For example, one of our clients with severe dyslexia was told that he wasn't disabled enough to get help from Into Work.

Where reasonable adjustments and supportive mechanisms are put in place in close liaison between the adviser and client, the chances of successful outcomes are far more likely to be delivered. Where there is a person-centred approach, informed by the client's needs, there is also a higher chance of success, but there needs to be a recognition that the support available may need to be more intensive and more time-consuming as a result of the additional support needs.

Our Careers advisers have heard several jobseekers say that the statutory agencies have given up with them and now all they do is stamp their benefits claims once a week. So there needs to be a commitment that they will persevere until there is a positive outcome – perhaps this isn't practical in all cases but it is an ideal. This is what the Dyslexia Scotland careers adviser service set out to do.

Specifically,

Weaknesses: the contracting and sub-contracting of the delivery of the Work Programme (section 3). The payment of the contractors and sub-contractors based on the positive outcomes for the jobseekers can lead them to push

people into any job in order to get their money and also to cherry pick the job seekers and reject the most difficult . The so-called “black box” system does not encourage the contractors and sub-contractors to spend time and effort with the vulnerable cases. However the situation has improved since the payment was changed into a staged process so the contractors don't get their total payment for a longer period.

The Work Choice programme (section 4) seems to work better as it is more people-centred i.e. Shaw Trust which has a very individual approach. However its restrictions can be frustrating – we know of cases where they fix up some work for a set period of time and if the client is not kept on at the job, then they are dropped.

SDS (section 5) offers a good service in theory but is working within restrictions. Their focus on designated age groups is frustrating for those outwith that focus and their use of predominantly online advice doesn't always work for those people with dyslexia who need the opportunity to discuss face to face or by telephone.

QUESTION 4

Where are the current examples of good practice in relation to alignment of services to most effectively support a seamless transition into employment?

Comment

Where there are nominated advisers in Job Centres, with an understanding of the difficulties and strengths of the client groups they are working with, e.g. an adviser with a knowledge and understanding of dyslexia who is allocated to working with clients with dyslexia (and where the line management

systems recognise the additional time that this may entail).

Good practice in developing good local networks and employers who are supportive, e.g. liaising with disability-aware/dyslexia-friendly employers and building on positive employment case studies with examples of reasonable adjustments that have been shown to work.

Where providers and Job Centres are aware of and able to seek advice when needed on specific needs/clients from specialist organisations such as Dyslexia Scotland.

Dyslexia Scotland's recent careers service pilot, where we matched trained careers advisers (working on a voluntary basis) with dyslexic job seekers and they worked intensively with them to support them into employment (and help them to sustain existing employment). **NB** This service is currently on hold as we are seeking funding to support its development.

Private sector programmes such as Barclays' Life Skills courses – Dyslexia Scotland and Barclays worked together to deliver such a course specifically for people with dyslexia.

QUESTION 5

What are the key improvements you would make to existing employment support services in Scotland to ensure more people secure better work?

Comment

Increase tailored, person-centred support for people seeking employment,

with access where necessary to organisations who can advise providers as required.

Provide more networking/training opportunities and improve links between third sector organisations and work programme providers/Job centres.

Improve access for people with disabilities by improving the generic, universal services or supplementing them with access to intensive, specialist support.

Dyslexia Scotland is currently seeking funding to help take forward the careers service project and to be able to offer intensive support to more people with dyslexia who are unable to access the work programmes when they are not dyslexia friendly or aware.

The Third Sector (section 5) needs a much supported and coherent strategy from the government. It has major ability to deliver specialised employment services as well as supported volunteering opportunities, but at present it seems that each charity does its own thing if it is inspired to do so. Some charities, i.e. Enable are government recognised and funded for its work but the work by the third sector in the field of unemployment should be more cohesive and organised.

QUESTION 6

How best can we assess the employment support needs of an individual and then ensure the support they receive is aligned with their requirements?

Comment

By asking the clients (and if appropriate those who support them) what works

for them.

By using the Employability pipeline.

By making use of existing third sector organisations for advice on particular learning support needs, e.g. by advisers calling Dyslexia Scotland's Helpline

By allocating sufficient time for the appointments, especially initially and setting a clear timetable with that client, to allow time to understand what works for them.

By ensuring that front line advisers at each stage of the employment process have a greater understanding of the nature of disabilities, including hidden learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

Where appropriate, by funding specialist services or advisers, or by funding/providing access to disability awareness training.

QUESTION 7

How best can the employability pipeline framework help providers best assess and deliver services people need?

Comment

It appears that this is a useful framework for organisations to identify and then meet the different needs people have at different stages in their journey into work and it is encouraging that the pipeline concept recognises that for individuals, the journey towards and into work is not a linear process. The framework would help providers best if backed up by a strategic, supported

approach involving a range of local and national organisations (including third sector) committed to supporting individuals at every stage of that journey.

QUESTION 8

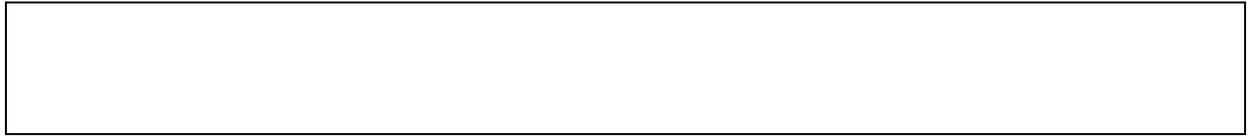
How can early intervention best be integrated into employment support and the design of future programmes?

Comment

Paragraph 7.14 states that 'The Scottish Government believes that accurate and realistic assessment of the support unemployed people need is crucial to making sure the individual gets the help they need, and that help is focused and effective'.

For our client group, people with dyslexia, for early intervention to happen, advisers have to be aware of how dyslexia impacts on the job seeker and to recognise dyslexia as a disability (as well as how the individual's strengths can be maximised). Tailored, person-centred support to individuals who need it most also needs to be integrated into future programmes.

This has also been outlined elsewhere in this response.



QUESTION 9

What is the optimal duration of employment support, in terms of both moving individuals into work, and then sustaining their employment?

Comment

For those individuals with greater additional needs, there needs to be a commitment that the support will persevere until there is a positive outcome – perhaps this isn't practical in all cases but it is an ideal.

This does not necessarily mean that the support is provided by the same organisation or provider - in some cases, the support may be more appropriately offered by other more specialist agencies, through an 'integrated and joined up approach focusing on the need of the individual' (as outlined in paragraph 8.15).

QUESTION 10

What are the benefits and challenges of a national contracting strategy for Scotland's future employment support service(s)?

Comment

As outlined in 8.15 of the discussion paper, 'The Scottish Government recognises that it is possible to balance a national employment support service with more focused employability services based on the need of the individual, but that one size doesn't fit all'.

The benefits might be that future employment services could be more strategically organised and more closely monitored to ensure greater

consistency and quality of service, staff training and standards that is backed up locally by a range of providers, including smaller and specialist providers.

The challenges are co-ordinating a cohesive approach across sectors with clear referral and signposting options that are accessible to individuals, especially those with the greatest support needs and which lead to sustained and positive outcomes for employees and employers.

QUESTION 11

How best can we secure effective regional and local delivery of employment support in future?

Comment

As outlined elsewhere, the Third Sector needs a more supported and coherent strategy from the government. It has significant skills and expertise and the ability to deliver specialised employment services in partnership with public and private sectors but at present it seems that each charity does its own thing if it is inspired to do so. Some charities, i.e. Enable are government recognised and funded for its work but the work by the third sector in the field of unemployment should be more cohesive and organised.

QUESTION 12

Do national or more localised employment support programmes work better for different client groups? If so, which ones and why?

Comment

The most important factors are the ability to deliver tailored, person-centred support and for staff to be well trained and aware of a range of different support needs and where to go for more support.

QUESTION 13

Who should be the contracting authority for devolved employment support provision?

Comment

We are not in a position to answer this question.

QUESTION 14

Which client groups would benefit most from future employment support in Scotland and why?

Comment

Those with a range of support needs who require more time and additional face to face support in order to access the universal services that are available such as My Word of Work. Those who cannot access digital/IT support.

For example, people with dyslexia need extra time and support to organise, process and take in verbal and written information and can find it difficult to complete forms, whether this is an application form for a job or for a benefit. They also often need extended interview times and support.

QUESTION 15

What should be our ambitions for these client groups?

Comment

A commitment that the employment support providers will persevere until there is a positive outcome. This may mean sustaining support once the person is in employment, at least until the individual is settled and reasonable adjustments have been successfully put in place.

A commitment to a service that is not restricted by age or other conditions driven by specific programmes, but is person-centred. The Dyslexia Scotland Careers service pilot was taken up primarily by people who did not fit within the age ranges of statutory work programmes, who had in some cases already used existing work programmes but had felt disadvantaged by the rigid ways in which the advisers had to work, which were not dyslexia friendly.

QUESTION 16

How can we maximise the effectiveness of devolved employment support in Scotland, in relation to the broader range of resources and initiatives available in Scotland?

Comment

See our responses in questions 5, 6 and 11.

QUESTION 17

What are the advantages, or disadvantages, of payment by results within employment support? What would form an effective suite of outcomes and over what period for Scotland? What does an effective payment structure look like?

Comment

The contracting and sub-contracting of the delivery of the Work Programme and payment of the contractors and sub-contractors based on the positive outcomes for the jobseekers, can lead them to push people into any job in order to get their money and also to cherry pick the job seekers and reject the most difficult . The so-called "black box" system does not encourage the contractors and sub-contractors to spend time and effort with the vulnerable cases.

However the situation has improved since the payment was changed into a staged process so the contractors don't get their total payment for a longer period.

QUESTION 18

What are the advantages, or disadvantages, of payment for progression within employment support? What measures of progression and over what period? What does an effective payment structure, which incentivises progression, look like?

Comment

See question 17.

QUESTION 19

What are the key aspects of an effective performance management system, to support the delivery of employment support outcomes in Scotland?

Comment

One that recognises the gradual and non-linear nature of supporting people into employment.

As outlined in paragraph 10.7... 'For people facing a range of barriers to work, success could be about making progress toward being ready for work, developing life skills, completing vocational training or undertaking a period of work experience ahead of securing that final goal of a suitable and sustainable job'.

Therefore, progression towards work readiness for people (e.g. with severe dyslexia and low self esteem as a result of their dyslexia being unsupported) is likely to be time-consuming and intensive with no immediate tangible or measurable outcomes.

QUESTION 20

Collectively, how best do we encourage active participation and avoid lack of participation on employment support programmes?

Comment

Involvement of third sector organisations such as Dyslexia Scotland who can help train providers and provide information that will help those working with unemployed disabled people have a better understanding of the difficulties involved in participation and how to mitigate/decrease the resulting barriers.

Reducing barriers to participation for people who are willing but prevented from meeting targets because of their disability. For example, someone with dyslexia who fails to turn up for appointments may not have understood or correctly noted the time or place.

Wider opportunities for providers to be fully aware of the barriers faced by disabled people in participating and in particular those faced by people with hidden disabilities e.g. dyslexia.

QUESTION 21

Do you have any other comments/views in relation to future employment support that have not been covered in the questions above?

Comment

No.

End of Questionnaire

Thank you for participating