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# Public employment services: Joined-up services for people facing labour market disadvantage<sup>1</sup>

## Summary

Slow growth in employment and economic activity is having disproportionately frequent and severe effects on people already facing disadvantage. People in vulnerable situations are more likely to have a weaker attachment to the labour market and fewer chances of re-employment. The available evidence on what policy approaches are effective in improving employment outcomes for disadvantaged groups shows the importance of tackling barriers to employment in parallel to those in education, health and housing.

This technical note shows how public employment services (PES) are going beyond traditional ways of working, moving towards joined-up services to help people facing complex barriers to employment in finding work and building skills, with the aim of

achieving more sustainable positive outcomes. The note explores the meaning of “joined-up services” and presents selected country case studies that offer insights from experience to policy-makers, practitioners and others interested in developing services to maximize the level of support available to disadvantaged jobseekers.

## Joined-up services: Beyond traditional ways of working

The idea of joined-up services is not new, and is often used in pursuit of the social and economic integration of population groups facing disadvantage in the labour market. Jobseekers facing complex barriers to employment are vulnerable to long periods of unemployment or precarious work. Frequent and prolonged unemployment spells often result in skills deterioration and lower wages, pushing many workers to take informal work, search for jobs abroad or give up looking for work and withdraw from the labour market. Improving employment

<sup>1</sup> This note was prepared by Zulum Avila (ILO). The opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the ILO. The Country Employment Policy Unit would like to thank the PES of France and the Republic of Korea for information provided.

outcomes for this category of jobseekers very often requires a combination of services to address both direct barriers to employability and other challenges (e.g. poor literacy, long-term illness, housing and financial constraints) that might influence job-search ability.

Given the wide social disparities in the global market, investing in the development of integrated services to promote social inclusion and fair societies by opening participation in employment to these people has become a pressing need. At the same time, the concept of joining up is gaining momentum as employment responsibilities are increasingly devolved to local authorities and in the face of pressures to rationalize public spending while ensuring services are both appropriate to

clients with very diverse profiles and needs, and adapted to local conditions.

A shift from stand-alone services delivered by independent providers towards joined-up provision for disadvantaged population groups entails going beyond traditional ways of working. The notion of integrating or joining up services for people facing disadvantage in the labour market relies heavily on cooperation and coordination between PES and strategic partners. The aim of this approach is to ensure that jobseekers receive the necessary continuum of support from PES, and that they are referred to other government initiatives or specialist providers offering complementary services and support.

**‘Integrated’ or ‘joined-up’ services refers to a sequenced organization of various types of support and measures to help clients who are not job ready or face complex barriers in the labour market – beyond job and employability skills – to secure employment.**

### **The global context: Decent work deficits and their disproportionate effect on vulnerable people**

Policy-makers around the world face the dual challenge of returning global economic growth to the levels achieved before the global financial crisis of 2008–09 while ensuring decent work for the tens of millions entering the labour market every year and for workers currently in unprotected, non-traditional and informal forms of work. The United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets as a major policy goal the achievement of full employment and decent work for all as a key ingredient for inclusive and sustainable prosperity. Yet not everyone is getting the same opportunities to secure decent work.

Slow growth in employment and labour incomes is currently having particularly widespread and severe effects on people already facing disadvantage, resulting in increased social tension and fragmentation. Globally, unemployment is estimated to affect more than 192 million people in 2018 (ILO, 2018). In 2017, 42.5 per cent of the workforce worldwide (1.4 billion workers) was in vulnerable forms of employment (own-account workers and contributing family workers) with limited access to contributory social protection, regular incomes, training and job stability. Vulnerable employment is projected to continue to rise, affecting 17 million more workers in 2018 than in 2017. In emerging and developing countries extreme working poverty remains widespread, with 114 million workers likely to be earning less than US\$1.90 a day in 2018 (table 1).

**Table 1. Unemployment, vulnerable employment and working poverty: Estimated and projected rates, 2017–18 (%)**

Indicator	2017	2018
<b><i>Unemployment rate</i></b>		
World	5.6	5.5
Developed countries	5.7	5.5
Emerging economies	5.6	5.5
Developing countries	5.3	5.3
<b><i>Vulnerable employment rate</i></b>		
World	42.5	42.6
Developed countries	10.0	9.9
Emerging economies	46.2	46.2
Developing countries	76.5	76.4
<b><i>Extreme working poverty rate</i></b>		
Emerging economies	7.7	7.2
Developing countries	41.2	40.1

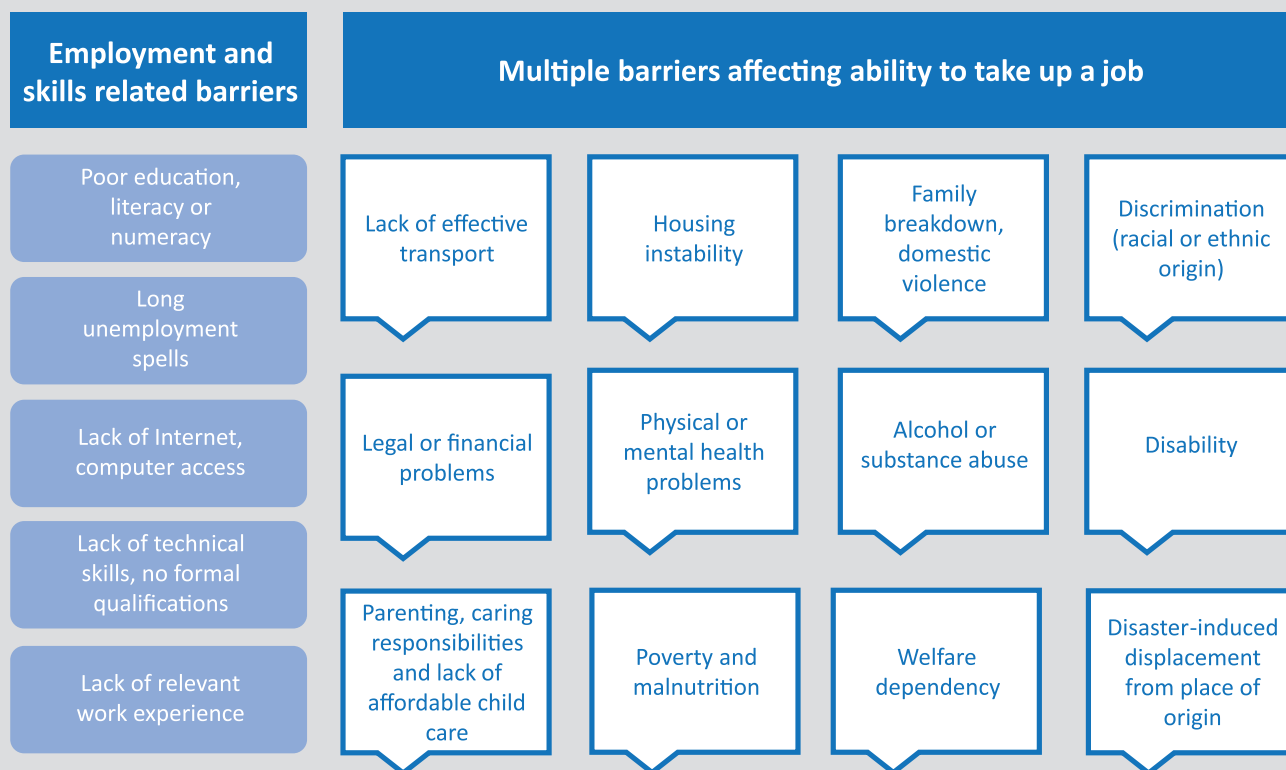
Note: Figures for 2017 are preliminary estimates; figures for 2018 are projections. Extreme working poverty refers to workers living in households with income or consumption per capita of less than US\$1.90 per day (PPP).  
Source: ILO, 2018.

## Who are the people facing disadvantage in the labour market in need of joined-up services?

While globally accepted definitions of vulnerability and disadvantage are lacking, given that each country has its own criteria to define and measure both, most countries make their assessments using similar tools, namely poverty line indicators and an index designed to determine lack of basic services or social exclusion. In its broader sense, the term ‘disadvantage’ in the labour market context

encompasses the range of distinct or overlapping barriers preventing some people or groups from fully participating in employment.

Groups facing disadvantage in the job market often need to overcome several barriers affecting their capacity to seek, find and maintain work. While some barriers may relate to core competencies or work ability, these are often coupled with non-employment-related challenges. The strong interconnections between economic and social factors affecting the ability of vulnerable groups to find and take up jobs are shown in [figure 1](#).

**Figure 1. Potential barriers to employment**

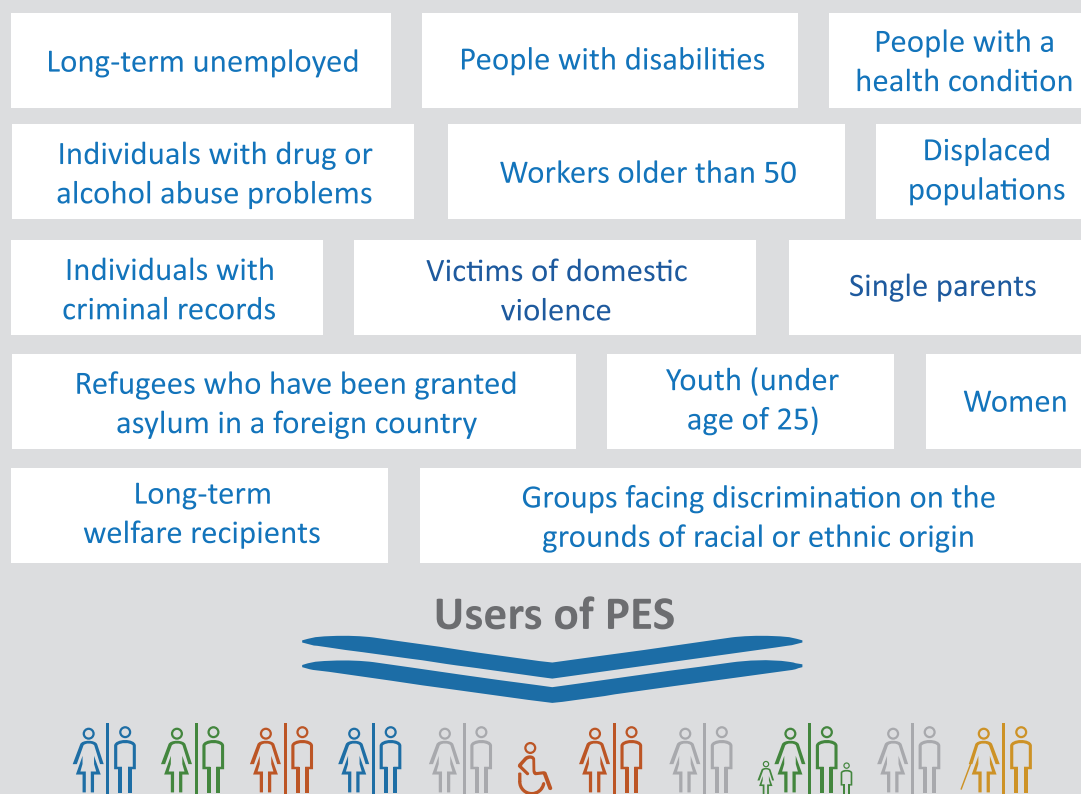
Source: Author.

These population groups are very diverse, as shown in [figure 2](#). Even if they are available for and willing to work, many of these jobseekers may have experienced repeated job-search failures in the past, or have become discouraged by the associated costs or other demands involved in taking up a job, whether full-time, temporary or shift work. Difficulties may include unreliable transport to the workplace, lack of needed work-related material (e.g. a driving licence, uniforms, tools), lack of access to affordable child care, or reduced capacity to travel to work at distance owing to shared parental responsibilities with an ex-partner or dependence on local housing, disability, medical or other welfare subsidies.

Recent developments linked to conflict, persecution and natural disasters due to climate

change have presented some PES with additional challenges in providing new services or intensified support to displaced populations within their own countries or refugees from other countries who have been granted asylum. Countries where the PES face particular challenges of these kinds include some members of the European Union, Colombia, Lebanon, Sudan and Turkey. PES are also confronted with the challenges of providing support to people with mental or physical health conditions, behavioural problems or a history of substance abuse or mental disability; individuals with criminal records; victims of domestic violence; and members of groups facing discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin.

**Figure 2. Jobseekers likely to face disadvantage in the labour market**



Source: Author.

## The difficulties facing disadvantaged people in finding decent work

Finding and retaining employment has become more challenging in the digital era, with job searching taking more time and effort even for the high-skilled. Workers and jobseekers already facing disadvantage are not only at increased risk of unemployment, but are also more likely to have a weaker attachment to the labour market and less chance of re-employment. At the same time, available evidence in advanced, developing and emerging economies alike shows that automation and outsourcing are increasing competition for low-skilled jobs and depressing wages for low-paid workers.

## *A large number of low-skilled vacancies are no longer full-time positions*

The labour market is being re-shaped by the digital economy, and a large number of low-skilled vacancies are no longer full-time positions but have become part-time or 'on-call' jobs, involving non-standard hours and contracts. These practices, which have become common in low-wage parts of the retail and service industries, result in significant fluctuations in total income. Many low-skilled workers have to combine several of these jobs to cover their basic life needs; others become more dependent on welfare aid or, where this is not available, rely on informal work or the incomes of other family members (Krause and Sawhill, 2017).

### *Demand for low-skilled occupations is declining in some economic sectors*

As automation and outsourcing increase, so does competition for low-skilled jobs. These changes have been particularly hard on young people entering their adult life without qualifications and on adult workers with poor education who were displaced from jobs in industries that have shrunk or disappeared. Many low-skilled workers are disproportionately likely to be in sectors where demand fell dramatically in and after the economic crisis of 2008–09 – e.g. manufacturing and traditional production-line work, construction and extraction – or in occupations disrupted by automation technologies – e.g. office and administrative jobs, financial operations, and sales and related positions (WEF, 2016).

### *Labour market conditions might not favour the job-search process*

Macroeconomic trends, local labour market conditions and the business cycle are all parts of a complex set of factors that influence the level of effort required to find work (Schwartz, 2014). For low-skilled workers, poor labour market conditions might lead to longer periods out of work regardless of how, and how hard, they try to find a job. For example, in Britain in 2010 and 2011, young people living in neighbourhoods recording high unemployment rates had to make twice as much

effort than their peers in more dynamic local job markets to find work (Tunstall et al., 2014).

### *Recruitment methods are shifting towards a more intensive use of the Internet*

The recruitment methods used by employers are also evolving, and available low-skilled vacancies are filled very rapidly owing to the widespread use of the Internet for job-searching. People without continuous access to the Internet are disadvantaged in respect of applying to jobs online, particularly in sectors heavily reliant on this recruitment method. Jobseekers without a fixed telephone line or a mobile phone also face the difficulty of not being easily reached by employers for invitation to interview and post-interview follow-up.

### *Selection practices and criteria*

Selection practices for filling low-skilled positions tend to privilege criteria such as the possession of social and soft skills (e.g. self-presentation, reliability and willingness) and some work experience over specific qualifications. Many employers prefer to take people with access to reliable transport and ready availability for on-call positions or shift work. Employers also tend to favour candidates with uninterrupted work histories, making it even harder for some population groups to get back into the labour market, such as people with criminal records and the long-term unemployed (**box 1**).

## **Box 1. The particular challenge of finding work for the long-term unemployed**

A recent study tracking employers' responses to job applications by people who had been unemployed for six months or over in the United States reveals that jobseekers in this group need to submit 3.5 times more applications, and receive half the number of invitations to interview, compared with job applicants who have been unemployed for under six months. If faced with candidates from the two groups with similar demographic characteristics and work experience, employers tend to interview and hire applicants with shorter unemployment spells. The study concludes that the probability of finding a job declines the longer a person is out of work.

Source: Ghayad, 2017, cited in Krause and Sawhill, 2017.

## Increasing PES investment in joined-up services for disadvantaged groups

Ensuring the right of access to employment, especially for disadvantaged and marginalized groups, is one of the main challenges facing governments and societies, given the significant economic, fiscal and social costs of unemployment. Effective policies are needed to accommodate different kinds of workers in the labour market and to establish fairness and equality of opportunity in employment for more people.

In many countries, PES continue to be one of the main points of access to a variety of services for matching people to available jobs. By mediating between labour supply and labour demand, PES help employers and jobseekers adapt to change in the labour market through delivering job-search support, counselling and placement services; labour market information to facilitate informed career and business choices; active labour market policies (ALMPs) and support for improving employability (e.g. training for employment, self-employment or entrepreneurship); and unemployment benefits, other related subsidies or complementary services. The provision of these services responds to international labour standards<sup>2</sup> regarding the right to equal opportunity in employment for everyone

and to equal and non-discriminatory access to related services free of charge for all clients, both jobseekers and employers (**Figure 3**).

PES operate on a universal access basis; however, they often give priority in service provision to population groups in a vulnerable situation in relation to employment and training. Over time, they have gradually become part of the network of key services by which disadvantaged and under-represented groups are helped to stay connected with the labour market. While performing this indispensable function, PES have started to work in association with other government agencies and stakeholders with core mandates related to economic and social rights. These collaborations, however, are occurring to different degrees in different national contexts, depending on the legislative framework, institutional capacity, extent of decentralization of the delivery system, and levels of investment in ALMPs and PES. A worldwide survey found that, of the 73 countries that responded, at least half had expanded the availability of employment services to priority target populations within the period 2014–16.<sup>3</sup> The specific groups mentioned most frequently by respondents as likely to need enhanced support, particularly if they are also low-skilled, were: youth under age 25, people with disabilities, women, long-term unemployed and workers aged over 50 (IDB; OECD; WAPES, 2015).

**Figure 3. Services provided by PES**



Source: Author.

<sup>2</sup> See Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88); Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181).

<sup>3</sup> Respondents included OECD members, countries in the Middle East, North Africa, East Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and countries able to offer only a basic level of job-search support.



## Box 2. Profiling tools for mapping barriers to employment

Profiling has been established as common practice in PES to determine the nature, timing and level of intervention jobseekers need. Systems range from sophisticated statistical tools to structured interviews and checklists used by job counsellors. Profiling systems screen the various factors influencing jobseekers' ability to find employment or start out in self-employment by collecting various types of data:

- demographic information and details about the individual's personal situation – e.g. age, sex, civil status, disability or chronic illness, legal or financial problems;
- formal qualifications, capabilities and employability skills;
- motivation and ability to engage in job search;
- behaviour and aspirations;
- family situation – e.g. number of dependants, caring responsibilities, receipt of welfare aid;
- constraints related to transportation, lack of Internet access or mobile phone.

These systems are instrumental in detecting barriers to employment that might not be obvious or visible. The resulting diagnosis, whether generated automatically by the profiling system or personally by the counsellor, or through a combination of both methods, provides an indication of the type of services that are most likely to smooth the client's transition into employment.

Source: Author, based on Kureková, 2014; Loxha and Morgandi, 2014.

Although many PES, in particular those in developing countries, have not yet attained nationwide coverage,<sup>4</sup> there is evidence that more and more countries are taking concrete steps to coordinate PES with other providers of social services or government agencies with responsibilities related to lifting people out of poverty, extending access to social protection and improving livelihoods. Developing people's ability to engage in paid employment has significant implications for income security and social well-being (ILO, 2017). With this in mind, and with a view to remaining responsive in periods of 'jobless growth' and fiscal stringency, many PES are adding to their portfolios new capability to determine the needs of jobseekers. With the introduction of profiling systems, for example, PES are able to identify at an early stage clients with complex profiles and allocate resources accordingly (box 2).

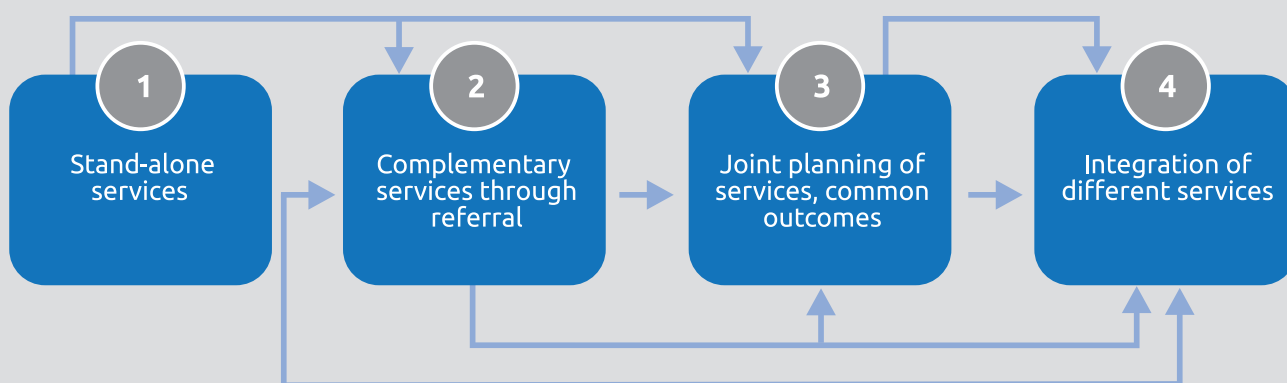
## Existing developments in joined-up employment services

Many PES have progressively increased their links not only with other public sector agencies, but also with the private sector, non-profit-making bodies and non-governmental organizations, in order to leverage capacity, knowledge and networks in such a way as to improve service provision and meet the needs of specific groups facing complex barriers to employment (Powers, 2017). In this context, joining up services can be achieved by a range of means, from linking up specific measures targeted on a particular group (horizontal integration) to constructing a delivery chain (vertical integration) or some combination of both. A similar process can also take place across different tiers and sectors of government, government agencies and providers. These joining-up processes may vary in both form and intensity, evolving incrementally and constituting not so much a linear process

<sup>4</sup> Nationwide coverage is here understood as the availability of publicly funded employment services within reasonable reach to all those who need them.



**Figure 4. Levels of service integration: Possible configurations**



Source: Author, based on Dunleavy, 2010, and Wilson et al., 2015.

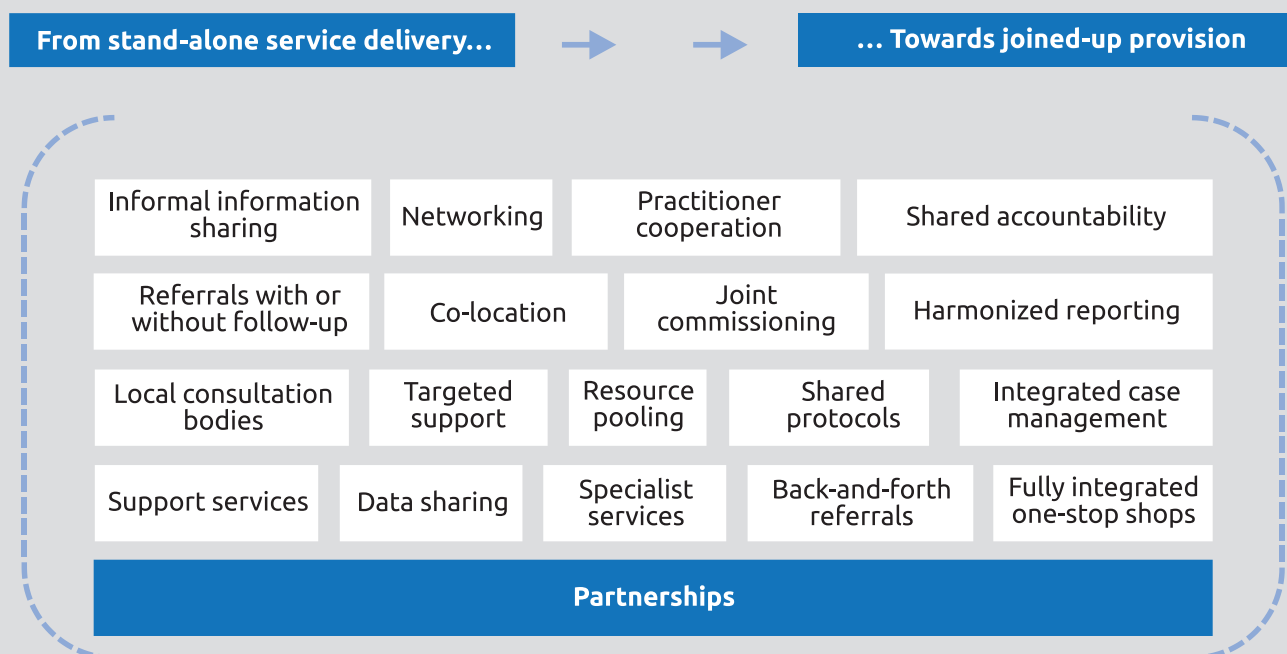
as a *continuum*<sup>5</sup> in service provision by which the specific needs of the target population are addressed. From the point of view of PES, this means providing ease of access to complementary services across different providers to ensure that disadvantaged clients can gain a foothold in the job market and remain active within it over time. The different approaches to joining up, ranging from lower to higher levels of service integration, are summarized schematically in **figure 4**.

In day-to-day practice, PES are constantly making and re-making arrangements with partner providers to address gaps and fragmentation in service provision for target populations. This constantly evolving process is reflected in the variety of arrangements that can be identified with the common aim of connecting services that themselves depend largely on the institutional capacities and resources available at local level. The formulation, maintenance and adaptation of these

arrangements is not an easy task, entailing parallel and simultaneous efforts in both the policy-making and the management dimensions to organize delivery across providers in a variety of sectors, including health, housing, social protection, family and social services.

**Figure 5** shows in schematic form the diversity of existing practice and initiatives for connecting employability services with other social services. These approaches range from information sharing (including by informal means) to highly integrated policy frameworks incorporating joint service design, delivery and accountability. The range of existing practices is shown in the boxes between the outer curved brackets; those towards the left-hand side indicate measures taken with a view to cooperation and possible coordination across agencies for service delivery, while those towards the right-hand side represent a higher level of service integration.

<sup>5</sup> The notion of a continuum is borrowed and adapted from the health literature. "Integration is best seen as a continuum rather than as two extremes of integrated/not integrated. Integration is about the organization of various tasks which need to be performed in order to provide a population with good quality ... services" (WHO, 2008, p. 1).

**Figure 5. Integrated or joined-up services: Current practice**

Source: Author, based on Wilson et al., 2015.

## Joined-up employment services in practice: Case studies

PES are gaining increasing experience with different approaches to joined-up services. The primary aim in moving from stand-alone services by independent providers towards integrated provision for disadvantaged populations is to reduce fragmentation in service delivery to ensure sustained access to the labour market for these groups. To date, few specialized studies and evaluations have been carried out to investigate in depth the mechanics of joining up services and answer policy-related questions about which approach works best for a given target group, or whether such approaches generate efficiency savings. Evidence from low- and middle-income countries is still emerging, and much of it is small-

scale or insufficiently documented. Most recorded experience to date comes from high-income countries where PES are better resourced and existing policy frameworks facilitate alignment of common goals – but even here, understanding is still limited (Wilson et al., 2015). Nevertheless, it is possible to note that existing practices producing positive results share the following core attributes:

- a client-centred approach to build services around clients' needs;
- multidisciplinary teams drawn from various agencies or/and partners;
- ease of access to services by different providers;
- information sharing and individual case management;
- flexibility to adapt services to local conditions;

- prioritized allocation of resources and funds by PES and other agencies;
- long-term orientation towards employment assistance.

The case studies below illustrate how PES in selected countries are coordinating efforts with other service providers to improve access to employment opportunities for people in vulnerable situations. The narrative of the analysis focuses on the elements making joining up a positive experience for clients, rather than on the mechanics (an important topic that merits further exploration). The examples presented here are selected to showcase different approaches to joining up, ranging from lower to higher levels of service integration (see also figure 4 above):<sup>6</sup>

- co-location of and basic referral between stand-alone services;
- complementary services through mainstreamed interventions;
- joint planning of services and common outcomes;
- full integration of different services.

### *Co-location of and basic referral between stand-alone services*

At this level, service provision is planned separately by each provider or service stream, with no sharing of resources except between stand-alone services. Some PES liaising through referral meet with other government agencies and exchange information on activities, plans, programmes and goals. Exchanges occur informally among peers or within the framework of local consultative or coordination bodies with broader policy objectives. The separate service streams, however, retain full budgetary and planning independence (Dunleavy, 2010).

In most cases, no common follow-up protocols are established for client referrals, and this may lead to duplication and inefficiencies rather than complementary services. It should be noted that while trends towards partnering and collaboration are intensifying at all levels of service delivery by government agencies, the division of government

administration still constrains the joining up of services. This is particularly evident in policy environments where departmental and other institutional divisions are rigid and cooperation is not planned and regular. However, it is not confined to low-integration contexts: coordination-related problems can also be found in contexts that have achieved a high level of provider integration. Poor communication between partners, for example, can have a negative impact on the experience of clients, who might feel that service delivery is patchy and inconsistent. Similarly, co-location of various agencies providing services in the same venue might be perceived by clients as positive, even though services are not sharing back-office delivery protocols (box 3).

### **Box 3. First steps to bring together formerly separate services in Ecuador**

As part of the expansion strategy of the PES (Employment Services Network) in Ecuador, the Ministry of Labour opened a new employment centre in the same building as the existing Ecuadorian Centre for Vocational Training in Cuenca, one of the country's three major cities. Sharing premises is intended to bridge gaps in service delivery and encourage clients to use available services successively, from job information, job-search support and the various types of training to placement and the advisory services on legal labour issues provided by the Ministry of Labour's provincial office. The design of the new premises also ensures greater use of services by people with disabilities and employers from the neighbouring industrial park. This more integrated setting for service provision has resulted in an increase in the number of clients served and placed by Cuenca's employment centre. Referral of clients from one service to another is not supported by shared protocols and follow-up of clients remains ad hoc. Clients' experience, however, is positive, given the elimination of the costs and time associated with travelling from the employment centre to other providers. Also, not everyone in Cuenca has reliable access to the Internet or can afford to make the numerous phone calls needed to speak to prospective employers: these services are provided free of charge to clients at the new employment centre.

Source: Based on ILO, 2015a.

<sup>6</sup> This analytical framework is adapted from Dunleavy, 2010; Wilson et al., 2015.

In employment service delivery models such as that in Ecuador, staff referral of clients to other service providers within a shared location eases access to services, but does not provide systematic follow-up on progress made by jobseekers. Clients with a low degree of autonomy in job search would need to be supported by case workers who can help them navigate a way through the different providers. In similar policy environments deeper cooperation might also be hampered by overlapping objectives and competition between institutions for funds and visibility. The limited availability of other social services locally can also hinder the efforts made

through co-location of services for disadvantaged people who need forms of support other than counselling, training and upskilling to effectively participate in employment or entrepreneurship.

### *Joining up services through mainstreamed interventions*

Some countries have adopted a focused approach on target populations by better connecting or joining up existing services and making them more accessible. Mainstreaming the notion of joined-up services may be done through ALMPs or through the

#### **Box 4. Mainstreaming the notion of joining up: An ALMP for disadvantaged youth in Argentina**

In Argentina, the Youth with a Future Programme (Programa Jóvenes con Futuro) is a successful example of cooperation between enterprises, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Protection (MTEySS) and the PES, the Employment Service Network, to deliver a package of services. The programme targets young people aged 18–24 without secondary education, a qualification or relevant work experience. It provides sequenced services beginning with a needs assessment and progressing through counselling services, training in the classroom and at the workplace for up to ten months, or support to complete basic secondary education. Each year the programme serves about 2,000 candidates, of whom 40 per cent are female. The majority of participants (70 per cent) prioritize going back to school. This group is served by the Ministry of Education, which provides scholarships in different areas of education and vocational training.

Among the 30 per cent of participants whose priority is entering the labour market, a third come from households where basic needs are unmet and are consequently at risk of social exclusion. This group, in particular, often faces stigmatization in the job market, reducing even further any opportunities to progress beyond low-skilled positions. The employment centres offer a sequence of targeted services for these participants, including matching their profiles to existing in-service training vacancies offered by partner enterprises practising corporate social responsibility. The PES also organizes orientation workshops where emphasis is placed on learning soft skills and increasing self-confidence. A mentor at the workplace and an identified counsellor at the employment centre follow participants throughout the programme. This particular element has proved of key importance in reassuring the young participants, providing a figure who can offer complementary advice, keep participants motivated and reinforce the conviction that change is possible.

An evaluation carried out in 2010, when the programme was still at the pilot stage, found that it had a dual benefit for participants in helping them both to develop soft skills for work and to gather meaningful work experience in formal jobs. On average, 60 per cent of all those who participate fully in the programme are placed in registered employment. About half of those who came from disadvantaged households achieved satisfactory performance and remained in work with the same enterprise that sponsored their in-service training. Joined-up interventions involving employers also modified existing recruitment practices in favour of social inclusion and reduced the social stigma attached to disadvantaged population groups.

Source: Based on ILO, 2015b; MTEySS, 2017.

establishment of a specialized provider delivering services on behalf of the PES. At this level, there is an explicit recognition that activities of different providers serve complementary functions in helping to improve the employability and job prospects of target populations. Specific steps are taken to sequence service streams; however, the different providers still retain full budgetary and planning independence (Dunleavy, 2010).

A key element of success in mainstreamed interventions driven by PES is the involvement of employers as main partners and the empowerment of target populations as agents of change. In Argentina, for example, packaging services within an ALMP for disadvantaged youth led to changing perceptions of and attitudes towards

groups of jobseekers who had previously suffered stigmatization and discrimination in the labour market (**box 4**).

Ensuring equality of access to services for men and women is another key aspect of commissioning specialized providers to deliver services. One example of packaging services for women who want to enter or re-enter the labour market comes from the Republic of Korea. In this case, mainstreamed joined-up services helped to advance gender equality in the labour market by introducing gender-sensitive changes in the provision of services. **Box 5** provides a brief summary of the approach adopted in Ansan City to respond simultaneously to the needs of women jobseekers in need of individual support and employers in local labour markets.

### **Box 5. Specialized providers integrating services for women in Ansan City, Republic of Korea**

The Occupational Centre for Women (OCW) in Ansan City, Republic of Korea, has been delivering employment services and training to women on behalf of the Ministry of Gender, Equality and Family since 2009. The OCW targets women interested in working who have a range of needs, from those who have interrupted their professional careers for family reasons and who lack reliable access to child care to immigrant women not fluent in the Korean language who are solely occupied in domestic duties in their own households, and women from socially disadvantaged groups without qualifications, many of whom experience other barriers to employment, including health and mobility constraints.

Very often, women who have been out of the active labour force for a long time find it difficult to approach the centre, lacking either information or self-confidence. To remedy this situation, the OCW works with community centres to organize weekly visits to the centres, markets and other public places where women gather, as well as to industrial parks and neighbourhoods that are difficult to reach. Systematic analysis of the project has shown that one-to-one support combining counselling from social workers with career guidance, training and job-search support from employment counsellors is effective in helping women to find jobs.

The OCW also provides advice to employers and enterprises willing to employ women and helps them to organize job interviews with women jobseekers registered at the centre. Customized training programmes are also available to employers working with the OCW to develop the skills sought by local enterprises and address skill shortages in certain sectors. Working with employers ensures that jobseeking efforts and training programmes are in line with the real demand for labour at provincial and local level.

Source: Information provided by the PES of the Republic of Korea.

*Joint planning of services; common outcomes*

At this level, active inter-agency cooperation starts to be a regular practice, to the point where service streams take conscious action to reduce duplication and overlaps. In some instances, protocols are designed jointly to address service gaps through cooperation and regular consultation among practitioners to facilitate clients' access to various services in sequence or simultaneously through focal case managers. This might involve resource pooling and joint commissioning of services; however, such practices are still subject to different annual funding cycles and regulatory processes governing the individual providers (Dunleavy, 2010; Wilson et al., 2015). In such cases, complementarity is a broader objective pursued through inter-agency cooperation with the aim of improving the situation of marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

Joint planning for service integration between the agencies responsible for social welfare and PES is often found in policy measures conceived in pursuit of broader social inclusion objectives involving access to employment. For instance, in 2014 the French Government established social inclusiveness and poverty reduction as a priority goal to be achieved through tackling simultaneously the social and employability barriers of people living at or below the poverty line, whether or not they were receiving social assistance benefits (box 6).

One-stop shops are another mechanism used to bring together formerly separate services. Colombia, for example, has adopted on a large scale a model of employment services that brings together public, private and non-profit-making providers delivering under the same brand name: the Network of Employment Services Providers. This hybrid model has been in operation since May 2013, following a major policy reform introducing labour market policies to protect the unemployed and help those who lose jobs to return to work.

**Box 6. Comprehensive support for jobseekers facing multiple barriers to employment in France**

The professional and social integration of vulnerable people has become a shared priority for the French PES, Pôle emploi, and the general councils (conseils généraux), which are the authorities responsible for overall social well-being and development at regional (département) level. Together, these two providers deliver a comprehensive package of services, known as the accompagnement global, combining social support and employability services to facilitate a sustainable return to work for unemployed people severely affected by precariousness and exclusion, including those living alone and in single-parent families, women, young people, the homeless and recent immigrants from certain other countries. A common protocol for action signed by Pôle emploi and the general councils provides the framework for action and allows for resource pooling; however, budgeting and accountability mechanisms remain separate regulatory processes managed independently by each partner. All existing 101 general councils nationwide have renewed the partnerships with Pôle emploi, ensuring continuity for this modality of service provision for the period 2017–20. The shared protocol is supported by coordinated follow-up of clients and a frequent review of progress by clients to inform necessary adjustments in the long term and prevent duplication.

Joint action is established on the basis of the target groups' needs and the services available at local level rather than as a pre-established package. The first contact of clients with Pôle emploi or the social services run by the general councils is critical to subsequent service provision and for the identification of seven peripheral barriers to employment:

- housing;
- health;
- mobility;
- excessive indebtedness;
- family constraints;
- lack of core work skills;
- administrative or judicial problems.

A joint diagnosis of each client's situation is conducted by an employment counsellor and a social worker to arrive at the best articulation of responses, services offered and intervention modalities. This comprehensive approach to serving clients offers three possible pathways depending on the individual's situation:

**Pathway 1**

*Employability services* led by Pôle emploi. This is appropriate for clients who have a good chance of returning to work with a combination of personalized support, training and the mobilization of specific mechanisms of social aid, such as the active solidarity income (RSA), which provides a minimum level of income to households living in poverty.

**Pathway 2**

*Coordinated follow-up* by a social worker and an employment counsellor. This is appropriate for clients who are not yet ready for full-time employment and need first to address one or more of the seven peripheral barriers.

**Pathway 3**

*Provision of social services exclusively* by the general council. This is appropriate for clients who face complex non-employment-related barriers and need to be referred to a social service provider before benefiting from employability services.

Each employment agency has an employment counsellor fully dedicated to work with vulnerable jobseekers. This individual deals with an average of 70–100 clients, representing about 10 per cent of the total jobseekers registered in an employment office.

An example of this system in operation is the protocol for mutual exchange of services (*échange des services*), supporting integration, job creation and entrepreneurship initiatives, that was concluded in 2015 between the general council and Pôle emploi in three communes of the Paris region (Île de France), Cachan, Arcueil and Gentilly.

For the period April 2015 to September 2017, the three communes reported that 312 people were referred to joint diagnosis, of whom 50 per cent were directed to pathway 2 (coordinated follow-up). Most clients were receiving social aid benefits and most had only low levels of education: 80 per cent had incomplete basic secondary education or less and had been unemployed for longer than 12 months. Women outnumbered men in a ratio of 6: 4, and a majority lived in single-parent families. These populations are extremely fragile: one in three of all beneficiaries were homeless. In spite of these challenging statistics, the investment by both providers and other social partners significantly reduced the 'distance' to the labour market for 50 per cent of the clients in pathway 2: 15 per cent of them obtained indefinite work contracts and 40 per cent short-term contracts; 2.6 per cent became entrepreneurs (mainly in the catering sector); 1.3 per cent followed long-term training (e.g. as care assistants); and 18.4 per cent moved on to mainstream services provided by Pôle emploi. A further 23 per cent quit the programme for reasons such as relocation, chronic illness or unavailability to work.

Source: Information provided by Pôle emploi.

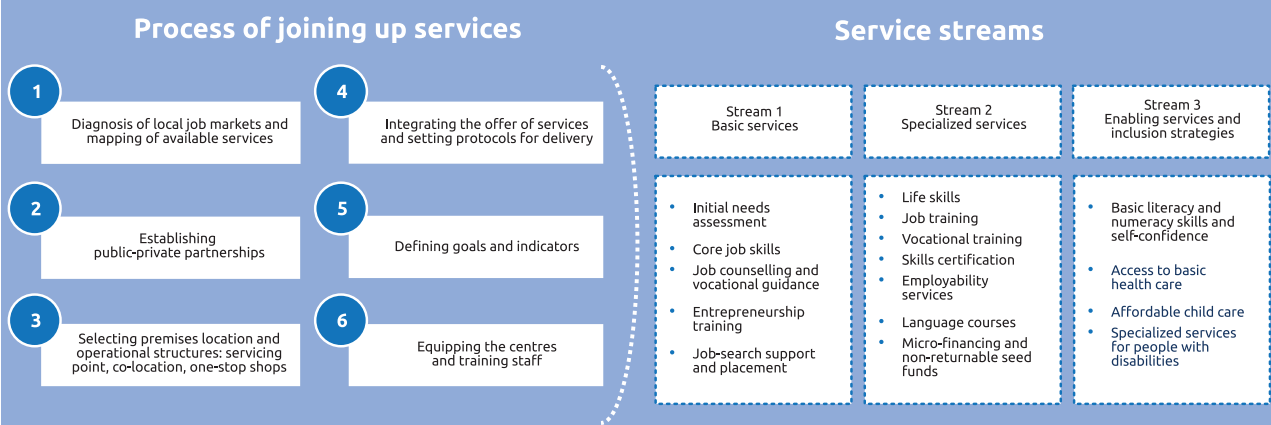


Forging partnerships to find complementarities in service provision offers an opportunity to overcome technical barriers for some providers and to break down information silos for others. One form of cooperation has the objective of offering joined-up services for socially disadvantaged groups and other target populations (box 7).

Box 7. Local employment and entrepreneurship centres in Colombia

In 2013, the Ministry of Labour connected provision of publicly funded employment services with the network of local employment and entrepreneurship centres (Cemprendes). This network is administered by the Department of Social Prosperity (DPS) through a technical working group operating public–private partnerships promoting poverty reduction and social development policies at local level. Cemprendes differ from regular employment centres in that their primary responsibility focuses on poverty alleviation through income-generating activities and promoting the labour market participation of groups vulnerable to poverty (e.g. those of African descent, indigenous groups and forcibly displaced populations).

Cooperation between the DPS, the Network of Employment Services Providers, and other government, private-sector and social partners is based on a search for complementarity in their activities, carried out within different operational structures tailored to specific local circumstances and needs. The most common forms it takes are: (1) co-location of services, with each provider delivering directly to clients either in the same premises as other providers or through referrals; and (2) one-stop shops, requiring the delegation of powers to one provider, usually the DPS, which operates the employment and entrepreneurship centres, to deliver on behalf of associated providers. There is a methodological guide for joining up services, the main steps in which are set out on the left-hand side of the diagram below. Irrespective of the organizational and functional structure of each centre, services are organized in three different streams: basic services, specialized services and inclusion strategies, as set out on the right-hand side of the diagram.



In 2016, three out of ten clients served by these centres were in extreme poverty, and five out of ten were forcibly displaced. In that year there were 18 Cemprendes, some of which were hosted by employment centres. More women used the centres than men, in a proportion of 6: 4. In general, it is estimated that the incomes of people served by the centres increase on average by about 23 per cent.

Source: Avila, 2017; UNDP and DPS, 2014.

### *Joined-up provision through full integration of different services*

This is the highest degree of integration. Here, PES are part of a chain of services provided across agencies and providers responsible for specific service streams. Providers have common outcomes and harmonized reporting frameworks. There is also frequent data sharing or use of linked data systems. Integrated case management and shared budgets for certain service streams ensure a continuity of provision and follow-up of clients (Dunleavy, 2010). Achieving such a degree of integration requires the empowerment of local authorities and the establishment of overarching policy frameworks favouring population groups that are not ready to enter work immediately but for whom work represents an important element in autonomy and self-confidence.

As a result of a policy of devolved powers under the Scotland Act 2016, the Scottish Government has been delivering new employment support services since April 2017. The model adopted, Fair Start Scotland, is scheduled to start in April 2018. It places clients at the centre of the system, with a particular focus on the most fragile populations, adapts to local conditions and is entirely voluntary, meaning that people may participate without the threat of sanctions if they choose not to or withdraw partway through. One programme focusing on the transition to work, Work Able Scotland, targets people with drug abuse problems (see [box 8](#)). A key element enabling the delivery of joined-up services in this context is the existence of an overarching policy framework making the delivery of agreed service levels for alcohol and drug partnerships a priority for integration authorities, operating at the local level, in 2017/18. The package has three main streams for action: (1) prevention; (2) sustained recovery, including through participation in employment; and (3) harm reduction, to minimize damage to communities, families and children. A national review on targets and indicators for health and social care is designed to establish a national measurement framework for the whole system that eventually will also show how many participants in the programme have effectively been re-connected to employment.

### **Main messages: Joining up services around people's needs and local resources**

The available evidence shows that the formation of joined-up services for vulnerable groups facing disadvantage in the labour market – whether through co-location with basic referral services, mainstreamed referral services, joint planning or full integration – is driven by the need of service providers to tackle barriers to employment in parallel to those in other areas, such as education, health and housing. This policy choice is aimed at improving the relevance and quality of services, producing sustainable outcomes and making more efficient use of existing resources. Few studies are available on the results of joining up services in respect of efficiency savings. However, evaluations of specific ALMPs with a strong emphasis on employability services conclude that integrated service delivery is particularly beneficial for populations facing obstacles to full participation in employment.

Preventing people from falling into precariousness and helping those who may experience complex barriers to participation in the labour market are important policy goals in the overall quest to achieve decent work for all and cohesion within societies. To improve service accessibility and responsiveness for vulnerable and disadvantaged people, PES are increasingly trying out different ways of organizing the provision of mainstream services along with targeted support and specialist services delivered by other agencies or partners. Establishing a bridge between welfare providers and employment services systems is expected to have lasting effect in equipping target populations with life skills, core work competencies and meaningful work experience.

Joining up of services by PES and their partners in the country cases examined above was largely made possible by environments in which flexibility and collaboration were valued and fostered. The approaches used to overcome barriers to joining up services involved the following key elements:

## Box 8. The Work Able Scotland Programme

Scotland has high levels of drug and alcohol misuse compared to the rest of the UK, and this problem particularly affects people living in deprived areas. In 2010/11, there were 219 new cases per 100,000 of the Scottish population. Of these, 67 per cent were unemployed and only 12 per cent were in employment or full-time education or training.\* Substance misusers are a marginalized group who often encounter multiple barriers to entering and sustaining employment. These barriers include:

- no or low qualifications, lack of work experience or incomplete work histories;
- low self-confidence, isolation and lack of social networks;
- perceived or actual discrimination from employers and colleagues;
- health and mental health problems;
- homelessness (or risk of);
- criminal background.

The Work Able Scotland Programme falls within an umbrella multi-agency partnership framework, the local alcohol and drug partnerships, led by the Minister for Public Health and Sport. This umbrella provides a commissioning framework and funding for action towards agreed priorities, as well as guidance on performance reporting and measuring progress against set indicators. Intervention through the local partnerships seeks to ensure swift referrals and timely access to the services needed through coordinated work by partner agencies, including those dealing with addictions, health, social work, criminal justice, education and employability.

The Work Able Scotland Programme draws on past experience and has overcome barriers to cooperation between employment services, social services and health providers. In the early 2000s, it was noticed that drug users were less likely than others to contact employment services agencies such as Jobcentre Plus. Specialists working in health and social services also worried that clients' benefits would be withdrawn if they started working or joined training activities. Within this most recent framework, employment, education, access to training and voluntary work are no longer viewed as end-point goals for individuals, but are seen rather as key intermediate goals that will promote longer-term stability and provide additional points of focus for interventions working towards recovery.

This programme operates through organizations that have expertise in working with harder-to-help groups by adding an employability dimension to their work. The programme provides a bridge between social support and provision and the world of work for client groups who are not usually served through mainstream employability services. The emphasis is on raising employability and opening up long-term career planning rather than on moving people quickly into full-time employment. Core elements within this flexible approach include: ensuring that employability forms part of clients' core initial assessment, even if the entry door is not an employment agency; providing individual action plans based on each person's strengths; and offering longer-term support and re-engagement strategies in case of recidivism, such as back-and-forth referrals through the chain of services available at local level.

\* 'Employment' here includes paid and unpaid employment, and support into employment.

Source: Based on Scottish Government, 2017; EIU, 2001.

- *Ensuring that analysis of the multiple barriers affecting each jobseeker's ability to take up a job is part of the client's initial assessment.* This approach is necessary even when the main entry door to service provision is not the PES but another agency or provider working with populations facing disadvantage. Employment should be viewed as a key goal in helping target populations to gain autonomy in the long term.
- *Achieving joined-up services by building on existing programmes and good practice at local level.* Packaging services for target populations in accordance with the availability of human, financial and technical resources at local level ensures that interventions are sustainable and can overcome institutional divisions within and between government agencies.
- *Involving employers in joined-up interventions.* Actively involving employers can influence recruitment practices in favour of social inclusion and reduce the social stigma attached to disadvantaged population groups.
- *Creating collective responsibility among government agencies and providers to develop re-engagement strategies.* These may include, for example, back-and-forth referrals for vulnerable groups in need of enhanced support. Protocols for follow-up are an important element in joined-up interventions to avoid duplication and ensure that clients do not 'fall through the cracks' in the system.
- *Providing local flexibility but within a national framework to enable the alignment of interventions towards overarching goals.* This requires working simultaneously in both the policy-making and the management dimension to organize provision from different providers. Investment in the skills of staff in PES and other providers is also necessary to facilitate referrals through the chain of services across providers, inculcate cultural sensitivity, and keep vulnerable groups motivated and engaged.

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