

An overview of Employment Related Services



1.

DEFINITION

The Employment Related Services (ERS) sector, also known as “Welfare to Work”, is concerned with helping the workless to find, start and stay in employment.

2.

FUNDING BODIES

Although bodies such as local authorities and charities often commission ERS programmes, the principal funders are the **Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)** and the **Skills Funding Agency (SFA)**. As the latter’s name suggests, it funds training-based provision, almost always around the delivery of accredited qualifications.

3.

COMMON JOB ROLES

SFA funded programmes largely require two operational roles, which can be carried out by the same person.

- **Trainer** – responsible for facilitating the classroom-based learning, this person must have (or be working towards) Qualified Teacher Status.
- **Assessor** – works with learners to judge their skills and knowledge against the qualification’s requirements. Assessors are usually required to have (or be working towards) the Assessor Award.

Employability provision (i.e. that funded by DWP) largely requires two or three operational roles, with different providers often blending the roles in different ways. Some providers use all three of these roles, others may mix two roles together to form a single job with a wider remit.

- **Adviser** – works one-to-one with a case load of clients to identify and remove barriers to employment.
- **Job Coach** – delivers training and one-to-one sessions on job searching skills and helps clients to apply for specific vacancies.
- **Employer Engagement** – contacts local/national employers to “sell” ERS programmes and persuade the employers to use the services. Works closely with the Job Coach to match participants to vacancies.



4. CURRENT PROGRAMMES - DWP

DWP currently fund a number of ERS programmes designed to support people into work, including:

4.1

The Work Programme. This is the flagship provision for the long-term unemployed and involves the claimant spending up to two years being supported by a provider to address their barriers to employment and find (as well as stay in) work. Providers are largely paid on results, which in this case means the longer that someone stays in work, the more the provider gets paid. Providers have license to decide what support the person receives (the “black box” approach), rather than DWP prescribing the services. The Work Programme is mandatory for some claimants and voluntary for others; and principally aimed at claimants of **JSA** and **ESA (WRAG)**.

4.2

DWP also fund voluntary provision for claimants to access early in their claim, prior to attending the Work Programme. The **Support Contract** offers a variety of modules to help people into work, including CV building; assistance with applying for jobs; and job search skills training.

4.3

Work Choice. Sits alongside the Work Programme as its equivalent for people with disabilities. Participation is voluntary and, although it shares something of a “payment by results” model with the Work Programme, a lesser proportion of funding is outcome-related and there is a higher degree of prescription – DWP require providers to deliver three modules focussed around pre-employment services, supported employment and in-work assistance.

4.4

Any JSA customers deemed to not be taking their job searching seriously, Job Centre advisers can refer them to a programme called **Mandatory Work Activity**. MWA is a 4-week full-time work placement of community benefit, aimed at instilling work skills and ethics into its participants. It is available for Job Centre advisers to refer people into before and after (but not during) the Work Programme.

4.5

DWP also co-fund provision for **Workless Families**, along with the European Union’s European Social Fund. This programme sees “key workers” identify and work with whole families that have multiple barriers to work, and who may suffer from inter-generational unemployment.

4.6

Lastly, Jobcentre Plus also offer JSA claimants who wish to become self-employed access to the **New Enterprise Allowance**. As well as providing access to a business mentor, this scheme gives JSA claimants the opportunity to secure some low-level funding for their business, and guarantees them some level of benefit while they first start trading. Please note that this is not available to Work Programme participants, and is not delivered by the provider community.



5. CURRENT PROGRAMMES - SFA

The Skills Funding Agency has a remit to fund both workforce development services (e.g. apprenticeships) and **skills training for the unemployed**. The latter is detailed below.

5.1

Pre-Employment Training via the Adult Skills Budget. Colleges and private training providers are allocated Adult Skills Budget funding each year (August to July). These providers may choose to use some of this funding to deliver accredited skills training to JSA and ESA (WRAG) claimants, whether or not they are on the Work Programme (this is currently the only other provision that Work Programme customers can also access). For a qualification to be funded, it must be listed as such on the Learning Aim Reference Application website (gateway.imservices.org.uk/sites/LARA/) and providers can deliver either whole qualifications (to any JSA/ESA (WRAG) claimant) or just units of a qualification (19+ claimants only).

5.2

Skills Support for the Unemployed.

Co-financed by the European Social Fund, SSU is similar to the above, but with greater freedoms as to which qualifications can be delivered. It is due to end in 2015.

5.3

Skills Support for Redundancy. Also co-financed by the European Social Fund, this provision is the same as SSU, but targets people at threat of redundancy, on notice of redundancy or newly redundant. Given this criteria, it differs from SSU as people in work (but likely to be made redundant) can access it. It is also due to end in 2015.

6. UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Much of the provision contracted by DWP and the SFA has its participant eligibility driven by the type of benefits that they claim

There are three main benefit groups, with one being further divided into two sub-groups:

6.1 Jobseekers' Allowance

JSA is the principle benefit for unemployed people aged 18+ who are actively looking for work.

6.2 Employment and Support Allowance

ESA has replaced Incapacity Benefit for people out of work due to a health condition.

All new claimants are paid ESA, and existing Incapacity Benefit claimants are being migrated across to it.

Within 3 months of somebody starting to claim ESA, they undergo a "Work Capability Assessment" to determine what they can do, and how realistic a goal employment is, as a result of this assessment, they are placed into one of two groups:

- I *ESA Work Related Activity Group (ESA WRAG) - the person could find and stay in work, with the right support.*
- II *ESA Support Group – the person's health condition makes work an unrealistic proposition.*

6.3 Disability Living Allowance

Change is nothing new, but the pace and enormity of change that businesses are facing today can make it difficult to keep everyone and everything moving ahead together. Parkhouse Bell Consultancy helps organisations and their people adjust to change, whether it is a technology system that requires training, processes that need integrating into existing work habits, or a strategic direction that depends on the understanding and support of stakeholders.

6.4 New Benefits

Finally, it is worth noting that there is a huge benefit overhaul underway. As well as changes to housing benefit and council tax relief, there will be two new benefits introduced in 2013 that will replace some of those listed above.

- I *From October 2013, all new claimants of income-related benefits will instead be paid **Universal Credit**, which combines JSA/ESA, housing benefit, child tax credit, working tax credit, income support and ESA into a single universal payment. From April 2014 a 4-year exercise will begin to move existing claimants of income-related benefits onto UC as well.*
- II *From April 2013 **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** will start to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA). All claimants will have to undergo a medical check to transfer across and there will be the potential to repeat the checks at intervals.*