

# Employment Related Services Association

## Overview: Government Disability and Health Employment Strategy – the discussion so far

### Introduction

The [Government's Disability and Health Employment Strategy](#) was released on the 17 December 2013. This paper will be followed by a government delivery paper later in the year, which will build on feedback to this initial strategy document.

### Overview

The new strategy focusses on creating improved pathways for those with disabilities and long term health conditions. The approach builds on the work of the DWP task and finish group, on which ERSA sat, and suggests creating a day one 'gateway', individualising support and improving signposting it also refers to co-commissioning with other departments and closer working and support for employers.

The strategy emphasises building the evidence base and suggests that more local projects will be piloted, with a view to then applying those which are successful on a national basis. In line with the most recent WCA review there is also a big focus on support for those with mental health issues.

### Proposals of particular of interest

- Creation of a 'gateway' to advise and signpost those with disabilities and long term conditions from the first day they are unemployed
- Expansion of the Access to Work scheme
- Creation of an 'Employer One Stop Shop' to engage with and inform employers
- Introducing Knowledge Toolkits to support and signpost young people with disabilities and long term conditions
- Specialist advisors, taking a whole life approach to help develop individualised action plans
- Establishing an 'Information Portal' to provide links to information about disability recruitment, retention and progression
- Greater use of peer support
- Considering options for improving support to ESA and ESA WRAG claimants
- Increasing support for self-employment
- Taking forward suggestions of the Mental Health and Employment Task and Finish Group

### Asks for ERSA members

ERSA asks for members to consider particularly the following questions:

1. How can we identify the hardest to help? What are the key characteristics we should be looking for?
2. How do we define and measure outcomes – what results should we pay for? What milestones could we develop? How should we define progression – increase in hours / increase in earnings? What incentives should be offered to reward progression?
3. Does national commissioning fit alongside a more integrated local/specialist offer?
4. Payment by results – how far should we go for Specialist Support?

5. How much should a 'black box' approach should be used to achieve outcomes? Should we be more prescriptive?
  6. How do we evolve and improve – building on new evidence and best practice?
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## **Overview of all Recommendations**

### **Access to Work**

- Extending the remit of Access to Work to support disabled people and people with health conditions undertaking a wider range of work experience, including work trials.
- Introducing a series of Access to Work peer support projects and peer support job collectives.
- Giving employers the ability to apply to Access to Work on behalf of their employees who are disabled or have a health condition (with that employee's consent).

### **The Employer One Stop Shop**

- DWP will design a 'One Stop Shop' service, accessible via a single, interactive website and a telephone service to support employers in employing disabled people and people with health conditions.

### **The role of employers**

- DWP are seeking to reform the Disability Symbol, including: wider publicity of the scheme; different levels of accreditation; a more rigorous assessment process; a feedback mechanism for employees; and better information and guidance.

### **Young people**

- Use of tailored Knowledge Packs to provide positive messaging and contain a series of links and helpful information to assist six key audiences including young disabled people, college staff and employment support advisers.
- Accessible work experience through DPULOs and impairment charities and promoting Saturday and holiday work to employers as part of the Disability Confident campaign.

### **The new Gateway**

- The Gateway will aim to identify and direct individuals at the earliest possible opportunity to the right type of support that will help them back into work. This approach will be delivered alongside the introduction of Universal Credit (UC).
- The first step will be to develop an understanding of an individual's abilities including their skills and work history. Following this the individual and their adviser will carry out a more detailed assessment to identify the individual's personalised support requirements. For both the mainstream and the specialist offer, these discussions will look at a claimant's capability and personal circumstances and develop a personalised employment plan.

### **Reformed specialist offer**

- Following referral to the specialist offer, each individual will be supported by a specialist adviser to identify their needs and support requirements. Together, they will develop an employment plan which takes a 'whole-life' approach.
- Government will develop an Information Portal that provides a single source for updated and accurate information on the employment support available for disabled people.

### **Mainstream support**

- Government will look at improving the ESA regime; for example, by actively engage with claimants prior to week 14 of their claim.
- Over the next 12 to 18 months piloting a range of activity to help inform understanding around supporting more ESA WRAG claimants back into work
- Supporting self-employment through more visible self-employed and entrepreneurial disabled role models and mentoring.
- Jobcentre Plus Districts forging closer links with Work Programme providers to deliver a better experience for claimants.
- The Recovery Works pilot, strengthening financial incentives for Work Programme providers to support people who are in treatment for drug and alcohol dependency.

### **Mental Health**

- Taking forward the following suggestions of the Mental Health and Employment Task and Finish Group
- Considering how the Clinical Commissioning Group Outcomes Indicator Set on employment can be used to focus attention on employment outcomes as a legitimate health goal.
- Working with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to review the evidence and efficacy of models of Supported Employment.
- Working with healthcare bodies to improve the education of frontline health and employment professionals.