



Submission

Future Employment Services

3 August 2018

Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health (Orygen) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science discussion paper, *The next generation of employment services*.

About Orygen

Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health is the world's leading research and knowledge translation organisation focusing on mental ill-health in young people. At Orygen, our leadership and staff work to deliver cutting-edge research, policy development, innovative clinical services, and evidence-based training and education to ensure that there is continuous improvement in the treatments and care provided to young people experiencing mental ill-health.

Introduction

This submission addresses a number of questions identified in the discussion paper from the perspective of developing and delivering optimal employment support services for young people experiencing mental ill-health.

There are many opportunities to be innovative in how employment support services are delivered for young people. Innovations need to be built on the available and emerging evidence-base of what works for young people, including those experiencing mental ill-health or other disadvantages.

2.1 What other economic, social or labour market trends are likely to affect employment services in the future?

There are three trends related to employment and education that are likely to affect employment services in the future. These are advances in technology, the 'Gig' economy and changes to education policy.

- Advances in technology such as automation and artificial intelligence that may reduce the number of entry-level jobs available for young people.
- The 'Gig' economy (Uber Eats, Deliveroo, Airtasker etc.) is becoming more prevalent with many young people working in these types of jobs. More research is required to understand the mid- and long-term employment outcomes from this form of work for young people to inform its suitability as an option for employment services.

- Changes to education policy (e.g. the Victorian government is funding selected free VET courses in 2019). Many job seekers may choose to opt out of employment services to enrol in free study. The possibility for employment services to support these job seekers, particularly young people, across both education and employment placements should be explored. Currently the Commonwealth manages employment services and state and territory governments manage education but many young people require ongoing support in both areas, with their studies, part-time work and then ongoing career development. Rather than separate functions, employment services should be resourced to support job seekers throughout this period of transition.

3.1 What services should be available to the job seekers who are disadvantaged in the labour market to find work and how can they be delivered in a culturally competent way?

Employment support services should use evidence-based models of employment support in the delivery of job services to disadvantaged job seekers. Programs should use an individualised approach and be flexible to suit the specific labour market and needs of the community or cohort they seek to support. The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model for job seekers with an experience of mental illness (currently being trialled and discussed further in response to question 3.3) could be, with appropriate cultural advice adopted and trialled for specific cultural contexts and extended to include supported educational pathways in the transition through to employment

- Co-design principles should be used when developing services for specific cohorts of job seekers.
- Embedding culturally aware peer workers or mentors may improve engagement in employment services.

Youth vocational peer workers

Orygen has embedded IPS in their headspace clinical services (located in north-west Melbourne) and enhanced this model through the inclusion of youth vocational peer workers. Youth vocational peer workers work collaboratively with the vocational specialists to provide emotional and social support to others. They do this from the perspective of a peer with lived experience of mental ill-health, incorporating their own experiences of work and/or study.

In the employment context, this can include supports such as talking about disclosing their mental health with employers or developing strategies with young people to manage their mental health when balancing work and study.

Vocational peer support can include:

- Promoting the vocational program to young people and clinical staff.
- Assisting young people to attend Centrelink appointments, job interviews and other practical activities that support engagement in work or study.
- Coordinating and co-facilitating vocationally focused groups.
- Providing pre-employment and post-placement support from a peer perspective.

Benefits of vocational peer support:

- Can increase young people's engagement and participation in vocational programs and other supports offered by the clinical service.
- Creates an entry-level career opportunity for young people interested in working in the mental health sector.

- Assists staff in understanding specific issues faced by their client group and therefore provide more individualised and targeted vocational supports.

3.2 What incentives might be useful to assist job seekers who are disadvantaged in the labour market to find work?

Providing funded training courses and financial support to access professional career advice would assist job seekers who are disadvantaged in the labour market. This funded support could be provided in a model similar to how NDIS funding is managed. Such an approach would empower a young person seeking work providing an incentive to be engaged with the support available.

The current system seems to vary greatly depending on the employment service used, with many service users not aware of what funding is available and/or not able to access this funding freely to enhance their job search progress. Spending should be able to be used by the job seeker to address anything they perceive as vocational barriers (e.g. driving lessons, short courses, vocational training or work clothing etc.).

Independent career practitioners could be an option to ensure job seekers were spending allocated funding on training and courses aligned to their career objectives. Currently many employment services are referring job seekers to in-house job search training courses or courses that are not aligned to the job seekers career aspirations but rather fit to the jobs currently available at that job service, for example forklift tickets or meat processing courses.

3.3 Are enhanced services best delivered through a single unified service, or a model that includes specialist service provision directed at particular cohorts of job seekers, as well as core service?

Orygen is currently trialling a specialist employment service for young people experiencing mental ill-health. The IPS model supports people with severe mental health difficulties into employment and involves intensive, individualised support, a rapid job search followed by placement into paid employment, and time-unlimited support for both the employee and the employer.

The IPS model is the most evidence-based and effective form of employment support for people experiencing serious mental illness. Twenty-four randomised controlled trials of IPS worldwide have shown a significant improvement in vocational outcomes for clients, including the first IPS trial undertaken with a youth cohort at Orygen Youth Health in Melbourne. On the strength of this evidence, the Australian Government funded a three-year national trial of the IPS model in 14 headspace centres across the country.

3.4 How could the quality of services job seekers receive from their employment services consultant be improved?

Orygen recommends minimum standards of training, supervision and ongoing professional development for career/vocational specialists working with people with a disability or mental health issue. Employment services staff should be required to have a minimum level of training in career development and introductory mental health training.

Career practitioners need to meet minimum requirements for eligibility to the Career Development Association of Australia. Developing a culture in employment service staff that encourages professional development, lifelong learning and professionalisation of the industry could have

multiple benefits to retaining skilled staff, increasing user engagement with services and reducing costs associated with referral to unsuitable training or employment opportunities.

Orygen recommends scholarships are made available to fund employment services staff to complete the Graduate Certificate in Career Development.

4.1 What online tools and assistance should be included to better meet the needs of particular user groups, including job seekers and potential employers? Which are the most important features that are required?

Orygen has is currently trialling a trial of a moderated online vocational platform (YOTES) to provide additional online career support, and peer support, to young people with mental ill- health via a web-based application. Many of the young people participating in the YOTES trial are also active or past participants in Orygen's IPS vocational programs.

YOTES is designed to support young people to access expert career advice, connect with peers, navigate career options and build career confidence. A team of online career specialists and youth peer workers assist users through social networking, group facilitation and interactive activities available on the system.

Benefits of the YOTES platform include:

- able to reach people in remote and regional areas or those with disabilities or illnesses that can make travelling to in-person supports difficult
- connects young people with other young people in a safe and supportive online setting to share their experiences of gaining work
- career management and job seeking skills can be delivered at a pace suited to a young person and they can track their progress
- support for young people at any stage of their career journey
- track their progress in the system.

4.2 Is there a group of users that the online service should target?

Young people are the highest users of social media and technology so creating engaging online services targeted at supporting young people to reach their career objectives is paramount. Online supports that are evidence-based and developed with young people's input (co-design principles) will ensure that online services developed for this group are accessible and acceptable, maximising the potential benefits and employment outcomes.

Orygen would recommend that online services be developed for use locally so that information and job posts are relevant to that particular community over a national; one size fits all online system.

5.2 How can future employment services add value to an employer's recruitment process?

Employment services could add value to an employer's offering to provide post placement support by working with employers to ensure their needs are met. Providing external specialists can support recruitment processes and ongoing support for employers in employing job seekers who experience mental health challenges. For example; engage mental health services to provide employer/employees with mental health first aid training.

5.5 What incentives (financial or otherwise) would help employers overcome any perceived risks associated with hiring disadvantaged job seekers? How should these operate?

Training should be available to employers and their employees to develop an understanding of some of the barriers that may be experienced from hiring disadvantaged job seekers. Training should be funded via the employment service but facilitated by external organisations that specialise in the area of disadvantage. For example; if a job seeker experiences autism, bring in training provided by specialist autism services.

6.2 Are there other options for accurately assessing job seekers needs that should be considered?

Assessments should include gathering information from the job seeker and, with their permission, medical specialists before a job seeker is referred to the employment service. If possible a case conferences with these specialists should be facilitated with Centrelink staff and the job seeker to create an agreed vocational support plan that will inform employment services to be provided for them.

6.3 What is the best approach to assessing a job seeker's digital literacy?

Orygen recommends the development of a basic online test for completion when registering for employment support services. Job seekers that score lower on testing could be flagged for more intensive in-person employment support to ensure they are not missing out on job opportunities through their lack of digital literacy.

7.1 Which of the activation options (points based or time based) would best support job seekers who largely self-service?

Both options have merit and suitability may depend on the cohort of job seeker. Young people may prefer a point-based system, as there could be potential to use gamification in employment service delivery to increase engagement in job seeking whereas some cohorts may prefer a time based option if they have more challenges to overcome before being 'job ready'.

It would be preferable to offer job seekers a choice in either based on their own individual need.

7.3 In addition to compliance actions for job seekers who do not meet requirements, could the activation framework also recognise job seekers who regularly exceed requirements? If so, how could this operate in practice?

Yes, if job seekers that are exceeding requirements could be incentivised with additional funding to the job seeker's training fund (mentioned in response to question 3.2).

8.2 How could local stakeholders be encouraged to identify priorities, engage with providers and implement local employment solutions?

Employment services could engage better with schools, LLEN's, education providers and local councils to better understand the training needs and local labour market. If the online system developed for use in employment services was localised and built with community consultation, this would enable employment services and job seekers to better understand the opportunities available in their local area.

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