



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
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TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

## **Evidence Brief**

# **Products and services to move people into work**

**2013**

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# 2013 Evidence Brief: Products and services to move people into work

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## Purpose

This report provides a general overview of the current international evidence on employment assistance for people receiving income support.

Across OECD countries there has been a greater use of conditionality and financial incentives and a move towards more personalised support services (OECD, 2010; Gregg, 2008).

## Summary

Interpretation of international evidence has to be done with care. The impact of programmes and services depends not only on who they are designed for and operated by, but also on the context within which they operate. Contextual factors include the labour market condition at the time of the evaluation, the broader social and institutional frameworks (eg employment law, child care services, health systems) as well as social and cultural norms or attitudes to work life balance.

## Summary table

Intervention	
Work obligations	Work obligations have been shown to increase benefit exits and, in some cases, employment and earnings outcomes. They have been particularly effective for sole parents.
Activation measures	Appear to reduce the time benefit recipients spend on benefit and are sensitive to labour market changes.
Sanctions	The threat of sanctions increases benefit exits as much as the imposition of a sanction. Increased monitoring of job search behaviour and less severe sanctions are effective in generating incentives to leave unemployment benefits.  Individual circumstances must be taken into account when implementing sanctions.
Case management	The impact of case management as an activity in itself is difficult to isolate. However, evidence indicates that case managers are critical to the success of interventions.  There is good evidence that <b>intensive case management</b> is beneficial for those disadvantaged in the labour market (eg sole parents, people with health or disability problems). The quality and stability of personal relationships with case managers appears to be a key parameter for successful return to work.
Job search assistance (JSA)	Evidence on the impact of JSA is mixed.  This is best targeted at those closer to the labour market. It is unlikely to help benefit recipients who lack the skills needed by the employers.
Financial incentives and assistance	Financial incentives can be effective in encouraging people to take up work and maintain it. The impact depends crucially on design features of the schemes, in particular the amount, timing and duration of the payment. Earning supplements have larger effects when combined with employment services.  They are best targeted at groups with low employment rates, especially sole

	parents and younger incapacity benefit recipients.
Childcare	<p><b>Childcare subsidies</b> are most effective in promoting employment if they are work-tested, 'sizable', targeted at parents most disadvantaged in the labour market and accompanied by other policies that assist the choices that parents make about paid employment and childcare.</p> <p><b>Subsidies for childcare providers</b> should be made towards capital investment, providers in deprived and/or scarcely populated areas and/or concerning the provision of services to children with special needs.</p>
Training	<p>There is mixed evidence for the effectiveness of training programmes. Appropriately designed training programmes can increase employment and employment quality by giving participants the skills they need to access better jobs. Examples include: training for qualifications which are valued and recognised by employers, training for pre-determined employment programmes, and training with an on-the-job component and strong links with local employers. Formal education or training shows promise in the longer term, especially for sole parents.</p> <p>Training programmes are best targeted at those closer to the labour market.</p>
Work experience/ work confidence	<p>There is no international evidence on the effectiveness of <b>work confidence seminars</b>. International evidence on subsidised <b>work experience programmes</b> is limited and mixed. <b>Work-for-the-dole programmes</b> are not effective.</p> <p>MDRC (MDRC.org) recommend testing enhanced models of subsidised jobs. These programmes are typically targeted at disadvantaged benefit recipients.</p>
Wage subsidies	Appropriately targeted and designed wage subsidy programmes are effective.
Multi-component programmes	<p>The evidence of what works to move the most disadvantaged benefit recipients into employment is more limited. Few interventions have been found to be effective.</p> <p>However, there is emerging evidence that models which integrate employment services and treatment services may be more promising than either strategy alone, especially for people with disabilities and behavioural health problems.</p> <p>Given the cost of these programmes they are best targeted at the most disadvantaged benefit recipients.</p>

## General points

Benefit recipients are a heterogeneous group. There are few interventions that are successful for all in this population, underscoring the need for a variety of approaches. Interventions need to be well implemented and the design needs to allow service providers to be responsive and flexible in meeting the individual needs of benefit recipients in order to move them into work (Hasluck & Green, 2007).

Labour markets and employers have an impact on the likelihood of benefit recipients moving into work (eg local job availability, lack of suitable work or arrangements, employer discrimination). Increasing employment among people with greater barriers to employment is difficult when levels of unemployment are high as there is greater competition from more able jobseekers. In addition, these groups require more supports which could involve significantly greater costs compared with other groups.

It is useful to look at interventions for benefit recipients within a vocational rehabilitation framework, the key principles of which are to:

- listen to and understand the person in their context
- work with the person to plan and deliver an agreed pathway to moving into work, understanding that the process may not be linear
- mobilise supports and services to help the person to achieve an everyday life
- intervene early starting with simple, low-intensity, low-cost interventions (Waddell et al., 2008; Waddell & Aylward, 2010).

Benefit recipients receiving support or services to move into work is only part of the solution. Increasing cooperation and promoting shared goals plays an important part in moving people into sustainable employment. For example, the OECD (2010) concluded that the single most important element for far-reaching change in disability policy and key to success is to strengthen the financial incentives for all those involved (eg benefit recipients, employers, medical practitioners and welfare agencies<sup>1</sup>) and to promote the same objective – increase employment opportunities for individuals with disability. This approach could apply to all groups of benefit recipients. Interventions such as case management, training and employment programmes, and childcare assistance can be applied within this context.

## **Work obligations and activation measures**

There has been a move away from the use of passive measures towards active measures (eg work obligations, activation measures) across OECD countries.

### **Work obligations**

The introduction of work obligations has been shown to increase benefit exits and, in some cases, employment and earnings outcomes. For sole parents work obligations result in modest increases in employment and earnings, and a modest reduction in benefit payments.

In randomised trials of policies affecting sole parent benefit recipients in the United States implemented in the 1990s, work obligations were applied to benefit recipients with children as young as one. Work obligations were found to:

- lift employment and lower benefit receipt, but the scale of impact varied widely and tended to be greatest in the context of strong labour demand<sup>2</sup> (Greenburg et al., 2005; Grogger & Karoly, 2005), and where childcare was provided as part of the intervention (Gorey, 2009)
- increase income, but only so long as adequate in-work financial assistance was available (Hamilton, 2002)
- have few effects on marriage, subsequent fertility or living arrangements of participants (Gennetian & Knox, 2003; Hamilton, 2002)
- have some positive effects on younger children, but only where income was raised and use of centre-based care was increased (Grogger & Karoly, 2005)

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<sup>1</sup> For example, within the benefit system, what incentives/disincentives to participate in work exist? Are there benefit traps? Do benefit recipients have difficulty understanding and dealing with the benefits system? How available and effective are employment services?

<sup>2</sup> The trials took place in a period of economic expansion.

- have some unintended negative effects on outcomes for adolescent children (including adverse effects on educational attainment and behaviour), even where there was an increase in family income (Grogger & Karoly, 2005)
- lower the incidence of physical domestic abuse, in some studies (Hamilton, 2002).

Norway introduced part-time work requirements for sole mothers with a youngest child aged three years or over in 1998, as part of a wider welfare reform package targeted at this cohort. A 2009 study analysing the reform's impact found that it was successful in increasing the labour force participation and disposable income of new sole mothers, that is, mothers who became sole parents after the reform (Mogstad & Pronzato, 2009). However, for existing sole mothers the study found the reform decreased disposable income and increased poverty because a sizeable group of sole parents were unable to offset the loss of out-of-work welfare benefits with gains in earnings. This suggests that the desired effects of welfare reform were associated with the side-effects of income loss and increased poverty among a substantial number of sole mothers with employment barriers.

More recently in July 2007, the Australian 'Welfare to Work' reforms introduced part-time work obligations for sole parent benefit recipients with a youngest child aged seven or over. Once the child is eight, the sole parent is no longer eligible for Single Parent Payment (SPP) and has to claim the Newstart Allowance (NSA) instead, which is a lesser payment with part-time work obligations. The reforms took place during a period of economic expansion, and are estimated to have significantly increased employment and reduced benefit receipt in their first year of operation (DEEWR, 2008). The impacts appear to have been larger for partnered parents than sole parents (Fok & McVicar, 2013).

The United Kingdom introduced Lone Parent Obligations (LPO) in stages from November 2008. Findings on the impact of the LPOs are not yet available.<sup>3</sup>

Applying overseas findings to New Zealand is uncertain given differences in childcare settings, in-work benefits, labour market and benefit recipient base, and given the nature of the work obligations introduced by Future Focus and more recent welfare reforms.

### **Activation measures**

In the context of work obligations, public employment service (PES) agencies such as Work and Income can introduce interventions to ensure benefit recipients are actively engaged in work search. In New Zealand, the introduction of the 52-week unemployment benefit (UB) reapplication was a good example of the large impact low-cost interventions can have on benefit recipients with full-time work obligations.

A number of studies have found that comparatively short job search programmes or compulsory interviews reduce the time benefit recipients spend on welfare or Unemployment Insurance in the US (Benus, Joesch, Johnson & Klepinger, 1997; Black, Smith, Berger & Noel, 2003), the UK (Dolton & O'Neill, 1997), Denmark (Toomet, 2008) and Australia (Borland & Tseng, 2003). However, an Australian study (Borland & Tseng, 2003) found that impacts are sensitive to local labour demand and the strategy had lower impacts in areas with higher unemployment rates.

Participating in planning to return to work also appears to reduce the time jobseekers are on benefit in the UK (Corcoran, 2002) and Ireland (OECD, 2005). However, some care needs to be taken when interpreting the impacts. Particularly large impacts may arise through subsequent assistance received by participants and not solely through activation by the planning process (eg those observed in the UK Restart Programme) (Dolton & O'Neill, 1997).

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<sup>3</sup>For early findings on experiences of the implementation see Gloster et al. (2010).

### **Impacts often occur before participation**

The impact of these programmes is largely felt because of the obligation to participate. People often exit benefit **before** starting the programme (through a referral or compliance effect). On the other hand, there is less evidence that participating in the compulsory activities themselves improves participants' employment outcomes (Black et al., 2003; Dolton & O'Neill, 1997; OECD, 2005).

### **Impacts may be short term and exits are not always into employment**

There is growing international evidence from studies tracking the longer-term impacts of activation measures that the early large impacts of activation programmes decrease over time (OECD, 2005). In several US welfare-to-work evaluations the initially high impact of job search-focused programmes decreased over time, while the impact of training plus job search showed better long-term results. However, these studies still conclude that work-first approaches are more cost-effective (Greenberg, Deitch & Hamilton, 2009).

Activation strategies can encourage people to leave benefit, but not necessarily into paid employment (Schoeni & Blank, 2000). Without in-work financial assistance, work testing does not increase incomes for sole parents. In the medium term, programmes that are most effective in increasing employment appear to be those which provide a mix of initial activities tailored to individual needs, such as immediate job search or short-term education or training, with a strong emphasis on the need to find work<sup>4</sup>.

### **Do activation measures alter the quality of jobs?**

Research is increasingly focused on how reductions in time spent looking for work may alter the quality of work entered into by those targeted by activation measures. At present, evidence is mixed, with several studies reporting no impact on job quality (Gaure, Røed & Westlie, 2008; van den Berg, Bergemann & Caliendo, 2008), while others report negative impacts (OECD, 2005). Differences may in part reflect the degree of activation. Increasing the strength of activation may result in faster exits at the expense of job suitability. Quality of job matching is important as it not only affects the activated benefit recipient, but also reduces the availability of suitable matches for other jobseekers. The worst case would be having activation measures that move higher-skilled jobseekers into low-skilled jobs potentially generating skill shortages and limiting job openings for low-skilled jobseekers.

### **Sanctions<sup>5</sup>**

Benefit sanctions are designed to counter the tendency for people to remain on unemployment benefits for longer than is necessary. Sanctions influence people on unemployment benefits in two ways. Firstly, they can increase job search intensity, and secondly, they can make the unemployed lower their expectations about which job offers they will accept (ie willing to accept lower paid jobs). They are typically coupled with work obligations.

The evidence indicates that:

- The threat of sanctions increases benefit exits as much as the imposition of a sanction.
- Increased monitoring of job search behaviour and less severe sanctions are effective in generating incentives to leave unemployment benefits.

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<sup>4</sup> See Future Focus evidence brief: part-time work testing for sole parents (file ref A4668802).

<sup>5</sup> Refer to 2010 Future Focus Evidence Brief: Sanctions Regimes (Obj ID A4673502), 2010 Future Focus Evidence Brief: Part-time Work Testing for Sole Parents (file ref A4668802), Evidence brief: The Quantitative Impact of Work Obligations (file ref A6013105) and 2012 Evidence Brief – Substance Abuse and Misuse and Links with Welfare Receipt (file ref A5946567)

- More severe sanctions, such as full reductions in unemployment benefits, increase job search behaviour and benefit exits as more benefit recipients accept substantially lower paid jobs.
- Individual circumstances must be taken into account when implementing sanctions. In general, sanctioned recipients are more likely to be in a disadvantaged position than non-sanctioned recipients. Deteriorating living standards for children can result when benefit reductions are wrongly applied. Sanctioned individuals who do not have the requisite skills for employment and who are not able to undertake training to improve these skills are more likely to return to benefit and less likely to be employed. Additionally, benefit recipients with a limited education, health problems and a poor work history are at increased risk of being sanctioned.

## Case management

### What is case management?

The basic functions within any case management model are assessment of benefit recipient needs, development of a comprehensive service plan, arranging for services to be delivered, evaluating and following up, and advocating for service improvements. However, there is still no consensus among users of case management regarding its components and appropriate application.

There is no agreement on what the ideal size of a case manager's caseload should be but there is evidence that having larger caseloads can negatively impact on the ability of case managers to work effectively with benefit recipients<sup>6</sup> (King, 2009; Perkins, 2007).

The impact of case management as an activity in itself is difficult to isolate. Case management occurs within a context of greater or lesser expectations of a benefit recipient to exit benefit and of the case manager to facilitate access to range of services not directly related to employment. The activities that constitute 'case management' are in many ways inseparable from their wider context.

However, evaluation evidence from the UK indicates that case managers are critical to the success or otherwise of interventions. For the most disadvantaged benefit recipients, research suggests that the circumstances and context of engagement between case manager and benefit recipient is as important as (if not more than) the specificities of types of provision. The quality and stability of benefit recipients' personal relationship with case managers appears to be a key parameter for successful movement into work. Evidence suggests that the greater the flexibility given to case managers, the better they are able to fulfil their role and to meet the specific needs of their clients (Hasluck & Green, 2007).

### Examples of effective case management

Intensive case management can be effective for benefit recipients who are sole parents or have a health problem or disability. For example:

- There is good evidence that access to a specialist case manager<sup>7</sup> speeds transitions from benefit to work for sole parents (eg COMPASS (NZ) and the New Deal for Lone Parents (UK)).
- There is moderate evidence that personal advice and support, incorporating case management approaches, is an effective method of delivering employment services to benefit recipients with

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<sup>6</sup> A German study looking at the impact of lower caseloads found that they resulted in a decrease in the rate and duration of local unemployment and a higher re-employment rate. Cost-benefit calculations suggested that the costs from employing additional case managers were offset by the savings from decreased benefit expenditures after a period of about 10 months (Hainmueller et al., 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Specialist case managers in facilitation roles can work with benefit recipients to develop individualised plans, advise on in-work financial incentives, act as a contact point for information, link benefit recipients with specialist assessments and services (eg mental health, family violence), and coordinate service provision (eg training courses, childcare).



a disability or chronic illness (Hanson et al., 2006, Waddell et al., 2008). These appear to be more effective for benefit recipients closer to the labour market. Examples of effective case management interventions for those on benefit for health and/or disability reasons include: New Deal for Disabled People (UK), Pathways to Work<sup>8</sup> (UK), Case management interview<sup>9</sup> (Denmark).

For long-term benefit recipients, especially those with complex needs, case management alone may not be sufficient to move people into employment and needs to be coupled with mandatory activities (eg work experience and training) to have a significant impact on job entry (Hasluck & Green, 2007).

## **Training and employment programmes**

### **Job search assistance**

Undertaking job search activities are important as most benefit recipients leave benefit without having participated in any of the major interventions (Hasluck & Green, 2007). Job search assistance (JSA) programmes are designed to improve job search skills of participants and ensure that jobseekers, especially short-term jobseekers, are active in looking for work.

Evidence on the impact of JSA is mixed. Some studies find that JSA has modest short-run impacts (Card et al., 2009). Others suggest that JSA is only effective if case managers can use sanctions for non-compliance (see section on activation measures above), and works best when it is high-intensity and targeted at groups most at risk of long-term unemployment (van Der Klaauw, 2007). Where impacts are found, they tend to largely come from compliance effects – where people referred to assistance choose to exit benefit rather than participate (OECD, 2005). Miller & Evans (2003) argue the effectiveness of job search assistance is largely dependent on labour market demand and is unlikely to help jobseekers who lack the skills needed by employers. There are also doubts about the effectiveness of job search assistance in gaining higher quality jobs (Immervol, 2010).

Little evaluation evidence is available about how different benefit recipient groups conduct job search activity, the effectiveness of different job search methods and of the various forms of support provided for job search by agency staff (Hasluck & Green, 2007).

### **Training programmes**

Training covers a wide range of programmes aimed at increasing jobseekers' skills to make them more attractive to prospective employers. Appropriately designed training programmes can increase employment and employment quality by giving participants the skills they need to access better jobs. Training programmes that can be effective include:

- Training for qualifications which are valued and recognised by employers.
- Training for pre-determined employment<sup>10</sup> (TPE) programmes which can reduce the time participants spend on benefit. These programmes are best targeted at work-ready benefit

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<sup>8</sup> Case management was a component of this initiative. The initiative was found to increase employment and accelerate the outflow from incapacity benefits but only for those who would have left the benefit rolls in less than a year anyway.

<sup>9</sup> An assessment of the impact of a case management interview on long-term sick-listed employees' probability of returning to work found that it significantly increased the probability of returning to work for the pre-sick leave employer but it had no effect on the probability of returning to work for a new employer (Høgelund & Holm, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> TPE programmes are interventions that match jobseekers to jobs, and employers use these programmes to train future employees with the skills required to fill a particular vacancy. See File Reference A4024618.

recipients who only need specific job-related training (eg food handling certificate) to fill the vacancy.

- Training programmes which have an on-the-job component and strong links with local employers. These programmes typically benefit more work-ready benefit recipients (CSRE, 2008; Betcherman, Olivas & Dar, 2004; OECD, 2001). They tend to show better employment outcomes in the medium term (two to three years) than in the short term (Card et al., 2009). Workplace training for disabled people outperforms other rehabilitation programmes (Carcillo & Grubb, 2006).
- Formal education or training shows promise in the longer term, especially for sole parents (Hansen, 2006).

When unemployment is high there is a stronger case for strengthening vocational education and training (eg apprenticeships) among youth and low-skilled people (OECD, 2011; Scarpetta et al., 2011).

There is mixed evidence for the effectiveness of training programmes for sole parents and people with health conditions or disabilities<sup>11</sup> who are not in work.

### **Financial incentives and assistance**

Financial incentives are mechanisms that address both low employment rates and in-work poverty. They can be effective at 'making work pay' by creating an appreciable income gap between benefit and paid employment, taking into account the costs of working (eg childcare, transport to work).

In-work benefits are employment-conditional payments made to people or families that face labour market challenges. When targeted at groups with low employment rates they can increase employment rates and income. The role of additional supports or services appears to be important. Some evaluations show that the impact tends to disappear once payments end, unless additional support services are provided during the employment period to help people retain employment (Carcillo & Grubb, 2006). When earning supplements are combined with employment services, they have larger effects than earning supplements alone (Martinson & Hamilton, 2011).

Examples of interventions that have had positive impacts on employment rates include:

- For sole parents – Canadian Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP) and In-Work Credit (UK) (Cremieux et al., 2004; Brewer et al., 2012; Martinson & Hamilton, 2011). Also see the childcare subsidies section.
- For those on incapacity benefits – financial incentives introduced to encourage Norwegian Disability Insurance recipients to move into work, changes to the earnings limit in Canada, a national programme of graded return to work<sup>12</sup> and the SSP (Kostøl & Mogstad, 2012; Campolieti & Riddell, 2012; Høgelund et al., 2008; Cremieux et al., 2004).

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<sup>11</sup> For people with health conditions or disabilities some research has found educational measures have a negative effect on the sick-listed employees' probability of returning to work for a new employer (Høgelund & Holm, 2011). However, Mavromaras & Polidano (2011: 1) found that in Australia completing a vocational education qualification "*had a considerable and long lasting positive effect on the employment participation and productivity of people with disabilities*". However, they also added that many people do not complete their qualifications.

<sup>12</sup> Sick-listed workers are able to return to work on reduced working hours. When their health improves, the working hours are gradually increased until the sick-listed worker is able to work the hours they were doing before becoming sick/injured. While the person is working reduced hours they receive their normal hourly wage for the hours worked (eg 20 hours per week) and sickness benefit for the hours off work (eg 17 hours a week). The graded return-to-work period normally does not exceed the one-year sickness benefit period. Participation in the programme significantly increases the probability of returning to regular working hours.

- Long-term unemployed – UK Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) programme (Hendra et al., 2011).

The targeting of financial incentives is very important.

- Targeting in-work benefits to families can lead to decreased employment rates for second earners in couple families. Targeting the individual rather than the family unit removes the adverse effects on second earners but is less cost-effective and does not result in the same effect on sole parents' employment rates.
- Financial work incentives should be targeted at younger disability recipients as they are more effective for this group (Kostøl & Mogstad, 2012).
- Generous financial incentives can be effective but should only be used when disability programme entry is tightly controlled (eg Canada Pension Plan (Disability) (Inderbitzin & Wallimann, 2012).

Some countries are also looking at models in which users are given a budget to choose which services they need and are the focus of increasing attention in the financing of health care (eg the Right to Control initiative in the UK). Sayce (2002) argues this could extend to services that assist people into employment. Individuals could have the right to manage the resource, if they wish and are able to, as a direct payment.

### **Work confidence/ work experience**

**Work confidence seminars** are short-term courses designed specifically to provide skills, motivation and confidence to help participants move into employment or undertake further training or education. General reviews have tended to place work confidence programmes under the broad heading of employment services (Betcherman, Olivas & Dar 2004; OECD, 2001). While these reviews conclude that employment services are effective, it is not possible to know what contribution programmes equivalent to New Zealand work confidence programmes would have made.

There are few examples of **subsidised work experience programmes** (similar to Taskforce Green) internationally and results are mixed<sup>13</sup>. In the US, evaluations of subsidised employment programmes suggest that they are effective at providing jobs in the short term but are less successful at helping participants transition to unsubsidised employment (Bloom, 2013). Bloom recommends testing enhanced models of subsidised jobs that include partnerships with private employers, the use of incentives for participants and employers, additional training in hard skills to better prepare people for unsubsidised jobs, and other supports designed to address benefit recipients' specific needs.

### **Wage subsidy programmes**

Wage subsidies are payments to employers to top up wages of low productivity workers, increasing the likelihood that they will be employed. Over the duration of the subsidy, the participant develops job-related skills and becomes a fully productive worker. After the subsidy, it is expected the participant will remain with the employer. International reviews express strong reservations about the use of wage subsidies. There is a risk of deadweight loss associated with wage subsidies along with potential abuse from employers and negative stigma for employees (Miller 2006; OECD, 2010; MSD, 2012). Wage subsidies are most effective when:

- targeted at those with labour market disadvantages, such as the long-term unemployed

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<sup>13</sup> Refer to Note 2007 Evidence to date on activation measures.doc (file ref A2840548)

- they offer employment that closely resembles a “real job” (Calmfors et al., 2002)
- they are on a small to medium scale
- there is close monitoring of employer use of the subsidies

Examples of effective programmes:

- the Finnish PES (OECD, 2010)
- Flexjobs (Denmark) – a permanently wage-subsidised job with reduced hours and/or other special conditions targeting recipients of incapacity benefits who are unable to return to ordinary employment.

### **Multi-component interventions for those with complex needs**

For benefit recipients with more complex needs (eg long-term benefit receipt, health conditions or disability, substance use problems), evidence of what works to move them into employment is more limited. Many benefit recipients face multiple disadvantages and barriers to (return to) work and the likelihood of work declines as the number of barriers increases. Few interventions have been found to be effective for benefit recipients who have been on benefit and/or out of work for more than one to two years (Bloom et al., 2011; Waddell et al., 2008; Waddell & Aylward, 2010). However, as Waddell & Aylward (2010) state there is a huge cost associated with doing nothing and it is important to continue to trial different approaches.

There is emerging evidence that models that integrate employment services and treatment services may be more promising than offering either strategy alone, especially for people with disabilities and behavioural health problems (Butler et al., 2012).

Interventions are likely to result in stronger employment outcomes if they:

- are tailored to the needs of each participant. The level and type of service or support provided will vary according to individual circumstances (Bloom et al., 2011; Hasluck & Green, 2007; Carcillo & Grubb, 2006)
- focus on job retention as well as job placement. Moving very disadvantaged benefit recipients into work requires the provision of appropriate supports and services prior to and in some cases post-employment (Butler et al., 2012)
- are linked to accommodating workplaces (Waddell et al., 2008)
- include work-focused healthcare for those with health or disability problems (Waddell et al., 2008)
- understand that moving into work is not an all or nothing event. It is a process where people prepare for, move closer to, and engage in work. This process may not be linear (Waddell et al., 2008).

Within this context examples of effective interventions include:

- Supported employed schemes<sup>14</sup>, the most well-known of which is the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model. The IPS model is evidence-based and consists of intensive, individual support, rapid job search followed by placement in regular, paid employment, and time-unlimited in-work support for both the employee and the employer. Clinicians and vocational counsellors are co-located to coordinate treatment with job placement and retention activities (Sainsbury Centre, 2009; Waghorn et al., 2012).

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<sup>14</sup> There are several types including the assertive community treatment model, transitional employment, the job coach model and Individual Placement and Support (IPS).

- CASASARD (US) provides intensive case management for substance-abuse dependent women receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (CASA, 2009).

In addition, Denmark is currently trialling the use of Return to Work co-ordinators and multi-disciplinary teams. The Return To Work (RTW) intervention uses *“multidisciplinary RTW teams, standardised procedures for workability assessments, and a comprehensive training course for all members of the RTW teams”* (Aust et al., 2012: 121). The aim is to improve sickness benefit management by municipalities. The intervention targets a broad group of sick-listed persons. There are few restrictions regarding the reason for sickness absence or employment status (employed, self-employed, unemployed). Results of the evaluation are due in 2013<sup>15</sup>.

## Ineffective programmes

Some types of programmes are ineffective<sup>16</sup>, for example:

- **Information initiatives.** There is no evidence to show that initiatives that inform sole parents of the benefits of employment and available support improve their chances of moving off benefit. Providing information on work may help and may be a useful component of facilitation programmes, but is not enough on its own.
- **Sheltered workshops**<sup>17</sup> for people with disabilities are less effective than newer approaches which aim at placing benefit recipients into open paid employment (OECD 2010).
- **Community employment schemes** are generally not effective in promoting improved aggregate employment rates or improved employment outcomes for participants (Boone & Van Ours, 2004; Card et al., 2009).
- **Public works schemes.** These programmes are designed to provide temporary employment either through government agencies directly or through non-profit organisations and to a lesser extent the private sector. The overall conclusion is that these programmes are ineffective at improving participants’ employment outcomes (OECD, 2001; Betcherman, Olivas & Dar 2004).
- **Work-for-the-dole schemes.** Most evidence shows work-for-the-dole programmes do not increase participants’ chances of moving off benefit and into employment. Instead, they have the opposite effect as participants remain on benefit longer<sup>18</sup>.
- **Military-style residential programmes.** International evidence is generally restricted to youth offender programmes. In this context, evidence indicates that on average military-style training programmes have no impact on recidivism. A 2004 meta-analysis of adult and juvenile boot camp programmes in the US found these programmes resulted in increased recidivism among juveniles (about 10 percent), while having no impact on adult participants (Barnoski, 2004). Further, evidence suggest more effective residential programmes are those with a therapeutic emphasis rather than purely a militaristic and physical focus (Wilson & MacKenzie, 2006, cited by NCCPP & AIC, 2007).

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<sup>15</sup> For further information on the Danish National Return To Work programme see [www.controlled-trials.com/ISRCTN51445682](http://www.controlled-trials.com/ISRCTN51445682)

<sup>16</sup> This means participants spend significantly less time in positive outcomes than the comparison group.

<sup>17</sup> Sheltered employment is used for vocational rehabilitation of those with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities. Sheltered work is a more traditional approach consisting of workshops offering simulated or actual work, intended to increase skills. Sheltered employment is now considered inferior to supported employment; few people move into competitive employment, skills learned are often not useful and token wages are paid (Miller, 2006a, OECD, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Refer to: Evidence on Work-for-the-Dole programmes (file ref A4070052)

- **Some types of training programmes<sup>19</sup>:** For example:
  - mandatory education programmes (eg sole parents in receipt of welfare in the US)
  - general training which does not lead to recognised qualifications
  - training programmes that do not address the multiple barriers faced by people with disabilities.

## **Childcare**

### **Impact of participation in preschool care**

Half of mothers in Australia, UK, Canada and US are in paid work on the first birthday of their child. Early Childhood Education (ECE) participation has known positive effects not only for the child's outcomes but also for parents and families. Early formal childcare can have a positive effect for children experiencing significant disadvantage whose parents are stressed or have poor parenting skills. ECE participation combined with quality of ECE matters. However, findings about the ideal intensity and duration of ECE participation are mixed (OECD, 2011a).

### **Childcare subsidies and maternal employment**

Childcare costs have a modest effect on participation in paid employment overall (Jaumotte, 2004). Overseas estimates indicate that childcare subsidies and expanded ECE supply increase maternal employment by 7 to 14 percent. Effects are larger for low-income groups and those disadvantaged in the labour market.

Childcare subsidies are most effective in promoting employment if they are work-tested, 'sizable', targeted at parents most disadvantaged in the labour market, and accompanied by other policies that assist parents in making choices about paid employment and childcare<sup>20</sup>.

Subsidies alone are unlikely to be sufficient to influence all parents' willingness and ability to access childcare and enter paid employment. Childcare subsidies may have a more limited impact on employment for more advantaged groups of women, those with a strong orientation towards parental care, and parents who find it difficult to access suitable childcare. Childcare subsidies have a limited impact where the supply of childcare services is insufficient to meet demand (Mitchell et al., 2008).

### **Childcare subsidies for providers**

Subsidising providers allows for regulation and control of how the programmes can be run and what areas are served. Examples include the 21CCLC offered in the United States (Afterschool Alliance, 2008).

### **Provision of childcare and out-of-school care**

There is strong international evidence that direct funding to expand ECE supply and childcare subsidies increases maternal employment, including that of sole parents receiving benefits (Mitchell et al., 2008). However, the universal public provision of childcare is expensive and subject to a large deadweight loss.

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<sup>19</sup> See Training programmes that lead to employment (file reference A4024618).

<sup>20</sup> Childcare subsidies for early childhood and out-of-school care to increase parental employment (file reference A3980655)

The OECD recommends that direct supply-side subsidies should be made towards capital investment, providers in deprived and/or scarcely populated areas and/or concerning the provision of services to children with special needs. They add that relatively high coverage can be achieved where the private sector provides childcare and this is combined with demand-side funding to parents (OECD, 2007).

Research suggests there is an unmet demand for formal out-of-school care services (Singler, 2011; Bellett & Dickson, 2007). There is little international research on the direct effect of funding supply or provision of childcare subsidies for school-aged children on sole parents' employment. However, cross-national comparisons do suggest that ready access to publicly-funded out-of-school care is an important contributor to high rates of sole parent employment in some Scandinavian countries (OECD, 2007).

### **Care outside standard hours**

Services for both pre-school and school aged children are even more limited for those parents who work irregular hours, shift work, or weekends (Singler, 2011). Internationally, a range of initiatives has been developed which may assist parents working atypical hours or in disadvantaged or remote areas (eg in Australia In-Home Care<sup>21</sup> for children aged under 13; Childcare Working Tax Credit – UK; Sitter Services<sup>22</sup> – Scotland; All Day School Programme – Denmark).

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<sup>21</sup> For more information refer to [www.education.gov.au/in-home-care](http://www.education.gov.au/in-home-care)

<sup>22</sup> See [www.opfs.org.uk/services/sitter-service-development-and-support](http://www.opfs.org.uk/services/sitter-service-development-and-support)

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