



Off the Streets and into Work



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FEANTSA Employment Working Group - Background Paper

'Multiple Barriers, Multiple Efforts': Employment Barriers and Solutions for homeless individuals

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1. Background to paper

Part of the on-going work of the FEANTSA¹ Employment Working Group (EWG) over the last two years has been to look at the barriers to employment faced by homeless² individuals.

The work began in 2004 with a presentation to the FEANTSA EWG by Off the Streets and Into Work (OSW) on the initial findings of its' research into these barriers³. This was followed up by a wider discussion, and the presentation of evidence and information from EU countries represented on the Working Group at a meeting in Genoa in September 2004. The outcome of that meeting was the recognition that while there are various local, regional and national factors that can pose barriers to employment, in fact many of the personal, social and structural barriers faced by homeless individuals across the EU were the same, or very similar. However, this was difficult to demonstrate in a wider context due to lack of (or differing) definitions, monitoring systems, and evidence.

In March 2005, OSW published its final research report 'No Home, No Job'⁴, which provided more detail on the barriers, and proposed solutions within an English context. The overarching recommendation was for a coordinated government strategy that linked housing and employment together, as they were being addressed separately, and less effectively. This was presented to the EWG, and also circulated widely throughout the EU, having been translated from English into French and Spanish. The responses and feedback received by OSW showed that although 'No Home, No Job' was based on the experience of service-users in London, the barriers and obstacles homeless respondents faced were commonly known and shared across the EU.

From the start of 2006, the FEANTSA EWG's two-year work programme had clearly identified actions to build on the previous work of the group, and to help fill gaps in knowledge and evidence. The work carried out by the group to date on barriers also contributed towards FEANTSA's work in the shorter term - as part of developing a response to the Commission on its 'Active Inclusion' Communication⁵.

¹ FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, was established in 1989 as a European non-governmental organisation (in French, FEANTSA stands for la Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri).

² The four categories of homelessness set out under ETHOS (European Typology for data collection on Homelessness and housing exclusion) are: 1) rooflessness, 2) houselessness, 3) living in insecure housing, 4) living in inadequate housing. The studies referred to in this paper will *collectively* incorporate all of these, although in the main the study sample groups will fall within the first two categories.

³ Later published as 'No Home, No Job', Singh, P, OSW, March 2005.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ European Commission, *Concerning a consultation on action at EU level to promote the active inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market*, Brussels, 8.2.2006 COM(2006)44 final.



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2. The Barriers

2.1 Background and evidence

'No Home, No Job' highlighted a multitude of barriers that homeless people face in moving towards or into employment. Despite these barriers, the vast majority of respondents who took part in the study had genuine aspirations about work. This finding is reflected in the experience of homelessness agencies across (and beyond) Europe, and in the views of homeless individuals themselves.

Additionally, evidence from a range of sources shows that many homeless individuals face multiple barriers to work, succinctly described in the 2006 Scottish Employability Framework: "Those who are most or more likely to be out of employment include: people with no qualifications...; lone parents...; people with caring responsibilities; people with disabilities or health problems, in particular, mental health problems; ex-offenders and those with drug problems. Some individuals, for example homeless people, can experience a combination of these barriers."⁶

Evidence from Denmark to the FEANTSA EWG showed that about "40 per cent of the homeless in homeless institutions have or have had mental (health) problems. 50 per cent have or have had alcohol problems. 20 per cent have or have had drug problems. 75 per cent have or have had problems with drugs, alcohol or mental (health) problems".⁷

There is now a large body of evidence on the barriers to employment that homeless individuals face. This will be supplemented by information gained from all EU member states through FEANTSA's themed annual questionnaire for 2007, which will be on employment.

The body of evidence on barriers compiled or considered by the FEANTSA EWG to date includes (and the list is not exhaustive):

- Reports of FEANTSA Employment Working Group meetings, 2004-5;
- Additional written evidence provided by members of the FEANTSA EWG;
- FACIAM's report 'Obstacles and Barriers that Homeless People Face', 2004 and 'Barriers to Employment' update 2006;
- Kofoeds Skole's report 'About Barriers to the Labour Market', 2006;
- OSW's 'No Home, No Job', 2005; and
- OSW's 'Common Ground: A Review of 12 Studies on Homelessness and Employment', 2006.

2.2 Specific barriers

⁶ Scottish Executive, Workforce Plus: an employability framework for Scotland', Edinburgh, Scottish Executive, 2006.

⁷ Meldgaard, Ole, *About Barriers to the Labour Market*, Brussels, FEANTSA EWG, 2006.



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It has been shown that homeless individuals face a range of barriers to work, often multiple, which can be personal, social, and structural. The main barriers identified include, in no particular order:

2.2.1 Personal

- a) Multiple, multi-layered, complex problems
- b) Transient, unstable, 'chaotic' life styles
- c) Lack of 'core' life skills
- d) Welfare dependency
- e) Problems with debt and poor financial skills
- f) Behaviour or hygiene issues
- g) Long term, persistent physical or mental health problems
- h) Logistical difficulties in accessing employment and training
- i) Long term distance from the reality of the labour market
- j) Drug and alcohol dependency
- k) Lack of social and work networks
- l) Lack of up to date training or work experience
- m) Criminal record
- n) Difficulty in prioritising work over other issues
- o) Previous life experience that can reinforce exclusion
- p) Low basic and vocational skills/lack of professional qualifications
- q) Loss of structure, incentive and purpose
- r) Disempowerment and lack of choices

2.2.2 Structural/social barriers

- a) Less likelihood of benefiting from mainstream programmes
- b) Racism and discrimination
- c) Social stigma and stereotyping
- d) Limited work availability or alternative options, e.g. part-time working
- e) Time limited initiatives are less effective
- f) Lack of or poor access to health and other support services
- g) High level of administration and bureaucracy
- h) Lack of personalised, individualised support
- i) Poor links/cooperation between necessary support services and agencies
- j) Lack of intensive and flexible case management
- k) Poor transitional and exit support
- l) Lack of awareness of homelessness

2.2.3 Employment, Education, Skills (EES) services and provision

- a) Insufficient or lack of provision of sheltered employment schemes and other relevant EES services
- b) A lack of ongoing support after the end of a programme or once someone has a job
- c) Attitude and low expectations of some hostel/support staff
- d) Poorly trained/paid support staff



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- e) Unstable and often short-term services due to funding regimes

2.2.4 Income and benefits

- a) Absence, or poor take up, of welfare and other benefits
- b) Minimum wage and other measures are not always sufficient to make work pay where living costs are high
- c) Poor information and advice on transitional and in-work benefits and tax credits
- d) Long-term economic and other inactivity
- e) Lack of available or affordable childcare
- f) Changing labour market, e.g. trends of casual and part-time employment

2.2.5 Housing

- a) Shortage of affordable or adequate housing
- b) High rents result in benefits trap
- c) Lack of housing and tenant support while undertaking training or during the initial stages of employment
- d) Poor working environment in hostels and other temporary housing
- e) Inflexible housing support - homeless individuals often work in the evenings, weekends or off hours that may conflict with shelter programme curfew requirements

The list is not exhaustive, and indeed many of the barriers will be familiar to other groups or individuals facing labour market disadvantage. Many could also apply to individuals across all of the ETHOS categories, although some will not. However, the multiple barriers faced by many (most?) homeless individuals means that traditional welfare to work and other programmes aren't effective, as described by the UK government's Department for Work and Pensions:

"It is important that the proposed approach addresses effectively the needs of those facing the biggest barriers to work...recognising that these clients will often need more time, more specialist help, and very strong partnerships with other statutory and non-statutory agencies if a real impact on employment outcomes is to be made...Within this group are people at high risk of social and labour market exclusion, and who often are already the focus of wider government interventions. The group includes homeless people, ex-offenders, those with a history of drug/alcohol misuse and some refugees...Working with the most disadvantaged will mean drawing in the contributions of partners to provide the necessary holistic packages of help." ⁸

As additional work is being done on barriers via the FEANTSA themed questionnaire for 2007, the EWG has shifted its emphasis towards identifying solutions that will help to tackle homelessness *and* unemployment.

⁸ DWP, *Building on New Deal: Local solutions meeting individual needs*, UK, DWP, June 2004.



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3. Looking Forward – Some Initial Solutions

3.1 Background and Evidence

“(The programme) demonstrated that with the appropriate blend of assessment, case management, employment, training, housing, and support services, a substantial proportion of homeless individuals can secure and retain jobs, and improve their housing condition.”⁹ USA, 1994

OSW’s recent research review ‘Common Ground’¹⁰, identified the most common, key barriers to employment faced by homeless people in various countries, as well as a set of core solutions or recommendations arising from the studies that should form part of any plans to tackle homelessness and unemployment. Twelve reports were selected for analysis from amongst many that discussed barriers and made recommendations ranging across three continents - Europe, North America and Australia. The 12 studies collectively provided statistics and findings relating to at least 56,316 homeless individuals who were accessing, or being targeted by employment programmes.

The research showed that many of the problems sustaining homelessness and unemployment, and the recommendations made to bring about the change needed, are broadly the same in different countries regardless of social, political or economic differences. The context might be different, the exact detail might be different, but the concept/issue was the same. Therefore, our understanding of ‘what are the barriers’ and ‘what should be done’ has become more concrete and robust. Below is a list of the studies used as part of the ‘Common Ground’ review.

England:

- *‘No Home No Job’, Off the Streets and Into Work, March 2005*
- *Foyers for Young People: Evaluation of a pilot initiative, Centre for Housing Policy, 1995*
- *Include Me In: How life skills help homeless people back to work, Crisis and Demos, June 2005*

Scotland:

- *Routes into Employment for Homeless People, Communities Scotland, February 2004*

Spain (Madrid):

- *Obstacles and Barriers that Homeless People Face, FACIAM, for the FEANTSA working group, September 2004*

EU (transnational):

⁹ James Bell Associates, Inc., *Employment and Training For America’s Homeless: Report on the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Project*, US Department of Labour Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA), Washington, USA, 1994.

¹⁰ Sarantos, Elina, *Common Ground: 12 studies into homelessness and employment*, unpublished, OSW, 2006.



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- *Mainstreaming Report - EQUAL Endeavour programme, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, September 2003*

USA:

- *Employment and Training for America's Homeless, US Dept of Labour, 1994*
- *Job Retention Factors for homeless people with disabilities, Community Work Services and Boston University, 2005*
- *Barriers to Mainstream Programmes, US Govt General Accounting Office, July 2000¹¹*

Australia:

- *A New Approach to Assisting Young Homeless Job Seekers, Hanover Welfare Services, Melbourne, April 2003*
- *Personal Support Programme Evaluation, Interim report, Brotherhood of St. Lawrence, Melbourne City Mission and Hanover Welfare Services, October 2005*
- *Homelessness & Employment Assistance, Hanover Welfare Services for the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, January 2002*

The Common Ground report identified, where EES programmes for the homeless had existed in different countries, and were evaluated in terms of their impact and effectiveness, that the main conclusions and recommendations on how to address the barriers were often identical. This was despite differences in approach and political objectives, as outlined in this research project summary for a recent international study carried out by the Max Planck Institute:

"All (of the seven countries taking part in a research study) agree that a lack of soft and basic work skills, social problems, substance abuse, medical and psychological barriers, and learning disabilities are barriers to employment, but whether and how this group is able to work reflects moral judgements and political objectives - and these differ systematically between countries. Some countries insist that this group is employable within a short time (USA, UK), others see them as able to work but not immediately employable (Denmark, Sweden, Germany), while a third group of countries regards them as unfit for work (France, Italy)...Despite some common developments, countries' welfare-to-work strategies towards this group differ substantially, putting relatively greater emphasis on either 'work' (USA, UK), 'welfare + work' (Sweden, Denmark, Germany) or on 'welfare' (France, Italy)."

"In the United States and United Kingdom, the hard-to-serve are connected to the job market as quickly as possible, despite the problems they face. The labor market is both the means and the ends of social inclusion. In Denmark, Sweden and Germany, programs aim to stabilize the social situations of people with multiple problems before they are expected to engage in job search. Work is a

¹¹ US General Accounting Office, *Homelessness: Barriers to Using Mainstream Programs*, Washington DC, for Congressional Requesters, 2000.



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central means of 'social activation', often organized as public works in supervised workplaces. Social integration efforts in France and Italy generally focus less on the labor market. French activation policy is an obligation of the state and part of a larger inclusion agenda in which integration into the benefit system is an important step towards societal inclusion, to be complemented by various *insertion sociale* activities." ¹²

An example from one of the Australian reports included in the Common Ground review brings together succinctly many of the main elements recommended by the different studies:

"There is a valuable reservoir of practice wisdom developed over a long period by organisations with histories of service delivery to those who are homeless. This serves to inform us about key elements for a more effective model that will deliver substantive outcomes:

- The achievement of *sustainable employment* will sit at the top of the hierarchy outcomes sought for participants...
- Personal support, housing and employment assistance will be interlocked and delivered as an *integrated response*.
- The model will deliver the equivalent of *a living wage*, which is progressively constructed as participants move towards full economic and social participation...
- Participants will be given a *guarantee of secure tenure, affordable housing* located to facilitate participation in employment or training programs...
- The model recognises and adjusts for acute crises and is sensitive to past experiences by ensuring *individualised, timely and flexible access* to specific services or programs.
- Participants will be offered consistency and continuity through the pivotal role of a *resourced case manager* to ensure engagement, commitment and continuity of assistance, and co-ordination of resources including brokerage funds.
- Employment assistance options will meet individual needs, however, participants will be expected to accept a *level of personal responsibility* in committing to participation consistent with community expectations." ¹³

A second example is from the evaluation of the US government's significant Job Training Demonstration Program for the Homeless¹⁴:

¹² Kahl, Sigrun, *Welfare-to-Work and the least employable in Europe and the United States*, Research Project Summary: Max Planck Institute, 2002-2006.

¹³ Horn, Michael, *A new approach to assisting young homeless job seekers* - Trial Proposal, Draft, March 2004.

¹⁴ The US Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Program ran for 7 years from 1988, costing \$55.7m, and engaging over 45,000 individuals at demonstration sites.



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“(The program’s) experience underscored the importance of providing a comprehensive range of services to address the varied problems faced by homeless persons. Homeless individuals face different barriers to overcoming homelessness (e.g., basic skills deficiencies, lack of job-specific skills, substance abuse, lack of day care, or lack of transportation). Barriers need to be addressed before individuals are likely to retain long-term employment. Demonstration program experience suggests that at a minimum -- either through the sponsoring agency or **coordination with other local service providers** -- the following core services must be made available to serve the full array of homeless individuals responsively and effectively:

- outreach and intake;
- **case management** and counselling;
- **assessment** and employability development planning;
- alcohol and other substance abuse assessment and counselling, with referral as appropriate to outpatient and/or inpatient treatment;
- **other supportive services** (e.g., child care, transportation, mental health assessment/counselling/referral to treatment, other health care services, motivational skills training, and life skills training);
- **job training services**, including: (a) remedial education and basic skills/literacy instruction, (b) job search assistance and job preparatory training, (c) job counselling, (d) vocational and occupational skills training, (e) work experience, and (f) on-the-job training;
- job development and placement services;
- **post placement follow-up and support** services (e.g., additional job placement services, training after placement, self-help support groups, and mentoring);
- **housing services** (e.g., emergency housing assistance, assessment of housing needs, referrals to appropriate housing alternatives, and development of strategies to address gaps in the supply of housing for participants).”¹⁵

The findings from the FEANTSA Employment Working Group and its members, and from the Common Ground and other studies, clearly identify a **number of core principles or solutions that should be built in to any framework**, strategy or guidelines that aim to tackle homelessness and unemployment. This is not to say that there are not other considerations, or local, regional or other solutions or constraints to be considered. But those are for local/regional/national agencies to resolve and plan for. The remit of the FEANTSA EWG is to address overarching Employment issues relevant to the EU and across Europe. Based on the evidence considered, the following ‘**10 Core Solutions**’ have been agreed by the Group and form a core position which will help us promote policy and practice solutions through our work over the next two years.

3.2 The 10 Core Solutions

¹⁵ James Bell Associates, Inc., *Employment and Training For America’s Homeless: Report on the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Project*, US Department of Labour Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA), Washington, USA, 1994.



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1. Holistic Approach

EES services for homeless individuals should be part of a holistic approach which links up support in relation to housing, employment and training, physical and mental health, social networks/family, substance misuse, and other related issues. Providing EES support in isolation of these things means that services - and individuals - are much less likely to succeed.

As part of its own EQUAL¹⁶ programme, TMD London, OSW produced a summary of the 14 EQUAL Round 2 projects focusing on homelessness and labour market (re)integration.¹⁷ We found that the majority of projects, basing their plans on labour market and other research evidence, intended to develop a holistic or integrated approach, which will address a range of issues including employment, learning, housing, discrimination, and personal barriers or issues in a comprehensive way.

In addition, reports and evidence from various countries suggest strongly that a holistic approach is required:

“The most effective support provides an integrated service, allowing people to build a strong relationship with a designated key worker who provides support to access a wide range of health, housing, employment, benefits and education advice from one key source - essentially providing access to a structured set of tailored activities and services aiming to build confidence and enable people towards work and independence.”¹⁸ **England, 2006**

“The needs that are not directly linked to employment (health issues, lack of housing, etc.) make labour market inclusion a complex process to be initiated and maintained by homeless individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out integrated interventions that consider all of these issues.”¹⁹ **Spain, 2006**

“(Homeless) Service users presenting with multiple needs require holistic strategies to support them.”²⁰ **Scotland, 2003**

“A fully integrated approach across the domains of housing, employment assistance and personal support will result in significant efficiencies in terms of lower demand

¹⁶ The EQUAL Initiative is a laboratory for new ideas to the European Employment Strategy and the Social inclusion process. Its mission is to promote a more inclusive work life through fighting discrimination and exclusion based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. EQUAL is implemented in and between Member States and is funded through the European Social Fund. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/index_en.cfm

¹⁷ Butcher, Linda, *Summary Report on EQUAL Round 2 Projects focussing on Homelessness*, London, OSW, August 2005. www.4inclusion.org.

¹⁸ CESI/Inclusion, *Employment Success Factors for homeless people with health conditions*, London, OSW, 2006.

¹⁹ Rodriguez, Antonio, *Comments to the study Barriers to Employment*, Faciam, Madrid, for FEANTSA EWG, 2006.

²⁰ Verve Associates, *Routes into Employment for Homeless People*, for Communities Scotland, 2004.



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within individual programs, as well as improved *durable* outcomes for young homeless jobseekers."²¹ **Australia, 2005**

"A consistent result of several studies focusing on employment or job training (for the homeless) is that:

- Employment services must be coordinated with other homeless services, especially for individuals who are homeless with a disability.
- Traditional approaches to job training and placement are inadequate, due in part to the emphasis on short-term outcomes, lack of long-term support, lack of service coordination during and after placement, and lack of follow-up.
- Lack of attention to physical health, ongoing substance abuse, or mental health problems results in loss of jobs."²² **USA**

In Japan, where rough sleepers' provision has been seen to take a 'job first' approach, the need for a more holistic approach is identified by this list of gaps: "1. The lack of liaison with supporting measures; 2. There is no liaison with housing and any kind of living support. It is necessary for rough sleepers to have accommodation, jobs, health checks, welfare provisions and daily living skills. Mostly they have received one of them..."²³ **Japan, 2004**

"For socially excluded groups it is not expedient to solve the problems one by one. It is not expedient to solve misuse and then discharge the homeless to the street again. It is important also for the results of alcohol treatment that there is an employment perspective. The best results are achieved when the efforts are linked: Treatment and appropriate training opportunities or practice, supportive social services and decent and affordable housing are necessary...Among the many areas that must be addressed simultaneously are: Misuse, behaviour, hygiene, nutrition, debt, illness, teeth problems, housing, sense of guilt, loneliness and anxiety, dreams and aspirations, resources, practise, job seeking, mentoring. The barriers are multiple. The efforts must be multiple."²⁴ **Denmark, 2006**

"The benefits of such activation measures should not be measured only in terms of immediate employment effects. They may also help to make people fight social isolation and develop self-esteem and a more positive attitude to work and society. Less attention has been paid, on the other hand, to adequate access to social services that form a basic pre-condition for being available for work.... evidence suggests that a comprehensive policy mix combining three elements is justified: (i) a link to the labour market through job opportunities or vocational training; (ii) income support at a level that is sufficient for people to have a dignified life; and (iii) better access to services that may help remove some of the hurdles encountered by some individuals and their families in entering mainstream society,

²¹ Perkins, Daniel, *Personal Support Programme evaluation: Interim report*, Melbourne, Brotherhood of St Laurence, with Hanover Welfare Services and Melbourne City Mission, 2005.

²² Hursh and McCarriston, Jr., *Research Brief: Targeting Employment and Job Retention for Individuals who are Homeless*, Boston, USA, date unknown.

²³ Okamoto, Yoshihiro, *The recent controversial rough sleepers provisions in Japan*, Paper for ENHR Conference, Cambridge, UK., Chukyo University, Japan, 2004.

²⁴ Meldgaard, Ole, *About Barriers to the Labour Market*, Brussels, FEANTSA EWG, 2006.



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thereby supporting their re-insertion into employment (through, for instance, counselling, healthcare, child-care, lifelong learning to remedy educational disadvantages, ICT training to help would-be workers, including people with disabilities, take advantage of new technologies and more flexible work arrangements, psychological and social rehabilitation). Such an approach may be termed *active inclusion*. To underpin policies in this domain and create conditions for achieving effective progress in curbing poverty and exclusion, it is fundamental that all these strands be interlinked.”²⁵ **European Commission, 2006**

“...a study on Welfare to Work for those with multiple problems and needs (80% of whom were homeless) found that:

- Most had failed to access mainstream services or found these inappropriate, turning for help to family, friends, and voluntary sector agencies
- most participants’ previous employment experience had been part-time, temporary, seasonal or entailed unsociable hours
- the long-term emotional or temperamental problems experienced by some meant it unlikely that they would sustain stable employment without appropriate support
- participants needed a ‘life-first’ approach to welfare to work; a holistic approach that would prioritise their life needs, including their need to work”²⁶ **England, 2002**

2. Coordination of services

The range of housing and non-housing support services for homeless individuals, including EES, need to be coordinated effectively within agencies, across agencies, and across sectors.

“Welfare clients with multiple barriers to employment require a broad range of supportive services over an extended period of time to help them get jobs and remain employed. To help clients obtain needed services, welfare agencies must develop strong collaborative partnerships with other organizations, including vocational rehabilitation providers, mental health and substance abuse providers, advocates for victims of domestic violence, shelter programs, child care providers, and housing assistance and transportation programs.”²⁷ **USA, 1998**

“But in asking homeless people to become sufficiently service literate to be able to make good choices for themselves about the best ways to meet their needs, we are making a serious demand upon people already facing extremely challenging circumstances in their lives. For this expectation to be a reasonable one, and to

²⁵ European Commission, *Concerning a consultation on action at EU level to promote the active inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market*, Brussels, 8.2.2006 COM(2006)44 final.

²⁶ TMD London EQUAL Round 2 bid quoting from Dean, H. and MacNeill, V., *A Different Deal? Welfare to Work for People with Multiple Problems and Needs*, University of Luton, 2002.

²⁷ Johnson, Amy, and Meckstroth, Alicia, *Ancillary Services to Support Welfare to Work*, submitted to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Washington, 1998.



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have the positive consequences for them that we would hope, we need to be prepared to tackle the problems inherent within our current system."²⁸ England 2005

"We know that money is already available from various sources to help people into work. However, this effort is disjointed with too many organisations and not enough co-operation among them. It is absurd that someone wanting to work is treated as a new client each time they access a different service. The system must be better geared to the needs of each individual, for example through providing key workers to support people on their route to work."²⁹ Scotland, 2006

"The need for a wide array of services points to the need for strong linkages and coordination arrangements among local service providers. Careful planning of service delivery strategies is needed, including an inventory of services available at the local level and an assessment of how such services might be relevant to the needs of homeless individuals...Linkages also enabled (delivery organizations) to refer individuals they could not serve effectively to other agencies..."³⁰ USA, 1994

"Part of any strategy should also be influencing and supporting access to flexible mainstream training and education options."³¹ Ireland, 2006

"The systems needed to enable someone facing multiple barriers to working to get a job and stay in employment are many and varied. We have *employment services* which provide the support and assistance clients need to tackle their specific obstacles to employment. These can include mental health, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, homelessness, drug and alcohol dependency, childcare, literacy and numeracy and career planning. The Workstreams identified a lack of common in-depth assessment approaches and also a lack of the systems and intelligence needed to manage clients' progress through this array of services."³² Scotland, 2006

"Of the 14 EQUAL Round 2 projects focusing on homelessness, 12 intend to create or improve the coordination and cooperation amongst support agencies, and usually across sectors."³³ Europe - transnational, 2005

3. Flexibility

Many homeless individuals need extra time and support to get back to work. Indeed, for some, work is not an option for now, or even in the future. Agencies working with homeless individuals, and the individuals themselves,

²⁸ Lownsborough, H., *Include Me In: How life skills help homeless people back into work*, London, Demos and Crisis, 2005.

²⁹ Scottish Employability Framework, 2006.

³⁰ James Bell Associates, 1994.

³¹ McTaggart, C, Focus Ireland, *Comments on Barriers to Employment*, Brussels, FEANTSA EWG, 2006.

³² Scottish Employability Framework, 2006.

³³ Butcher, Linda, OSW, 2005.



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need the flexibility to change track, work at the right pace, and 'fail' sometimes - not everyone will be a positive outcome, and sometimes it may take several attempts.

Too much of the funding for services - especially from local, regional or national governments - is inflexible and does not cover the breadth or intensity of service required.

OSW data on over 1,000 homeless beneficiaries who gained employment outcomes showed that 43% attended two or more non-mainstream services, and 7% attended between three and nine non-mainstream services, before gaining a job.³⁴ England, 2005

"Getting homeless people back to work requires an approach that is tailored to their specific circumstances and needs and recognizes that a stepping (stone) approach is often needed, with meaningful activity or volunteering as an interim step towards the longer term goal of paid work."³⁵ England, 2005

"In France, figures show that, depending on the type of subsidised employment contracts (*Insertion par l'activité économique*), 34% to 48 % of the homeless targeted is able to obtain jobs in the mainstream labour market. This is often achieved only after a certain period of employment experience and/or training in the supported employment sector."³⁶ France, 2005

"A flexible, informal approach is also suggested...:

Firstly, agencies have to be flexible in terms of the clients' individualised needs. Each person is different, therefore, training programmes and services have to build on existing client needs by providing a wide array of training options to suit individual talents and needs.

Secondly, they must also be flexible enough so as to *appropriately* cater to the multiple, complex barriers faced by the clients.

Thirdly, more flexibility needs to be shown in terms of the logistical problems that may arise. For example, expanding appointment times allotted for review interviews with marginalised job seekers, or, as mentioned in the structural barriers above, in the housing services provided."³⁷ International, 2006

"...it is important to take account of the specific role that is played by the voluntary sector - not operating on a market-based logic - in providing the whole range of services that are necessary for the slow, varied and individual process of social inclusion of people experiencing homelessness. These include services such as counselling and advice services, education and training (including language

³⁴ OSW Link data, 2005.

³⁵ Crisis, Policy Briefing: *From the Margins to the Mainstream*, London, Crisis, 2005.

³⁶ FEANTSA, Policy Statement: *Targeting homelessness in the streamlined EU Employment Strategy: A win-win approach to tackle homelessness through labour integration and to promote employment and an inclusive labour market*, Brussels, FEANTSA, 2005.

³⁷ Sarantos, Elina, 2006.



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training), meaningful occupation, supported employment or transitional employment. But it is based overall on a framework of support of the individual which takes account of all of their problems and the importance of their participation in their own reintegration plan.”³⁸ Europe - transnational, 2006

“None of the (Kofoed) school’s statutory sources of income is tied directly to the achievement of outputs or outcomes. The school has been able to develop a level of trust with funders based on a successful track record of achievement and positive outcomes for clients. The effect this has had on the school’s ability to develop a truly client-centred and flexible approach cannot be overstated. These funding arrangements have not had a negative effect on success. Approximately 40% of KS students progress to further learning or employment...”³⁹ Denmark, 2005

4. Different Routes and Options to meet individuals’ needs and aspirations

Everyone is different and has different needs and aspirations. Individuals who are homeless should, wherever possible, have a choice of options; and their needs, aspirations and views should be central and influential in the planning and delivery of services.

A complete package of services would include such different elements as engagement, meaningful activity; advice and guidance; volunteering; training and skills development – including basic and life skills; social enterprise/supported employment; work placements; job brokerage; in-work support and follow up; ‘bite-sized’ work and learning options; non-work support: e.g. housing, health, counselling, drug and alcohol, social networks, signposting and referrals, etc.

“Employment is not always a suitable outcome for some clients. Pushing individuals living with long-term illness or mental health difficulties towards employment, would be counterproductive to their positive progression and set them up for further failure. Volunteering may be a suitable alternative, providing useful experience in the move towards employment.”⁴⁰ Europe - transnational, 2006

“There are very few protected employment and pre-labour market workshops for the homeless. These measures are a good transitional step towards the mainstream labour market.”⁴¹ Spain, 2006

“Clients respond positively to services which they see as meeting their needs as an individual. Many clients have experienced a number of employability programmes through their working life. The customised approaches stand in contrast to the

³⁸ Mercadie, Michel, *What Access to Employment for people experiencing homelessness?*, Homeless in Europe, FEANTSA, 2006.

³⁹ Perkins, Ian, *Report of study visit to Kofoed’s Skole*, for London Housing Foundation, London, OSW, 2005.

⁴⁰ FEANTSA, response to Commission Communication on Active Inclusion, 2006.

⁴¹ Rodriguez, Antonio, *Comments to the Study Barriers to Employment*, Faciam, Madrid for FEANTSA EWG, 2006.



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highly standardised delivery traditionally associated with national employment programmes.”⁴² Scotland, 2006

“But ultimately, for some people taking up work will not be a viable option.”⁴³ European Commission, 2006

5. Case Management (e.g. personal advisers), with Initial and On-going Assessment

Identifying - and understanding - an individual's needs and aspirations, is critical to the process of providing the right support at the right time, as well as being able to help problem solve when necessary. Assessment needs to take a holistic approach, and take place not only initially, but also on an on-going basis. Many agencies and individuals have found that assessments become more honest and accurate over time, as trust is developed.

Additionally, various studies produced on homelessness and employment support have highlighted the need for a case management (personal advisor) approach - to help individuals navigate through the system and the range of services, to help problem solve, assist with referrals, build trust, etc.

“Analyses of participant-level data, as well as evidence from interviews with... staff, indicate most homeless individuals face multiple barriers to employment which are not always evident at the time of intake. For example, drug or alcohol problems, poor reading skills, a history of domestic abuse, and mental health issues are often not apparent at the time of intake. Hence, comprehensive and ongoing participant assessment to identify specific obstacles to employment and tailoring services to meet the specific needs of each homeless individual are important to achieving positive results.”⁴⁴ USA, 1994

“We conclude the current interview procedures are failing to engage this group of (homeless) disadvantaged job seekers in a way that will facilitate full disclosure of all relevant circumstances to making an informed assessment of their ‘job readiness’ and capacity to participate in employment assistance programs.”⁴⁵ Australia, 2002

“The most effective support provides an integrated service, allowing people to build a strong relationship with a designated key worker who provides support to

⁴² Scottish Employability Framework, 2006.

⁴³ European Commission, Concerning a consultation on action at EU level to promote the active inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market, Brussels, 8.2.2006 COM(2006)44 final.

⁴⁴ James Bell Associates, 1994.

⁴⁵ Parkinson, Sharon and Horn, Michael, *Homelessness & Employment Assistance: A research report examining the effectiveness of assessment and job referral procedures for income support recipients experiencing homelessness*, Hanover Welfare Services, Hanover, Melbourne, 2002.



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access a wide range of health, housing, employment, benefits and education advice from one key source."⁴⁶ **England, 2006**

"Assessment, ongoing support and periodic review by a *single case manager* will ensure that participants actively engage in meaningful activities according to an agreed realistic careplan across housing, employment and personal domains:

- Housing guarantee, including access to crisis accommodation and/or transitional housing, social housing or private rental
- Immediate access to training, employment assistance or work opportunities
- Timely access to respond to personal/health issues
- Ongoing support to resolve crises and maximise participation in activities

Participation in activities may be sequential or concurrent according to need and changing circumstances. A case based approach, founded on a realistic assessment with supportive advice about options and aspirations, is seen as critical to achieving positive employment outcomes."⁴⁷ **Australia, 2004**

"In various evaluations, clients consistently offer positive comments on the role played by personal advisers and key workers. They like a number of things about this way of working:

- Having access to the same adviser/key worker over time so that they can build a relationship with them;
- Being able to spend time with these advisers rather than being processed through a volume programme; and
- The support provided by advisers/key workers who they feel are on their side."⁴⁸ **Scotland, 2006**

"...we have seen through our professional experience, many of our users have suggested that they have contact with a lower number of professionals because they complain about having to tell their personal history to too many people."⁴⁹ **Spain, 2006**

"...experience suggests that case management -- typically under which a participant is assigned to and monitored by an agency case worker throughout program participation -- is a critical ingredient in tailoring services to specific needs of homeless participants. Ongoing case management enables agency staff to monitor the progress of each participant toward his/her goals and alter the mix of services to respond to changing circumstances or needs of the participant. A

⁴⁶ CESI/Inclusion, *Employment Success Factors for homeless people with health conditions*, London, OSW, 2006.

⁴⁷ Horn, Michael, *A new approach to assisting young homeless job seekers* - Trial Proposal. Draft, March 2004.

⁴⁸ Scottish Employability Framework, 2006.

⁴⁹ Rodriguez, Antonio, FACIAM, for FEANTSA EWG 2006.



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case manager can also help deal with problems as they arise, such as child care glitches, housing problems, interpersonal conflicts at work, substance abuse relapses, and transportation problems."⁵⁰ USA, 1994

6. Increase real incentives and reduce disincentives

Some programmes have found that the introduction of meaningful incentives, such as transitional benefits once someone has found work, can increase take up and the achievement of results. There is much evidence in certain countries, that benefits structures, minimum wage levels versus cost of living, and other financial factors pose significant disincentives to work. Where possible, incentives should be increased and disincentives removed.

"In 1986 over 90% of St Mungos' (homeless) residents had some form of paid employment - by 1999 only 2% had full time work and only 9% participated in any economic activity. Evidence suggests that from 1986 to 1999 changes affected resident's ability to take on some form of paid work - e.g. benefit restrictions, fewer 'cash pay' opportunities, the need for qualifications for certain jobs."⁵¹ England, 2004

"There must be an advantage to take on work: work must pay in real terms."⁵² France, 2004

"Benefit systems...may compete with ongoing transitional work services and result in disincentives to increased work involvement."⁵³ USA, 2004

"...the issue of disincentives...is a real challenge within the Irish context also, and one which appears to becoming more and more of an issue as the social housing sector is being replaced by very expensive private rented accommodation subsidised through our rent allowance scheme. This allowance is means tested and as such affected if someone is employed even if it is in relatively low paid employment."⁵⁴ Ireland, 2006

"By reducing the living standard on social benefit the Government will make an incentive for social recipients to find a job. However, the job-effect of this strategy is very poor. The strategy does not create more jobs, and for many it only reduces their living standard - and is flagrantly in conflict with the inclusion strategy."⁵⁵ Denmark, 2004

⁵⁰ James Bell Associates, 1994.

⁵¹ St Mungos figures supplied for OSW TMD London proposal, 2004.

⁵² Mercadie, Michel, FNARS, for FEANTSA EWG meeting, 2004.

⁵³ Hursh, Norman C., McCarriston Jr., William T., Turner, Linda, *Research Brief: Housing, Employment, Health Care, and Legal Policies and Regulations: Impact on Homeless Individuals' Ability to Sustain Employment*, Boston, 2003-04.

⁵⁴ McTaggart, C, Focus Ireland, *Comments on Barriers to Employment*, Brussels, FEANTSA, 2006.

⁵⁵ Meldgaard, Ole, Kofeods Skole, for FEANTSA EWG, 2004.



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"...in Spain the minimum income is very low and insufficient to solve rising housing costs for instance."⁵⁶ **Spain, 2005**

"If you are claiming benefits in London then you have less incentive to take a job in comparison with the rest of the country."⁵⁷ **England, 2003**

"Loss of safety net programs does not bring increased employment for former recipients. In the two years after Michigan terminated its General Assistance program, only one-third of former recipients found any employment, and most of this was unstable. Most welfare recipients are part of social networks made up of other poor people who are unable to offer even minimal help if welfare ends. Workers "tottering on the edge of subsistence" are less employable than workers whose lives are stable; welfare needs to be available to help jobless people maintain this stability. Families and friends should not be viewed as having the capacity to replace public assistance for low income individuals."⁵⁸ **USA, 1995**

"In an increasing number of countries financial incentives are being improved with the aim of ensuring a strong incentive to take up work. For instance, tax credits have been made available to workers in low-paid employment as an income top-up conditional on carrying out paid work, and at the cut-off point where benefits would normally have been withdrawn, payments now are gradually phased out in order not to discourage work effort."⁵⁹ **European Commission, 2006**

7. On-going Support for job sustainability

A critical part of the package should be about supporting homeless individuals to sustain jobs, and to progress within the labour market to better jobs where possible. This support is rare as it is usually not eligible for funding. Yet this has enormous potential to maximise, and sustain, the investment made by individuals themselves, as well as by support agencies and funders.

"On re-entering employment, it is vital that people are given the chance to return to organisations for advice and support during critical periods."⁶⁰ **England, 2005**

"(The) high concentration of homeless workers in the lowest paying occupations suggests that simply finding a job, any job, is not a complete solution to the problem of homelessness and poverty."⁶¹ **USA, 2004**

⁵⁶ Rodriguez, Antonio, Faciam, Madrid, for FEANTSA EWG, September 2005.

⁵⁷ CESI/Inclusion, *Making Work Pay in London*, (London, GLA, LDA, ALG: 2003).

⁵⁸ Flaming, Daniel et al, *Jobs, Welfare and Homelessness Synopsis*, Economic Roundtable, Los Angeles, 1995.

⁵⁹ European Commission, *Concerning a consultation on action at EU level to promote the active inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market*, Brussels, 8.2.2006 COM(2006)44 final.

⁶⁰ Lownsborough, H., *Include Me In: How life skills help homeless people back into work*, London, Demos and Crisis, 2005.

⁶¹ Flaming, Daniel, Burns, Patrick, and Haydamack, Brent, *Homeless in LA: Final Research Report*, Los Angeles, Economic Round Table, September 2004.



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"Fourth Phase: "Job maintenance". Once they get a job this phase begins. During this phase we assess the level of satisfaction and the possible difficulties that may arise when they start in a job (adaptation to the working hours, interpersonal conflicts with their colleagues at work, conciliation of family and working life....) . What we intend is to prepare them and or help them develop the necessary abilities (skills) to take decisions and to solve conflict in the working environment. We also provide them with information as regards labour law (contracts, social insurance, salaries (pay slips)...Fifth phase: When the level of satisfaction with the job is not adequate and the person thinks of continuing looking for another job we enter what we call the search for a better job phase. In some cases during this phase we need to redefine the professional objective."⁶² Spain, 2004

"...even after job placement, many homeless individuals still need support services and an objective and informed person to guide them. By providing follow-up services and ongoing case management (for six months or even longer after a participant has secured a job), agencies can help to troubleshoot problems (before they become bigger problems) and reduce the risks of participants returning to homelessness. An added benefit is that agencies are better able to track the long-term success of their services and adjust service delivery strategies accordingly. JTHDP sites found that successful employment outcomes (i.e., finding and retaining jobs) were often associated with availability of housing assistance and long-term support services."⁶³ USA, 1994

8. Clear, consistent information on services, rights, and entitlements

Many individuals find it hard to access information on the range of services available to them. Many find it even harder to gain accurate and consistent advice on their benefits or tax entitlements, or their right to engage in activity such as volunteering. Clear, consistent and accurate information needs to be easily available and kept up to date.

"Of those looking for a job or planning to, around a third (31 per cent) are not aware that people in employment can claim the Working Families Tax Credit, two thirds are not aware that Housing Benefit can be claimed in employment, and 12 per cent are not aware that people in employment can claim any benefit."⁶⁴ England, 2005

"A number of people in the group commented that they had previously been given poor advice...about the overall financial implications of them entering work, and had subsequently been left worse off by entering work."⁶⁵ England, 2005

"Of the more practical barriers the biggest was the perception that volunteering would affect benefits. 35% thought that volunteering could result in them losing

⁶² Rodriguez, Antonio, *Obstacles and Barriers to ETE faced by homeless people*, Faciam, Madrid for FEANTSA EWG, 2004.

⁶³ James Bell Associates, 1994.

⁶⁴ Working Future 'Report of Tenants' Survey', 2005.

⁶⁵ TMD London Service User consultation Report, OSW, 2005.



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welfare benefits. 80% (28% of people questioned overall) of these people had got this information from the benefits office. This is particularly unfortunate because volunteering shouldn't have any affect on welfare benefits as long as the only money that the volunteer receives is a reimbursement of expenses."⁶⁶ England, 2005

"Information needs to always be kept up to date and employment professionals should have on-going training to be able to advise in an accurate and effective way."⁶⁷ Spain 2006

9. The Right Policy Framework

Homelessness agencies and NGOs have sometimes developed good practice and effective services despite the policy and legislative frameworks in their countries, rather than because of them. Even when policymakers carry out successful pilots or conduct research, and know what needs to be done, financial constraints, lack of commitment or coordination, or political changes can mean that nothing much happens. The EU, and its member states, must ensure that coordinated and effective policies - and services - are in place to help individuals escape homelessness, unemployment and/or inactivity.

"Social protection policies need to be carefully designed, because, when the various aspects of social protection do not complement each other, they substitute for each other, and unintended consequences may follow. Since multiple disadvantages generate multifaceted exclusion, in practice the lack of policy integration is likely to cause even greater efficiency losses, and the weakest members of society are all the likelier to bear the brunt."⁶⁸ European Commission, 2006

"Fundamentally, we need a revolution in our public services, that re-engineers them from the bottom-up and ensures they look first at the whole needs of the individual and then that the services deliver a tailored, personalised package of support that truly responds to the homeless person's circumstances and sets out to empower them and not administer another short-term fix."⁶⁹ England, 2005

"Participants (of the focus group) noted that policies, regulations, and guidelines across health care, benefits, employment, housing, and legal systems could provide incentives, disincentive, and barriers to sustained employment."⁷⁰ USA, 2003

⁶⁶ Bowgett, Kate, *Homeless people and volunteering report*, interviews by Sharon Kirk, London, OSW, 2005.

⁶⁷ Rodriguez, Antonio, FEANTSA EWG, 2006.

⁶⁸ European Commission, *Concerning a consultation on action at EU level to promote the active inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market*, Brussels, 8.2.2006 COM(2006)44 final.

⁶⁹ Lownsborough, H., *Include Me In: How life skills help homeless people back into work*, London, Demos and Crisis, 2005.

⁷⁰ Hursh, Norman C., McCarriston Jr., William T., *Get a Job and Keep a Job: What Makes a Difference for Homeless People?*, Boston, 2003-04.



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“In order to reduce the size of homelessness, instead of delegate it to the competency of social policy, the problem of homelessness must be regarded as a complex policy task, which requires the cooperation of social, housing, employment, child protection, education and criminal policies.”⁷¹ Hungary, 2003

“The failure of both housing and employment assistance is due as much to the manner in which assistance is constructed and delivered as to the state of contemporary housing and labour markets. These programs deliver assistance that addresses discrete aspects of disadvantage - such as a lack of stable housing, marketable skills and poor health - in an insular, one-dimensional and consequential way. A new approach is required if homeless jobseekers are to realise their modest aspirations and avoid a future as passive welfare recipients.”⁷² Australia, 2005

“Conflicts and tension, especially between central and regional government, have arisen over the years. While the state decides employment policies, responsibility for training lies with the regions.”⁷³ France, 2001

“A governmental study from 2003 showed that people at the margin of the labour market generally wish to find a job and that it is possible to become self-supporting even after a long period of unemployment. However, there are big differences in the municipalities’ efforts for weak groups among the unemployed.”⁷⁴ Denmark, 2004

“(there is also)...the question of permanent residency as the prerequisite in Hungary to any social benefits, and which represents a large problem for homeless people.”⁷⁵ Hungary, 2005

10. Longer-Term, Secure Funding

It is so often said because it is true. Services need longer-term, flexible and more secure funding to operate most effectively; to provide the support that disadvantaged individuals actually need and want; to build and then maintain capacity, knowledge and expertise; and to develop and maintain trust with the individuals they exist to support.

“Many formerly homeless individuals need to attend a number of services before they will be ‘work ready’. Authorities that commission and fund employment-related training need to recognise the importance of the journey towards

⁷¹ Metropolitan Research Institute, *The demographics of the homelessness population in Hungary*, Budapest, October 2003.

⁷² Campbell, S., *A New Approach to Assisting Young Homeless Jobseekers*, (Melbourne: Hanover Welfare Services, Melbourne Citymission and the Brotherhood of St Laurence: January 2003).

⁷³ Peer Review Executive Summary, *Trace: Access routes to employment for young people in danger of exclusion*, France, 2001.

⁷⁴ Meldgaard, Ole, for FEANTSA EWG, 2004.

⁷⁵ Bakos, Peter, for FEANTSA EWG, 2005.



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independence in their funding structures. Funding should not be restricted just to 'hard outcome' achievements." ⁷⁶ **England, 2006**

"In terms of program delivery, the most significant concern is the inadequate program funding to assist a client group facing such significant disadvantage." ⁷⁷ **Australia, 2005**

"To begin with, the multi-dimensional approach requires a partnership structure between public and private, profit and non-profit agents: municipal social services need the co-operation of housing agencies, welfare organizations, community workers, employment agencies, etc. Such partnerships can be expected to produce a value added on the level of organizations, over and above the synergies on the level of individuals...As regards the monitoring of such collaborative networks, the pros and cons of different formulae need to be taken into consideration. More and more, Dutch public authorities are recurring to outsourcing of assignments by means of tendering procedures. This obviously boosts efficiency and gives rise to clear commitments between the partners. On the other hand, a competitive setting may prove less adequate for welfare services with large externalities (positive side-effects for third parties) as market prices usually under-value these effects. Tendering procedures also tend to boost a culture of competition and thus might undermine the necessary spirit of collaboration in partnerships." ⁷⁸ **Netherlands, 2004**

"Program outcomes improved as sites gained experience working with homeless individuals and refined their service delivery strategies -- for example, job placement rates among JTHDP participants increased from 33 percent during Phase 1 to 43 percent by Phase 4, and job retention rates (among those placed in jobs) increased from 40 percent during Phase 1 to a high of 58 percent in Phase 3." ⁷⁹ **USA, 1994**

"Although the majority of (job training for the homeless demonstration program) sites continued to provide employment and training services to homeless individuals after the termination of their...funding, most reduced the number of individuals served or the types of services provided... The majority, though, reported being unable to maintain their JTHDP (program funded) level of services." ⁸⁰ **USA, 1994**

"This fragmented and restrictive system also complicates decisions concerning the appropriate allocation of resources: whether to focus on the harder-to-serve or the more easily employed populations, on the welfare or the low-income populations,

⁷⁶ Off the Streets and into Work, *Welfare Reform Green Paper, A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work - A response*, London, OSW, 2006.

⁷⁷ Perkins, Daniel, *Personal Support Programme evaluation: Interim report*, Melbourne: Brotherhood of St Laurence, with Hanover Welfare Services and Melbourne City Mission, 2005.

⁷⁸ Nicaise, Ides and Meinema, Thea, *Peer Review in the Field of Social Inclusion Policies: Experiments in Social Activation in the Netherlands*, The Netherlands, 2004.

⁷⁹ James Bell Associates, 1994.

⁸⁰ James Bell Associates, 1994.



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on those faced with one barrier to employment as opposed to another, or on those in need of expensive as opposed to low-cost services.”⁸¹ USA, 1998

“If you want to genuinely help people who have been problematically homeless, including those with mental health histories or substance misuse issues, back into mainstream education training or employment, it is essential to take on board that extensive resource has to be provided for recruitment and retention of trainees; that there needs to be a different and wider set of payable outcomes; and that for many beneficiaries it is the first step that is the hardest to take - i.e. from ‘non-engagement’ to ‘engagement’”⁸² England, 2006

“It is intensely frustrating that these types of services that tick so many boxes of the government’s agenda of social inclusion are continuously fighting for survival. They should not have to compete with mainstream education and employment advice providers but should be appropriately supported for the specialist provision they are and resourced accordingly.”⁸³ England, 2006

⁸¹ Johnson, Amy, and Meckstroth, Alicia, *Ancillary Services to Support Welfare to Work*, submitted to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Washington, 1998.

⁸² These are the views of a respondent agency to a survey conducted by OSW summarised in the document: Butcher, Linda, *OSW Funding Paper*, 2006.

⁸³ Ibid.



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SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Holistic Approach

EES services for homeless individuals should be part of a holistic approach which links up support in relation to housing, employment and training, physical and mental health, social networks/family, substance misuse, and other related issues. Providing EES support in isolation of these things means that services - and individuals - are much less likely to succeed.

2. Coordination of services

The range of housing and non-housing support services for homeless individuals, including EES, need to be coordinated effectively within agencies, across agencies, and across sectors.

3. Flexibility

Many homeless individuals need extra time and support to get back to work. Indeed, for some, work is not an option for now, or even in the future. Agencies working with homeless individuals, and the individuals themselves, need the flexibility to change track, work at the right pace, and 'fail' sometimes - not everyone will be a positive outcome, and sometimes it may take several attempts.

Too much of the funding for services - especially from local, regional or national governments - is inflexible and does not cover the breadth or intensity of service required.

4. Different Routes and Options to meet individuals' needs *and* aspirations

Everyone is different and has different needs and aspirations. Individuals who are homeless should, wherever possible, have a choice of options; and their needs, aspirations and views should be central and influential in the planning and delivery of services.

5. Case Management (e.g. personal advisers), with Initial and On-going Assessment

Identifying - and understanding - an individual's needs and aspirations, is critical to the process of providing the right support at the right time, as well as being able to help problem solve when necessary. Assessment needs to take a holistic approach, and take place not only initially, but also on an on-going basis. Many agencies and individuals have found that assessments become more honest and accurate over time, as trust is developed.

Additionally, various studies produced on homelessness and employment support have highlighted the need for a case management approach - to help individuals



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navigate through the system and the range of services, to help problem solve, assist with referrals, build trust, etc.

6. Increase *real* incentives and reduce disincentives

Some programmes have found that the introduction of *meaningful* incentives can increase take up and the achievement of results. There is much evidence in certain countries, that benefits structures, minimum wage levels versus cost of living, and other financial factors pose significant disincentives to work. Where possible, incentives should be increased and disincentives removed.

7. On-going Support for job sustainability

A critical part of the package should be about supporting homeless individuals to sustain jobs, and to progress within the labour market to better jobs where possible. This support is rare as it is usually not eligible for funding. Yet this has enormous potential to maximise, and sustain, the investment made by individuals themselves, as well as by support agencies and funders.

8. Clear, consistent information on services, rights, and entitlements

Many individuals find it hard to access information on the range of services available to them. Many find it even harder to gain accurate and consistent advice on their benefits or tax entitlements, or their right to engage in activity such as volunteering. Clear, consistent and accurate information needs to be easily available and kept up to date.

9. The Right Policy Framework

Homelessness agencies and NGOs have sometimes developed good practice and effective services *despite* the policy and legislative frameworks in their countries, rather than *because* of them. Even when policymakers carry out successful pilots or conduct research, and know what needs to be done, financial constraints, lack of commitment or coordination, or political changes can mean that nothing much happens. The EU, and its member states, must ensure that coordinated and effective policies - and services - are in place to help individuals escape homelessness, unemployment and/or inactivity.

10. Longer-Term, Secure Funding

It is so often said because it is true. Services need longer-term, flexible and more secure funding to operate most effectively; to provide the support that disadvantaged individuals actually need and want; to build and then maintain capacity, knowledge and expertise; and to develop and maintain trust with the individuals they exist to support.



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