

Employment support for disabled people; investigating the relationship between investment and outcomes

Introduction

This is a two year study (from October 2011) being carried out by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi¹) and funded by the National Institute for Health Research's School of Social Care Research (SSCR²).

This study will use a mix of methods to investigate the relationship between Social Services *investment* in employment support for disabled people, and the *resulting outcomes* (e.g. people getting paid work).

Aims

Our overall aim is to strengthen the cross-client group evidence base around employment support (a recent review carried out by NDTi shows this evidence is currently very patchy). Through this, we hope to enable people who commission employment support to make more informed choices and decisions.

The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the 'value for money' impact of current employment supports, in terms of people consequently achieving paid work?

(e.g. from a commissioner perspective:

"If I invest x amount, how many people should be gaining, and keeping, paid employment as a result?")

2. How does that 'value for money' impact vary between different models of employment support? Do they result in different outcomes?
3. How is the 'value for money' impact affected by different approaches to implementing local employment strategies?

As part of this we will also look at the influence of (and links between) various factors, such as types of work, hours worked, type of disability, age/ different life stages of people needing support etc.

Research Methods

The table overleaf provides a summary of key stages and activities in this research.

¹ www.ndti.org.uk

² http://www.nihr.ac.uk/research/Pages/programmes_school_for_social_care_research.aspx

What	When	How
National Data collection	Jan – May 2012	A questionnaire, to all councils with social services responsibilities in England, to get an overall picture of how much is currently invested, in which types of employment support - and to find out what kind of evidence is currently collected about the outcomes of that investment. Also scoping / analysis of any existing secondary data.
In-depth analysis with a sample of sites	May 2012 – Jan 2013	Closer work with a smaller sample of around 12 local authorities to carry out further in-depth data collection and analysis relating to the above research questions. As part of this we will use a Realist Evaluation framework to find out what is working well, for which people, why, and in which particular set of circumstances.
Sharing findings & Action Learning	Nov 2012 – Sept 2013	Producing and making available a wide range of materials in order to share the evidence arising from this research. Facilitating Action Learning with a network of authorities across the country, to help them put the evidence into practice.

Research Outputs

Evidence and resource materials arising from this research will include:

- Evidence about which types of service investment are most likely to result in people getting paid work
- Evidence of the relationships between financial investment in and adoption of different models of support, and the number of people getting and keeping work
- Greater understanding of the systemic and organisational actions and attributes that are most likely to result in investments leading to people getting paid work
- Frameworks for use by local authorities for them to continually review and evaluate this information for themselves in the future

This evidence will help to inform commissioners and providers of employment support, about:

- ✓ How to achieve better value for money from their investments in employment related services
- ✓ Which types and styles of investment are most likely to result in disabled people getting paid work
- ✓ How to plan, develop and manage employment supports (including key skills required by staff working in these areas) in order to achieve the best outcomes in terms of sustainable paid work.
- ✓ How different strategies may be successfully applied in different situations and with different groups of people needing support.

How to find out more

If you would like to find out more about this research, please contact Anita Wilkins at NDTi, on ☎ **01202 471 423** ✉ anita.wilkins@ndti.org.uk