

Freedom of Information request 1396/2011

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Information request

'I would like under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to make a request for a copy of the contract that was awarded to Remploy to deliver support services to vulnerable job seekers, to examine it to see if there is a possible breach of contract between your department and my self the receiver or in deed between Remploy and myself.'

DWP response

Remploy is funded through Grant in Aid by the Department for Work and Pensions to deliver Work Choice, the programme that replaced WORKSTEP in October 2010.

Because of the different funding arrangement, Remploy do not have a contract to deliver the Work Choice programme, so I am unable to provide you with a copy of a contract.

I have provided at Annex A an extract from the Department for Work and Pensions guidance on delivering Work Choice, outlining the stages of the programme that I hope you will find useful.

Annex A

Extract of Jobcentre Plus Adviser Guidance

Work Choice Stages

The Work Choice programme is designed as a four-stage, modular, specialist provision. The four stages are:

- Referral or Introduction;
- Module One – Work Entry Support;
- Module Two – Short to Medium Term In-Work Support;
- Module Three – Longer Term In Work Support.

Referral or Introduction

The DEA has a pivotal role as the gatekeeper for the Work Choice programme in ensuring that only eligible and suitable disabled people are referred.

A limited number of Statutory Referral Organisations (SRO) are able to introduce suitable disabled people directly to a Work Choice Provider.

The work choice provider cannot recruit directly onto their Work Choice provision.

The provider may only decline to accept a customer who has been referred by a DEA if their Work Choice provision is deemed “full”.

Module One - Work Entry Support

All new participants will enter Module One of Work Choice where they will work with their provider on a detailed Development Plan to address their complex barriers and employment support needs. In Module One the provider must provide a range of support that could include:

- individually tailored vocational guidance and development planning to help identify and address support needs (both disability related and any social or financial support);
- a choice of job seeking activities;
- personal and job-skills support, confidence building, and capacity building to ensure that the participant will be able to work 16 hours or more per week;
- job search support – advice, job matching of individuals to identified vacancies, active sourcing of suitable jobs, and advising employers on opportunities for ‘job-carving’;
- job application support – including managing disclosure of health/disability information, CV and interview preparation, skills

- development, advocacy to the employer if needed, e.g. working with the employer to amend recruitment procedures as appropriate for participants with learning disabilities;
- labour market advice and support including
 - provision or sourcing Better Off In Work calculations
 - promotion of in-work benefits
 - assistance or sourcing assistance with tax credit applications;
- close working with employers to help them see beyond pre-conceptions or perceptions of a person's disability and help them focus on abilities and strengths;
- brokerage between employers and participants – analyzing the support needed with the participant prior to the support being put into place;
- an explanation to both the participant and the employer of the appropriate types of adjustment or customization of the workplace and the wider support available from DWP and beyond;
- knowledge of support available within the local labour market area that helps the participant manage any personal circumstances relevant to their job aspirations;
- help for participants wanting to enter self-employment;
- agreeing a support plan with the help of the individual and employer;
- signposting participants claiming JSA/IB/ESA to expert sources of help with any benefit regime requirements.

Minimum Levels of Support in Module One

Minimum levels of support must be maintained on a monthly basis. Providers, however, are expected to be flexible to the needs of customers. In Module One support should be sufficient to enable participants to engage in at least eight hours preparation for work entry per week. The support could include one to one help or less intensive support and advice depending on the participant's needs.

As the participant progresses through Module One their level of activity on the programme should increase up to 16 hours as they prepare to make the transition into work. This should be documented in the participant's development plan.

Module One may be used for capacity building but is not intended as a means of capacity testing. Customers referred to Work Choice are expected to be able to work for a minimum of 16 hours per week following participation in Module One.

Certain participants in Work Choice Module One may be eligible for Access to Work support. See Permitted Work and Access to Work).

In these circumstances the Provider will assist the customer with their application. In order to maintain consistency and build experience and expertise, all communications with Access to Work are with the Prime Provider. The Prime Provider has access to a Work Choice-dedicated AtW Specialist Advisory Team, based in an AtW Centre, who will advise and mentor them and discuss any queries the Prime Provider may have about the appropriateness of an application to Access to Work for Permitted Work and Work Trial customers. Annex 6 of the Work Choice Provider Guidance also refers.

Duration

Module One normally lasts for a maximum of six months. The provider may exceptionally allow up to a further three months in line with Guidance issued to Providers.

A participant who fails to secure employment (either supported or unsupported) following Module One will, if they wish, be given the option of referral back to the DEA or Statutory Referral Organisation responsible for the original referral.

Module Two – Short to Medium Term In-Work Support

Once a participant has found paid supported employment (or self-employment) supported by Work Choice of 16 hours or more a week (NB this could be more than one job which adds up to 16 hours or more a week) the provider will work with the employer and participant to identify the support required for the participant to start work

In Module Two the provider must provide a range of support tailored to the needs of the individual participant and, depending upon their circumstances, this could include;

- discussing with the participant and their employer how the participant's career goals can be met ;
- agreeing a tailored support package with the participant to ensure they stay in employment and develop further;
- ensuring the participant is aware of any changes to their benefit entitlement and that they are receiving all appropriate in-work benefits; by signposting them to Jobcentre Plus for expert advice;
- working with Access to Work Specialist Advisory Team to provide advice and support about accessibility and other longer term solutions;
- agreeing, with all parties, a development plan that includes how the provider's in-work support may taper off over time;
- conducting regular reviews with the participant and their employer to ensure:
 - agreed actions have been fulfilled;

- the participant is making progress towards unsupported employment where appropriate;
- appropriate adjustments to the support package and the participant's roles and responsibilities are agreed;
- progress is recorded and agreed;
- working with sub-contractors other appropriate support or advisory organisations who can assist participant to achieve their goal;
- ensuring the participant is aware of their rights as a disabled person (e.g. under the Equality Act 2010) ; and
- discuss with the employer long-term support for the individual.

Minimum Levels of Support in Module Two

In Module Two, the provider must work with the participant, or with others on behalf of the participant (e.g. their employer), to ensure that for at least eight hours per month, the participant is engaged in activity that will further their aim (and that of Module Two) of progression to unsupported employment within two years, where appropriate. This may involve the provider in up to eight hours one-to-one guidance, or a more advisory role, depending on the participant's needs.

At any point in their Work Choice customer journey the level of support needed by a customer could increase significantly for a number of reasons. Such a change could make the transition to unsupported employment a more distant goal, with a need for longer-term in-work support in Module Three.

Certain Participants in Work Choice Module 2 may be eligible for Access to Work support, but **not** for short term support designed to settle them into their supported employment. Annex 6 of the Work Choice Provider Guidance also refers.

The Prime Provider has access to a Work Choice-dedicated AtW Specialist Advisory Team, based in an AtW Centre, who will advise and mentor them and discuss any queries the Prime Provider may have about the appropriateness of an application to Access to Work.

Duration

Module Two lasts for a maximum of 2 years.

Module Three – Longer Term In-Work Support

Module 3 recognises that some participants will need support in employment for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, providers must ensure that they maintain a clear focus on the ongoing development of participants throughout their career.

All participants should be helped and encouraged to progress to unsupported employment where appropriate (including those whose support started before 2001 when Supported Employment was replaced by WORKSTEP). Where relevant, consideration should be given to help that may be available from Access to Work.

In Module 3 the provider should confirm regularly that participants are receiving:

- a quality service,
- all relevant in work benefits
- ongoing and appropriate support to develop their knowledge and skills enabling them to stay and progress in work
- quarterly (at least) face-to-face reviews between the provider, the participant and their employer, timed to meet the needs of the participant.

Support for each participant must be tailored to their individual needs. The provider will judge and agree with the participant (and their employer) depending on circumstances. This support could include:

- taking on a job coach role, for example, to help a person with a learning disability adapt to new work tasks;
- delivering disability awareness training to an employer and co-workers to help them understand how everyone can contribute to a successful workplace;
- working with the employer and co-workers so that they become skilled in adapting tasks or training procedures to facilitate employing people with more significant disabilities; and
- helping an individual with an aspect of their home life that is adversely affecting their ability to do their job.

Minimum Levels of Support in Module Three

In Module Three the provider must work with the participant or with others on behalf of the participant (e.g. their employer) to ensure that for at least four hours per month the participant is engaged in activity aimed at developing their full potential at work. This may include up to four hours one-to-one guidance, or a more advisory role, depending on the participant's needs, level of independence and abilities. As in Module Two, this might include, for example, learning new skills, broadening their role or responsibilities, learning new ways of working, etc. The opportunities for working towards progression must remain to the fore in all planning discussions.

Besides Provider support, certain customers participating in Work Choice Module 3 may be eligible for Access to Work support, but **not** for short term support designed to settle them into their supported employment. Annex 6 of the Work Choice Provider guidance also refers.

The Prime Provider has access to a Work Choice-dedicated AtW Specialist Advisory Team, based in an AtW Centre, who will advise and mentor them and discuss any queries the Prime Provider may have about the appropriateness of an application to Access to Work.

Duration

Module Three is not time limited.