



IEP RESPONSE TO DES REFORMS AUSTRALIA

If eligibility was extended to include those with an assessed work capacity with support of less than 8 hours a week:

- What would quality employment look like for this cohort? What would be the key features of a service for this cohort?

Not different in principle from other cohorts but likely to require more intensive support.

- What kind of expertise would be required in providers to deliver this service?

Expertise in Supported Employment, with links to health housing and social services and considerable experience and professionalism of front-line staff.

- What type of employment incentives or support would be beneficial?

A guarantee of long-term support regardless of changes to government or regulations.

If the 2-year limit on DES participation is removed and/or if the requirement to be in receipt of an income support payment is removed?

- What benefits would these arrangements bring to participant services and reduced administration?

More people with disabilities would be able to access needed support to help them into, or towards, work. Social equality would be enhanced.

- Are there any unintended consequences?

Any loss of services to DES / IS beneficiaries would be regrettable.

If the Disability Management Service (DMS) and Employment Service Support (ESS) were combined into a single service with funding levels catered to differences in service and support needs:

- Would this simplify the program design and reduce administration?

Probably, but at some risk – below.

- Would this have any unintended consequences?



Risk of loss of quality of support as generalists might dominate quality measures, budgets, and expertise in provision. This could lead to loss of customised, cohort specific services. Protections would be required.

If, in addition to the current full-service offer, a more flexible service option was proposed for some participants

- Which participants might be suitable for this type of service offer?
- What benefits would this bring to participant services and reduced administration?

Flexibility in service delivery is necessary to respond to participants' needs. Any lack of flexibility within a properly staffed (qualified, professional, participant-centred) service can be ineffective for some clients as it prevents advisers from offering the appropriate service.

- Are there any unintended consequences?

Flexibility usually, but not always, implies a move towards greater co-ordination of services, more tailored participation, and lower caseloads. Hence costs might increase, as would the concomitant rewards of flexibility.

If it was possible to simplify requirements so participants meet their obligations by engaging effectively with a provider in preparing for, seeking and undertaking employment:

- What benefits would this bring to participants and administration?

Are there any unintended consequences, for whom and why is that important?

- Would the option to move to specific requirements – similar to current arrangements – be appropriate where a participant wasn't engaging effectively?

The UK experience of sanctions / obligations is that:

"For a substantial minority, welfare conditionality within social security regularly initiates and sustains a range of negative behaviour changes and outcomes including:

- counterproductive compliance
- disengagement from the social security system
- increased poverty, and on occasions, destitution
- movements into survival crime
- exacerbated ill health and impairments."

Source: Final Findings report, Welfare Conditionality Project, Economic and Social Research Council 2018. <http://www.welfareconditionality.ac.uk/>



If Work Assist focussed on immediate access to support service fees, and with less emphasis on outcome payments:

- What benefits would this bring to participant service and reduced administration?

More emphasis on 'distance travelled' and co-ordination of and between services leading to better engagement, progression and eventual employability / employment.

- Are there any unintended consequences?

Longer on-programme durations – which is part of the aim of such a reform, and to be expected.



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