European
Social
Network

Leading
Social Services

Tools for
INCLUSIVE
ACTIVATION

Improving the social inclusion of people furthest from the labour market

#InclusiveActivation

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication is the result of the European Social Network's (ESN) work on inclusive activation mainly through its seminar and research in the framework of its 2018-2021 strategy. This research project was managed by ESN and carried out in collaboration with Paolo Graziano, professor of political science at the University of Padua (Italy).

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL NETWORK

ESN is the independent network for local public social services in Europe. It brings together the organisations that plan, finance, research, manage, regulate, deliver and inspect local public social services, including health, social welfare, employment, education and housing. We support the development of effective social policy and social care practice through the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

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Acknowledgements

FOREWORD
by the Chief Executive

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide guidance and practice examples on inclusion strategies of people furthest from the labour market for senior social services professionals who provide care for vulnerable people across Europe. The publication is based on the findings from a questionnaire shared with our members working in the social inclusion of people furthest from the labour market, a literature review of trends and issues on the topic, and the discussions held at focus groups during ESN's seminar 'Inclusive Activation: Social inclusion of people furthest from the labour market' in Vienna on 5-6 November.

While at national and European levels, there has been an emphasis on activation, our members have pointed out to limitations of this model for those in situations of exclusion who may not be able to participate fully in activation programmes and require some form of adaptation. This is how we suggested an approach focused on 'inclusive activation'. This means that people furthest from the labour market are supported in a more holistic manner which is adapted to their needs, where social, health, education, housing and employment services are all considered relevant in promoting their social inclusion. The concept of inclusive activation, as implemented by many ESN members, is built on a series of principles, including: a holistic assessment of the needs of people using services, an integrated provision of services, a personalised plan, adequate income support, a labour market which accounts for their specific needs, and access to quality services.

Our work over the years and most specifically the analysis of the literature, the questionnaire and the seminar organised in 2018 helped us to come up with three key areas of guidance when designing inclusive activation policy and practice: coordination between services, availability and adequacy of resources, and designing pathways to inclusion for specific populations.

Coordination between services is particularly important since it represents a pre-requisite for effective outreach and personalisation. A common denominator of success in coordination is appointing a case manager. Case managers can help increase chances of services take-up, establish personalised care plans, and monitor the implementation of the plan. One-stop-shops as a single-entry point and place of referral to the right service can also play a key role. Finally, public-private partnerships, where the private and third sectors work closely with public authorities to create opportunities that account for multiple needs, can lead to more inclusive labour markets.

The availability of adequate funding and resources is another important factor. Social services professionals highlight that the availability of resources to support people with complex needs in the labour market is often limited. Therefore, one of the main challenges for public services, especially social services, is to find alternative funds for tailored support. In addition to national and local budgets, other funding options can be explored. These include EU funds such as the European Social Fund and the European Regional and Development Fund, funds for local entrepreneurship or private investors tools, such as social impact bonds.

Designing specific pathways to inclusion for people who are not immediately employable and need tailored support to integrate in the labour market is the third area explored in the toolkit. These pathways take the form of personalised plans which have as their ultimate goal the social inclusion of people with complex needs through a series of tools and short to medium term objectives including employment. These populations include the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, young people, migrants and refugees, homeless people or people suffering from mental illness, and single parents with caring duties.

Wishing to overcome the idea of social inclusion solely driven by employment, we propose for an inclusive activation approach grounded on practice that responds to the multiple causes of social exclusion in a holistic manner and promotes services personalisation and the autonomy of people using services.

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CONTENTS

WHY INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION?

Inclusive activation and the role of social services

Since the start of the economic crisis in 2008, unemployment trends in EU Member States changed. In the first years after the crisis, long-term unemployment (long-term unemployed refers to unemployment lasting for more than 12 months) rates increased. For example, the number of people out of work for two years or more in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) area grew by 2.6 million since 2007 and reached 7.8 million in 2011 (OECD, 2013: 8). Moreover, the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) rose. Before 2008, the NEET rate was decreasing, down from 12.9% to 10.9% for the 15-24-year olds and from 15.3% to 13.1% for the 15-29-year olds (European Parliament, 2017: 4). However, in 2017, 17.2% of 20-34-year olds in the EU were neither in employment nor in education or training (Eurostat, 2017).

Public social services experienced increased pressure as more people fell into poverty and ended up socially excluded. In research that we conducted in 2014, ESN members reported much higher demand as new population groups such as middle classes turned to social services and welfare benefits citing job loss and inability to meet housing costs (ESN, 2014: 2). In the worst affected countries, municipalities and NGOs had to set up food banks or soup kitchens to feed those who could not afford to pay for food (ESN, 2014: 2).

Other service responses included increased counselling for depression, anxiety or other mental health problems, and a rise in child protection concerns (ESN, 2014: 2). At the same time, people with disabilities, people with mental health problems, frail older people, vulnerable children and families have been increasingly affected by restrictions in eligibility criteria and therefore service accessibility (ESN, 2015: 3).

Public social services provide support primarily for vulnerable people on the basis of an assessment of their needs: long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, young people, migrants and refugees, homeless people, people with mental illness or single parents, amongst others. In many cases, people with whom social services work receive minimum income or other types of financial benefits and face multiple barriers to access employment. These include lack of adequate education and training, lack of housing, health issues, indebtedness, the need to care for family members and children, and substance abuse. As a result, these vulnerable populations are at greater risk of being unemployed, a situation that can last longer than for other groups.

ESN has been working on inclusive ways of supporting employment since 2008 when ESN published its first contribution to this topic. ESN members clarified that:

"Inclusion typifies the diverse and evolving set of responsibilities of social services. First, it offers a chance to those at the margins to make it to the labour market, find and retain a job and (re-)integrate socially. Its second aspect relates to the situation in which participation in the primary labour market is limited or not possible. Then active inclusion translates into efforts to support all citizens to make an active contribution to society and participate in civic, social and cultural life in alternative ways" (ESN, 2008: 3).

Following this first publication, ESN responded to two EU consultations in 2013 and 2015 to evaluate the implementation of the European Commission Recommendation on active inclusion (European Union, 2008) and the European Council Recommendation on the integration of long-term unemployed people in the labour market (European Union, 2016).

ESN and its members highlighted in the two consultations that activation grounded only on employment does not offer a real opportunity to people furthest from the labour market to be socially included, especially for those in a situation where participation in the labour market is limited. Therefore, it is key to shift policy and practice from activation focused solely on employment to an 'inclusive activation' approach. This means that people furthest from the labour market are supported in a holistic manner which is adapted to their needs, where social, health, education, housing and employment services are all considered relevant in promoting their social inclusion.

The concept of 'inclusive activation', as implemented by many ESN members, is built on six principles:

At the start of the service users' journey, there is an assessment of needs conducted by social workers, who in many cases become case managers. Social services have a holistic view of the needs of service users, since their work is not only aimed at improving employability but more broadly the social inclusion of individuals at higher risk of social exclusion. After this first step, social services, together with the people they support, establish a personalised plan based on specific individual needs. Linking this plan with the person's employability is crucial to ensure their inclusion.

Providing adequate income support is an important part of the personalised plan. There are different models of financial support in EU countries to ensure a minimum standard of living. These vary from mini-

Diagram 1. Proposal for an inclusive activation approach

INTEGRATED SERVICES

ADEQUATE INCOME SUPPORT

HOLISTIC VIEW OF NEEDS

INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION

PERSONALISED PLAN

INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKETS

ACCESS TO QUALITY SERVICES

mum income schemes to other types of non-contributory means-tested benefits for people of working age (European Commission, 2016: 7). As noted in a study published by the European Commission, in many countries, "the generosity and coverage of minimum income schemes seems to have been reduced as a result of financial retrenchment in recent years" (European Commission, 2016: 8). Cuts in national budgets have reduced the level of financial support or increased conditionality. Adequate income support is an important element of the inclusive activation model proposed by ESN, especially when it comes to preventing the multigenerational transmission of poverty.

Social services can help employment services identify which measures could support the labour market become more inclusive for people with complex needs. Social services can also help employment services to develop alternative programmes for people who cannot be included in the labour market but require a different approach to ensure their social inclusion.

Inclusive activation in the European context

The EU has adopted a number of policy recommendations to tackle the issue of unemployment. The European Commission adopted a first Recommendation on active inclusion (European Union, 2008) and the Council adopted a second Recommendation (European Union, 2016) on the integration of long-term unemployed people in the labour market.

The Recommendation on active inclusion specifies that "active inclusion policies should facilitate the integration into sustainable, quality employment of those who can work and provide resources which are sufficient to live in dignity, together with support for social participation, for those who cannot" (European Union, 2008: Article 1). The Recommendation points to three pillars, namely income support, inclusive labour markets and access to high-quality social services.

The Recommendation on the long-term unemployed suggests that Member States put in place integrated plans to support people with complex needs into employment. This Recommendation focuses on the registration of jobseekers with employment services, individual assessment and guidance offered at the very latest after 18 months of unemployment, and job-integration agreements. Job-integration agreements are a key tool to target the specific needs of registered long-term unemployed persons via integration of relevant services and measures provided by different organisations.

In 2010, the European Commission also adopted the Europe 2020 Strategy (European Union, 2010) with specific targets on unemployment reduction.

Europe 2020 targets foresee that by 2020:
- 75% of people aged 20–64 to be in work;
- Rates of early school leavers below 10%;
- At least 40% of people aged 30–34 having completed higher education;
- At least 20 million fewer people in – or at risk of – poverty/social exclusion (European Union, 2010).

Since 2014, progress towards these targets has been partly addressed through a mechanism of economic policy coordination between the European Commission and Member States - the European Semester (European Semester webpage). Employment and social issues in EU Member States are analysed yearly, and the European Commission issues country specific recommendations to address specific issues per country.

In 2013 the Commission launched the Social Investment Package (European Union, 2013), which emphasised the importance of guaranteeing access to quality and integrated services. The Social Investment Package included a series of measures designed to help address the growing risk of poverty and social exclusion resulting from the economic crisis that hit Europe ten years ago. The three main points of the social investment package are:
- Better social protection systems able to respond to people's needs at critical moments throughout their lives;

- Simplified and better targeted social policies to provide adequate and sustainable social protection systems;
- Better active inclusion strategies including affordable quality childcare and education, prevention of early school leaving, training and job-search assistance, housing support, and accessible healthcare.

In 2017, the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) (European Union, 2017) was adopted, giving a new momentum to policies towards the social inclusion of people furthest from the labour market. Chapters 1 and 3 of the EPSR are the most relevant to inclusive activation policies by enshrining social rights such as the right to education, training and life-long learning, gender equality, equal opportunities and active support to employment. In relation to this last item, the EPSR states that:

"Everyone has the right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-employment prospects. This includes the right to receive support for job search, training and re-qualification. Everyone has the right to transfer social protection and training entitlements during professional transitions. Young people have the right to continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship or a job offer of good standing within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education. People unemployed have the right to personalised, continuous and consistent support. The long-term unemployed have the right to an in-depth individual assessment at the latest at 18 months of unemployment" (European Union, 2017 (1), Point 1.4).

The implementation of the following rights enshrined in the Pillar fall under the exclusive or shared responsibility of public social services at local level:

- **Principle 4:** Active support to employment (with cooperation with employment services);
- **Principle 11:** Childcare and support to children;
- **Principle 12:** Social protection;
- **Principle 13:** Unemployment benefits;
- **Principle 14:** Minimum income;
- **Principle 17:** Inclusion of people with disabilities;
- **Principle 19:** Housing and assistance for the homeless;
- **Principle 20:** Access to essential services.

How did we develop this toolkit?

This publication builds on three main strands of work. First, an online questionnaire of ESN members working in the social inclusion of people furthest from the labour market. Second, a literature review of trends and issues on inclusive activation of people furthest from the labour market. The third and final strand is related to the outcomes of discussions held at the ESN's seminar 'Inclusive Activation: Social inclusion of people furthest from the labour market' (Vienna, 5-6 November).

The literature review aimed to gather information on different activation measures implemented in European countries. This exercise helped us to identify key trends in the field. Trends identified in several countries included: decentralisation, income support and conditionality, marketisation, availability of new technologies, and staff training. The analysis of the literature also helped us to come up with key elements of the various models of inclusive activation that impact on how the models are designed and the results they may lead to. These include different levels of policy or practice coordination or integration, the availability of adequate funding, and the need to design specific pathways to inclusion for people who are not immediately employable and need more support to integrate into the labour market.

In June 2018, we developed an online questionnaire to help identify key issues faced by professionals working on supporting employment for people furthest from the labour market. The questionnaire was submitted to public social services, local authorities and third sector organisations responsible for different vulnerable groups. We received a total of 66 completed questionnaires from 24 European countries. Thanks to the questionnaire, we identified the most frequently detected needs of the most vulnerable population groups, major barriers in interventions and issues around the use of EU funds.

We also identified specific practices implemented by public social services to support people furthest from the labour market to find and retain jobs. These practices have been uploaded to ESN's practice library, providing an excellent resource for social services professionals and others to learn about innovative approaches on inclusive approaches for the activation of people furthest from the labour market.

The seminar in November was attended by more than 170 participants from 25 countries. Group discussions focused on the role of social economy and entrepreneurship and the improved use of EU funds for inclusive activation, as these two topics had been considered of high interest by the professionals who answered the questionnaire. In addition, there were three sessions on specific population groups: minimum income recipients, people at higher risk of social exclusion, and young people with a disability. Respondents to the questionnaire identified these three population groups as most at risk of social exclusion for the purposes of promoting employment.
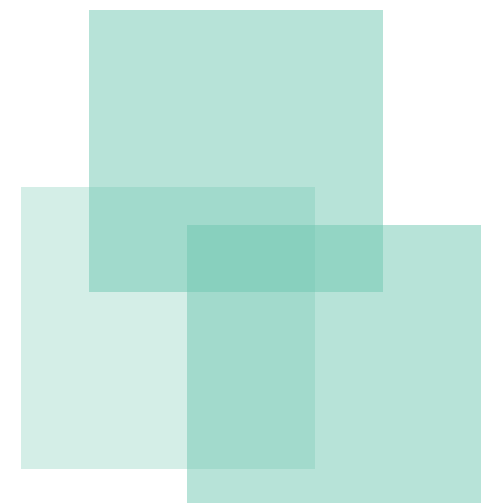
TRENDS IN INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION: WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE TELL US?

1 Different models of inclusive activation

Inclusive activation has achieved an important status in European social policy debate and practice. As already mentioned in the background section, active inclusion became a buzzword for the European Commission and the European Council from 2008 (see European Commission, 2008; Council of the European Union, 2016). The academic and practitioners' debate on the specifics of inclusive activation followed. Prior to the 2016 Council Recommendation which focused especially on long-term unemployment and the launch of the European Pillar of Social Rights (2017), the most recent debates regarding people furthest from the labour market covered primarily youth unemployment, NEETs, as well as people with disabilities and mental health problems.

How has inclusive activation been implemented across Europe?

As with other EU policy areas, it is not possible to consider the implementation of a policy across Europe as if it followed a single implementation pattern. The national situation in each country needs to be taken into consideration and specifics are needed to understand the reasons behind policy implementation gaps.

Since the launch of the European Employment Strategy (1997), activation goals have been at the centre of European and national social and employment policies (Bonoli, 2010; Heidenreich and Aurich Beerheide, 2014). In recent years, the issue of inclusive activation became of particular importance, especially in the aftermath of the Great Recession (see also Bonoli, 2013).

Research has shown how activation in European countries follows different patterns linked to the dif-

ferent types of welfare states (Heidenreich and Aurich Beerheide, 2014). One of the key findings is that implementation of effective inclusive activation policies requires a tripartite form of integration: multi-dimensional, multi-actor and multi-level.

- Multi-dimensional refers to the improved horizontal coordination between various policies and sectors needed to guarantee that the various social and employment services and benefits are adequately coordinated;
- Multi-actor refers to the need to include different knowledgeable actors, both institutional and non-institutional, in order to share information and profit from their knowledge and experience-based added value;
- Multi-level means that implementation must take place at different governance levels, since current inclusive activation policies lie increasingly at the centre of a relational web of organisations and institutions at national and local levels.

The Scandinavian, Continental, Anglo-Saxon, southern European and central-Eastern European variants of inclusive activation were studied in an EU-funded project 'Local Worlds of Social Cohesion' (LOCALISE) and summarised in a special issue of the International Journal of Social Welfare (Heidenreich and Graziano, 2014). Each variant has specificities which are linked to the broader features of each welfare state model.

In the Swedish case, there is a comprehensive form of inclusive activation since all types of labour market integration are adequately managed by key actors, such as decision-makers and practitioners - both at institutional and frontline levels. Furthermore, the precondition of universalism is seen as particularly important for reaching the goal: "the universal provision of social services and the dual activation at national and municipal levels explain the successful activation and reintegration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market" (Heidenreich and Aurich Beerheide, 2014: S14). Long-term unemployment is the policy area where the most significant research efforts on inclusive activation have been conducted.

A different situation emerges in the continental case, which was also assessed in the above mentioned research. In Germany, the policy of integration – in its three main components: multi-dimensional, multi-actor and multi-level – is relatively new and has led the insurgence of a 'creaming and parking' effect. This effect refers to providing more support ('cream') to those who are closest to the labour market, leaving at the margins ('park') those who are furthest. "While the groups closer to the labour market are successfully activated and reintegrated into the labour market, other groups - further away, such as migrants, low-skilled and ill persons - are often not activated and hence durably excluded" (Heidenreich and Aurich Beerheide, 2014: S15).

The southern European example researched in the study (Italy) is even more troublesome due to greater pressure, in terms of the numbers of unemployed people, and the lack of policy coordination due to employment competences being primarily a regional competence whereas social assistance functions are primarily a municipal task. "Due to the division of competences between the national, regional, provincial and municipal levels, systemic coordination does not take place between the fragmented, complex employment and social policies in Italy. Thus, lacking multilevel integration leads to a lack of multidimensional integration" (Heidenreich and Aurich Beerheide, 2014: S16). This is particularly true in the southern part of the country.

The Polish case tells a different story. Policy integration seems to be still in the making and therefore inclusive activation not yet fully consolidated. In fact, it is argued in the literature that "the outcome of the organisational patterns is a residual role of activation policies for the long-term unemployed" (Heidenreich and Aurich Beerheide, 2014: S17). However, possibly due to low unemployment, the lack of policy developments has not yet had a harmful impact on the functioning of the labour market.

Finally, the UK. Although it displays an older story of activation policies and multidimensional integration, there is evidence of favouring "creaming and parking strategies, especially in difficult economic situations" (Heidenreich and Aurich Beerheide, 2014: S19).

2 Trends impacting inclusive activation

Broadly speaking, activation strategies have been particularly relevant in the aftermath of the Great Recession, which hit particularly hard the long-term unemployed (Heidenreich, 2015). Across all European countries there are issues that have emerged over the past twenty years linked up to the implementation of social policies, which are also relevant for activation models. These include: decentralisation, income support and conditionality, marketisation, the availability of new technologies, and the skills and training of professionals

Decentralisation

The implementation of inclusive activation strategies need to take account of limitations in administrative capacities and the degree of decentralisation of power from the national to regional and local levels (Borghi and van Berkel, 2007; Aurich and others, 2015; Catalano, Graziano and Bassoli, 2015; López-Santana, 2015; Marchal and van Mechelen, 2017). Several studies have shown how multilevel implementation may be particularly difficult in contexts characterised by limited administrative capacities that may be affected by limited resources, limited training or excessive workload.

This was highlighted in a comparative survey of the 'governance of active welfare states', conducted by Mosley (2009), and van Berkel, de Graaf and Sirovatka (2011). The results of the study show that the implementation capacities in various European countries differ since they require "being able to coordinate local actors; analyse local needs, develop appropriate strategies, implement programmes, monitor, control and evaluate performance, and comply with accountability standards that may be required by higher level authorities" (Mosley, 2009: 37). Put differently, too often decentralisation may seem a promising strategy in principle but it could be rather demanding in terms of administrative capacities. Without the adequate funds, training and workload, providing more responsibilities to the local level may be detrimental to the effectiveness of inclusive activation strategies.

Conditionality

Strongly linked to the notion of activation, conditional income support constitutes one of the main incentives for activating people. In one of the contexts where conditionality has been most widely used – the UK – it has been noted that "unemployed and low paid citizens are now held to be solely responsible, not only for a lack of paid employment, but also partial engagement with the paid labour market and the levels of remuneration they may receive" (Dwyer and Wright, 2017: 33).

While conditionality can be effective in reducing welfare expenditure, it may also carry significant implications regarding social justice and social rights (Withworth and Griggs, 2013). As for its effectiveness, empirical research is rather scarce since most of the studies focus on active labour market policies rather than conditionality per se (see, for example, Escudero, 2018).

What has been mostly researched is the overall principle. Although it provides for a reduction in costs and a larger number of labour market inclusion opportunities, it does not focus on social inclusion. In fact, one of the most important points presented in the literature is that inclusive activation should not merely be considered from a labour market perspective but rather from a broader social perspective to avoid the erosion of social rights and the 'stigmatisation' of precarious work and social conditions (Dilgendey, 2007; Etherington and Daguerre, 2015).

Marketisation

Marketisation – or 'commodification' – first launched in the Anglo-Saxon welfare state, has been adopted by a number of other welfare states over the years. In the literature, marketisation is particularly important in the context of inclusive activation because it determines that specific targets should be met so that service providers are remunerated.

Although marketisation is commonly assumed to have spread throughout welfare states, its main mechanisms and features still remain scarcely explored. One noteworthy exception is the study by Greer and others (2018) which shows that not-for-profit and commercial providers act differently. Not-for-profit providers focus a lot more on those furthest from the labour market than commercial providers (Greer, Schulte and Symon, 2018: 1448-1449). In sum, marketisation may pose complex coordination and implementation challenges which require well equipped and trained public servants that can address implementation gaps (van Berkel, de Graaf and Sirovatka, 2011).

IT availability

IT innovations in employment and social policies have not been thoroughly studied yet, but their potential is promising. The availability of new technologies – especially in terms of IT management – has made policy implementation much easier. Primarily, innovation may have a relevant impact on higher education by "[o]ffering entry to students from disadvantaged backgrounds (…). Raising the availability of tertiary education in remote areas (…). Offering financial incentives both for higher education institutions to enrol students from underrepresented groups, and for students from these groups to enrol" (OECD, 2017: 10).

More specifically, with respect to employment and social policies, IT innovation could improve big data management and allow public employment services, social services providers and civil servants to process information faster and more effectively than in the past. Furthermore, remote 'one-stop-shops' could help people requesting employment and social services support to get all the paperwork done in less time and practitioners can focus more on skills development. As we shall see later in the analysis of the questionnaires responses and identified practices, there are many examples of innovation in the provision of services – better targeting, better data processing and gathering of beneficiaries' information.

Training

Skills, training and expertise of employment and social services personnel is key in guaranteeing adequate human capital support for the implementation of inclusive activation strategies. As already stated in ESN's report 'Investing in the social service workforce'

(2016), social service workforce motivation and training are key to ensure that social services are effective for the beneficiaries and public budgets. One of the key findings and recommendations of the report highlights the "need to update social workers' training contents to acknowledge social changes as well as developments in other areas including the role of technology" (ESN, 2016: 20). Based on this piece of work, it also emerged that there is a need to use 'technological improvements' to help case workers in their daily tasks, saving time and making their work more effective.
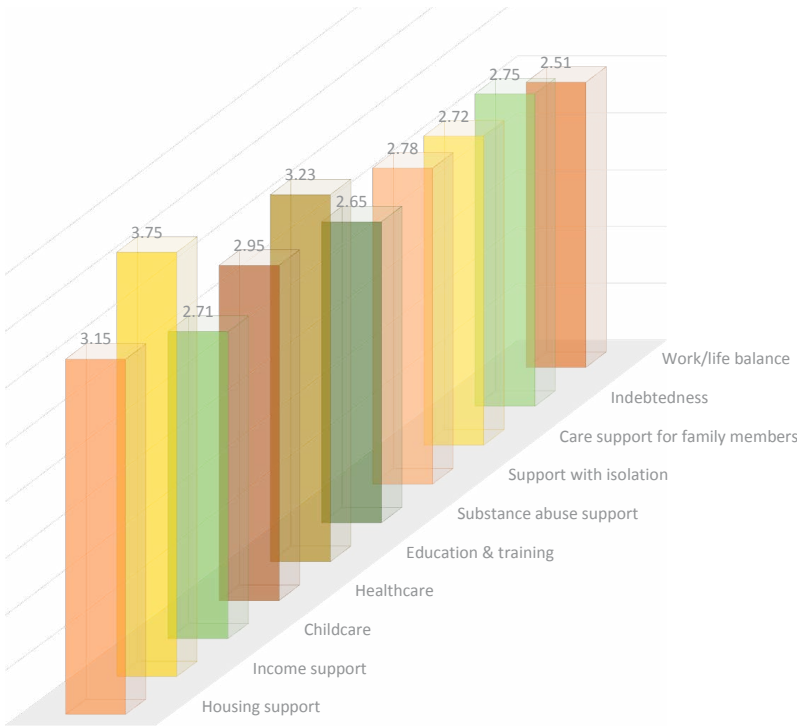
TRENDS IN INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION: WHAT DO PRACTITIONERS SAY?

The main goal of the questionnaire was to capture the most relevant issues related to the implementation of activation programmes, with a focus on their capacity for promoting the social inclusion of people furthest from the labour market. The questionnaire was submitted between June and August 2018, and 66 answers from 25 countries were received. The respondents to the questionnaire are primarily involved in planning, regulating, developing and delivering social services (for further details on the respondents, see appendix 1).

Key activities performed by respondents are planning, regulation, development and delivery of social services. Planning is by far the most frequently performed activity – about 55% of respondents – followed first by services provision about 45% of respondents – and services regulation and development in third place – just below 40%.

In terms of the population group, most respondents work with the long-term unemployed, though this is a heterogeneous group that may include other populations far from the labour market. The long-term unemployed are followed by people with disabilities, young people and migrants and refugees. This is in line with the policy and academic literature on the topic, such as European Commission (2017) or Theodoropoulou (2018), which illustrate how the long-term unemployed have been especially affected by the most recent economic crisis together with people with disabilities, and young people (Burkhauser, Daly and Ziebhart, 2016; Scarpetta, Sonnet and Manfredi, 2010).

Income and housing support, along with education and training are the most frequent needs covered by the social services representatives who answered the questionnaire (Figure 1). This finding aligns with the interest in the topic at European level, where there has been ongoing work between the European Commission and member states on the adequacy of income support through analysis of the various benefits available and assessment of minimum income schemes and reference budgets.

Figure 1: Most covered needs by social services

What are the most frequent detected needs of your target group?

People furthest from the labour market have complex needs, which require cooperation with other services to be able to address them accordingly. As Figure 2 shows, the sector with whom social services cooperate most to be able to support people into employment and inclusion is employment. Cooperation is also significant with housing and healthcare. This is confirmed by the literature which says that social services cooperate mostly with employment, healthcare and housing – especially when there is policy integration (Heidenreich and Aurich-Beerheide, 2014; Catalano, Graziano and Bassoli, 2015).

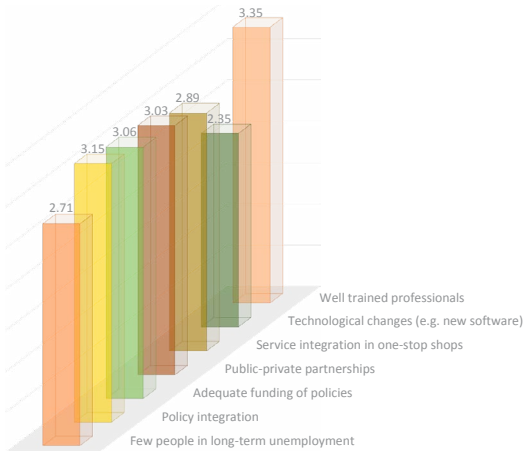**Figure 2: Social services cooperation with other services to support activation**

Please let us know which services your social service division cooperates with:
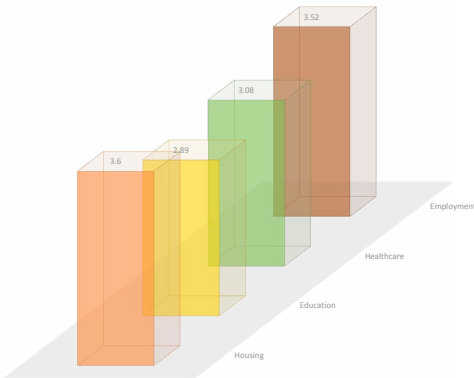
In terms of the duties performed by social services to support employment of people with complex needs, personalised plans, cooperation with other services (notably, employment, healthcare and housing healthcare), and case management were the three most mentioned by respondents to the question

naire. This finding resonates well with the literature on the topic which has underlined that setting specific support and services personalisation are effective in ensuring successful inclusive activation (see, for example, Fuertes and Lindsay, 2016).

Personalisation tools, such as establishing a personalised plan and individual case management, have been increasingly considered as key drivers for successful activation of people with complex needs. Furthermore, the link between personalised social services and income support, highlighted above as one of the most effective ways to cover the needs of those furthest from the labour market, is also underlined by the literature as one of the best routes to inclusive activation (Fuertes and Lindsay, 2016; Rice, 2013).

Professionals in social services should also be adequately trained to provide the best possible support for people furthest from the labour market and refer them to the right type of service. Respondents to the questionnaire highlighted 'well trained professionals' as an important success factor, followed by policy integration and adequate funding, to support effectively people with complex needs in their activation and social inclusion (Figure 3). These answers resonate with previous ESN findings regarding the social services workforce which underlined the relevance of adequate training and motivation for employment and social services to be delivered effectively (ESN, 2016). They also resonate with other literature findings focusing on the relevance of policy integration (Catalano, Graziano and Bassoli, 2015; Tosun and Lang, 2017).

Figure 3: Success and barriers in inclusive activation practice

What are the major success factors (external and internal) of your model of intervention in addressing the social needs of people furthest from the labour market?

What are the major barriers (external and internal) of your model of intervention in addressing the social needs of people furthest from the labour market?
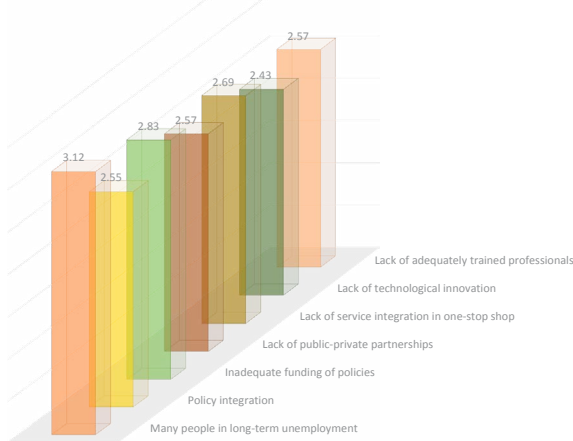
PLANNING AND DESIGNING SUCCESSFUL INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION PRACTICE

Bringing together the findings from the literature review and answers to the questionnaire, there are three topics that are common when designing inclusive activation policy and practice strategies:

- The improvement of coordination between services

- Ensuring the availability and adequacy of resources

- Designing specific pathways to inclusion for specific populations

1 First, finding ways to ensure the implementation of policy integration principles that promote **coordination between services** is particularly important since coordination is a pre-requisite for effective outreach and personalisation (ESN, 2016: 33-35; European Commission, 2015). The so called 'one-stop-shops' (Minas, 2014) are a good example of multidimensional integration, where coordination between multiple stakeholders may allow for successful innovation (Rathgeb, 2018).

One-stop-shops are good examples of the implementation of horizontal policy integration which consist of a single point of access to facilitate information and referral to the right service. It has been underlined that multilevel policy integration is required for successful inclusive activation, although it may be difficult to obtain (Aurich, 2011; Aurich Beeheide et al., 2014; Catalano et al., 2015) because of the high level of commitment to coordination which is required at practitioner, administration and political levels.

While improved coordination may facilitate problem-solving capacities, it may also lead to conflict among the various actors involved in decision-making, as some may 'lose' power in the 'pooling' of resources and competences. This means that one of the main obstacles to improved services coordination is not just related to the organisation of competences but rather the allocation of power attached to those competences.

2 Second, **availability of resources** is another important factor which emerges from the literature and the responses to the questionnaire. In order to implement successful inclusive activation policies consisting of a combination of services and income, adequate resources need to be available. This finding also emerges from research conducted in Denmark following an experimental design (Maibom et al., 2017). The researchers showed that intense support, such as individual and timely meetings with the unemployed had a positive effect in terms of finding a job, and were cost-effective. According to this research: "Individual meetings between newly unemployed workers and caseworkers increase employment rates over the next four and a half years by 5%, and they improve the government budget by close to EUR 4,500 per unemployed worker" (Maibom et al., 2017: 565).

3 Third, both literature and practice highlight the need to **design specific pathways to inclusion** for people who are not immediately employable and need targeted support to integrate in the labour market. These pathways take the form of personalised plans which have as their ultimate goal the social inclusion of people with complex needs through a series of instruments and short to medium term objectives that include their integration in the labour market. These groups include the long-term unemployed – understood as a heterogenous group of people with different care needs – people with disabilities, young people, migrants and refugees, those who are homeless or have a mental illness, and single parents with caring duties.

These three topics will be analysed in detail in the next three chapters. The aim of each chapter is to provide an overview of tools and practice examples that can support social services professionals in the design and implementation of inclusive activation policies, which improve outcomes for the social inclusion of people furthest from the labour market.

IMPROVING SERVICES COORDINATION

In recent years many EU countries have implemented reforms to better coordinate social and employment policies in response to the financial crisis. In a study conducted in 2017, the European Commission reported that Austria, Germany and the Netherlands tested forms of decentralisation or service integration at local level, whilst Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, some regions of Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Slovakia have formal agreements on cooperation between employment and social services agencies (European Commission, 2017: 12).

Some challenges remain for the coordinated provision of social services and financial benefits, as different authorities and administrative levels are involved. According to the European Commission study, the highest level of coordination of employment and social services can be found in Germany, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. However, the integration of financial benefits and services through one-stop-shops led by a single case manager has not been achieved in most EU countries, although this seems to be a major policy development in the field of support for people furthest from the labour market (European Commission, 2017: 13).

Another recent study (European Commission, 2018) aimed to analyse how integrated services can better support minimum income recipients find and retain jobs. The study underlines that:

> "coordination across services has advantages beyond removing duplications and ensuring that minimum income recipients have access to the range of services needed to tackle the multiple barriers with which they are faced. It can support outreach efforts (by enabling referrals from several contact points) and facilitate the monitoring of client trajectories during long and repeated benefit spells" (European Commission, 2018: 5).

Two thirds of respondents to the questionnaire (66%) replied that they felt cooperation between services was managed successfully in their localities and regions, which seems to suggest that local practice has been in some cases more advanced than national practice. In addition, 43% of respondents highlighted that cooperation between the various services involved with the individuals and families they supported worked without significant difficulties. This cooperation can be enhanced through a specific protocol (45%), adequate training (60%) and funding (40%), and new technology (40%).

Responses to the questionnaire and discussions at the seminar showed that integrated services provision can produce better outcomes for people with complex needs using services. Levels of integration vary depending on the country, although there are a number of elements that are increasingly common in practice across Europe. These are:

- **A case manager** as first point of contact for service users can help increase chances of services take-up, establish personalised or tailored care plans, and monitor the implementation of the plan;
- **One-stop-shops** act as single entry point and place of referral to the right service;
- **Public-private partnerships**, where the private and third sectors work closely with public authorities, can lead to more inclusive labour markets.

Case management

According to the definition put forward by ESN, case management refers to the "coordination by multiple professionals to meet the users' needs. A single contact person for service users is often essential in case management and may require the creation of a new role: a case manager who oversees available services, works in a person-centred way and has the authority to coordinate different services from different sectors" (ESN, 2016: 51).

The case manager can act as the entry point to the system so that people access the services they need.

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The case manager plays a key role in tailoring services to the individual and ensures that service users' needs are met through effective service provision. Assessing service users' needs, establishing a personalised care plan, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of the interventions are the key steps of an efficient provision of integrated services (ESN, 2016: 49).

A case management methodology is used to increase the chances of social reintegration for inmates in the prison of Teixeiro (ES). The Regional Ministry of Labour and Welfare of Galicia, together with the Galician Consortium of Services for Equality and Welfare and the Spanish Ministry of Interior have developed a comprehensive programme to support the social reintegration of inmates that are being released in a year and a half. This programme aims to provide the right skills to support their reintegration in society. Beneficiaries of the programme set up their personalised plan with the professionals. Personalising the plan helps inmates to commit to its implementation and increases their chances of reintegration in society once they are released.

One-stop-shops

One-stop-shops refer to a single point of access or the provision of services under the same roof. There are other forms of coordinated service delivery, such as colocation, where a social worker is based at public employment services, or employment officers visit social services to support social workers in their assessment and work with people who need to access employment. One-stop-shops could be virtual, have different professionals involved, or focused on a population group.

For example, the City of Offenbach (DE) has promoted a new model of cooperation between different services to support disadvantaged youth in the city through the creation of 'Youth-to-Work-Agencies' (Schulze-Böing, Matthias, 2016). They consist of a one-stop-shop service, where professionals from across teams with different care duties provide support under the same roof. As an example, figure 4 shows the different agencies involved in supporting the school to work transition of young people.

Public-private partnerships

Improving services coordination also involves strong public-private partnerships, as shown by the example of the 'Disability and vulnerable people employment strategy' of Gloucestershire County Council (UK). One of the strategy's programmes, Going the Extra Mile Project (GEM), aims to engage with and support individuals who are currently dealing with circumstances that prevent them from working, and move them towards education, training, volunteering or work – with an employer or through self-employment. The GEM Project is a partnership of over 50 voluntary and community sector enterprises and other organisations in Gloucestershire. It is managed by Gloucestershire Gateway Trust, a group of leading local business people and social entrepreneurs, on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council.

Gloucestershire's primary focus are those with disabilities or long-term health conditions. However, they recognise that those who are furthest from the labour market have multiple and complex challenges that require a holistic package of tailored support. Gloucestershire works with a network of partners across all sectors to ensure that people get the right support when they need it. It also ensures that all organisations, whether they are commissioned or delivered by Gloucestershire County Council, are fully aware of their part in a person's journey to autonomy and work.
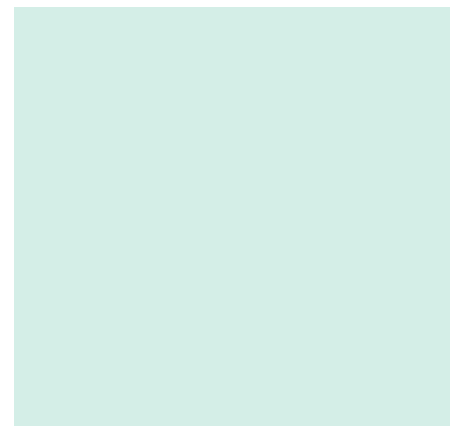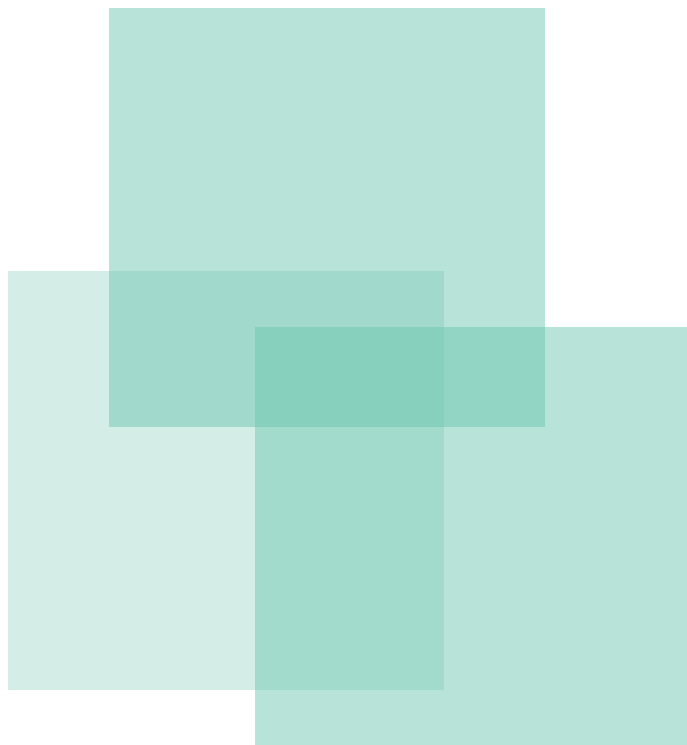
Figure 4: Agencies involved in school to work transition in Offenbach (DE)
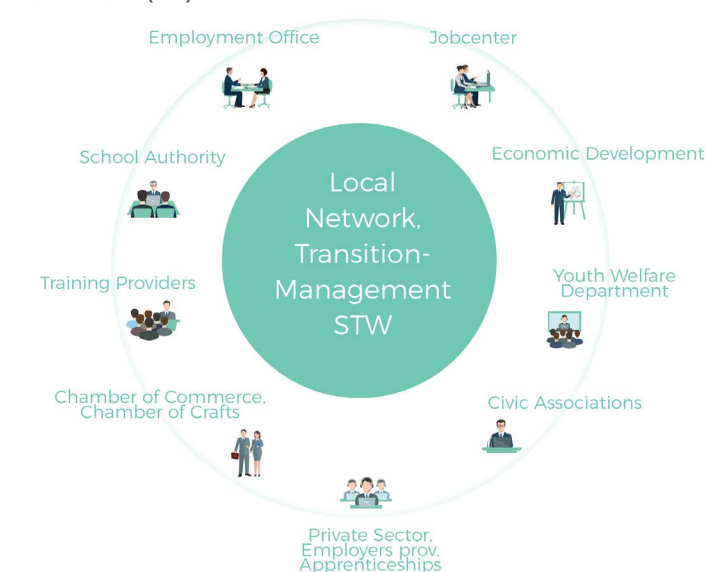
Source: Schulze-Böing, Matthias, 2016: p. 3

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INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION IN PRACTICE

ESTI@ Project
Employment enhancement and social
service integration, City of Athens (GR)

This project, funded by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), aims to support the social inclusion of beneficiaries through innovative and integrated social services. The integrated package of services (e.g. career counselling, legal advice, psychological support, entrepreneurial counselling) is designed to cover the needs of the beneficiaries, and in the meantime upgrade their capacities and skills. Eight main activities are taking place and are provided in an integrated manner:

TWO SINGLE ENTRY POINTS: Single Entry Points (SEP), introduce a wide spectrum of psychosocial, legal, medical and career services. They are being set-up by transforming existing support and medical centres. The staff of the two SEPs attend relevant training according to their roles and responsibilities.

CASE MANAGER: Central to the project, in this new professional role case managers are the main point of reference for beneficiaries so that they can navigate all the services provided, and for managing their records. At the end of the project, the case managers will be able to link beneficiaries to a wider range of services and benefits – in addition to services at the SEPs – thanks to an integrated IT system connected to other local services.

EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES: A set of services are offered to improve employability and help with finding job opportunities. This is done through personalised job consultancy sessions, the operation of an internet corner, and referrals to other experts when needed.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES: Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA), a project partner, supports the development of sustainable social enterprises, contributing to the creation of job opportunities that could be relevant for the beneficiaries of the ESTI@ Project.

LEGAL AID: The specific objective of the legal aid service is to ensure that deprived populations have access to free of charge legal aid services, promoting citizens' rights to decent legal representation.

CHILDCARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT: A multifunctional Day Care Centre for Children within each of the two SEPs has been created.

MEDICAL CARE: The specific objective of the medical care service is to improve and increase access to primary health care of vulnerable, marginalised and deprived populations severely affected by the economic crisis.

FIRST ASSISTANCE SERVICES: Material support and outreach is offered to the most deprived people. Namely material assistance – food, non-food items and some medication – are offered to those among the beneficiaries who fall below the poverty line. Additionally, a team of street workers conducts outreach activities specifically for very vulnerable populations, such as homeless people and people suffering from drug addiction with the aim of offering them the support provided within the project.

The full practice can be found here.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES FOR INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION

Responses to the questionnaire showed that the availability of resources to promote support into the labour market of people with complex needs is often limited. Therefore, one of the main challenges for public services, and specifically public social services, is to find alternative funds for tailored support. This holds particularly true in the light of the 2008 -2009 global recession and the Eurozone debt crisis which significantly affected European economies, decreasing growth and increasing unemployment in many European countries.

Municipalities have been particularly affected as social services budgets suffered significant reductions as a consequence of the economic crisis. Therefore, municipalities have had to seek alternative funding sources in addition to national and local budgets. These may include:

· **EU funds,** such as the European Social Fund and the European Regional and Development Fund;
· **Social entrepreneurship** supported by local citizens and local businesses;
· Private investors tools, such as **social impact bonds.**

EU funds supporting inclusive activation

The EU has different funds and programmes that may directly or indirectly support inclusive activation programmes. The most relevant funds are the European Social Fund (ESF), the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), and the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF).

Table 1. EU funds supporting inclusive activation

European Social Fund (ESF) (EUR 80 billion).	Supports jobs and investment in human capital. Around 25% of ESF (EUR 21.2 billion) targets social inclusion, poverty and discrimination.
Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) (EUR 8.4 billion).	Supports the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, an initiative targeting young people up to the age of 25.
European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) (EUR 21.5 billion).	Contributes to education, healthcare, childcare, housing and other social infrastructure.
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) (EUR 3.8 billion).	Provides assistance to most deprived, basic packages including food or clothing etc.
Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) (EUR 9.2 billion).	Provides support to social policy innovation programmes and projects.

Source: Presentation at ESN Seminar in Vienna on 5 November 2019 (Day 1- Plenaries)

Out of the questionnaire responses, 79% use the European Social Fund (ESF), whilst 19% use the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF). Funds are mostly used for supporting people from different population groups to find employment (77%), training and support for service users to ensure they retain their jobs (67%), and training staff (54%).

Despite the widespread use of European funds, respondents also highlighted major barriers to the use of these funds. These include bureaucratic complexity, which was highlighted as a significant limitation for most respondents (73%). There were 52% of the respondents who considered that the funds they managed were still insufficient to address the challenge they were addressing. Difficulty ensuring the sustainability of projects once the financing period ends and late payment were presented as somewhat a limitation for 43% and 31.37%, respectively.

Representatives from the Association of Centres for Social Work in Slovenia presented an example of how the ESF can be used for a social activation project which started in 2017. The objectives of the project are threefold: support the integration in the labour market of populations at risk of social exclusion, improving the integration of employment and social services, and develop an IT system to manage service users' files.

The project targets in particular long-term recipients of social benefits, long-term unemployed people with complex social issues and specific groups at high risk of social exclusion, such as participants in rehabilitation programmes for people with substance and alcohol abuse problems, and migrant women. Two types of programmes are implemented depending on their time length:

· Long programme (11 months) – personal empowerment, improvement of functional knowledge, and improvement of job skills;
· Short programme (3 months) - social integration, personal empowerment, motivation for change – less focus on improvement of job skills.

Initial results, which were made available in May 2018, show that out of the 3,123 people who were informed of the programme, 873 people signed a contract with jobcentres and 577 started one of the three programmes. One of the main challenges is how to support individuals with very complex social and financial situations. Hiring more staff and designing programmes targeting the development of social skills seem to be the solutions put forward. According to representatives from the Association, an important feature of this project is that participants join the programme voluntarily and there is no conditionality attached to start or finish the programme. This element is what differentiates the social activation programme from regular activation programmes in Slovenia.

The Jobcentre in the City of Offenbach (DE) is also implementing a project funded by the ESF. This programme is similar to the programme designed in Slovenia, but it has other innovative features. Post-placement coaching is the most innovative element of the programme, together with the opportunity for participants in the project to integrate into the primary job market and build professional experience as part of the programme itself. Employers commit to employ people with complex needs and offer them a paid opportunity, which is in some cases subsidised by public authorities. Cooperation with employers is a key success factor for any integration strategy, in addition to supported placements and tailor-made job-hunting. A coach supporting the employee during the placement for at least the first six months has also been identified a success factor because it leads to more sustainable labour market integration.

As highlighted above, there are other EU funds available for inclusive activation programmes. Thirty-two per cent of respondents to the questionnaire confirmed that they also used other EU funds, such as Erasmus+ and EU neighbourhood initiatives, like 'ENI CBC Mediterranean sea basin (2014-2020)'.

Eramus+ is a funding scheme supporting initiatives in the field of education, training, youth and sport. Erasmus+ is organised around four key actions, and the most relevant for social services involved in inclusive activation programmes is Key Action 2 'Cooperation'. Under this action, organisations from different countries receive funds to work together, develop, share and transfer best practice and innovative approaches in the fields of education, training and youth.

ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin (2014-2020) is an initiative involving 14 countries (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia). One axis of cooperation is the promotion of social inclusion and fight against poverty with a specific focus on support for NEETs and women with low skills. This initiative also supports third sector organisations to improve capacities and cooperation between public administrations for services provision.

Currently, the EU is discussing the new multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027 and proposals have been approved by the European Parliament involving the restructuring of EU funds in the field of social policies (European Commission, 2018 (1). The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) will be increased to EUR101.2 billion and will merge previous funds such as ESF, YEI, FEAD, EaSI and the EU Health Programme (See Figure 5). Based on the proposal approved at the European Parliament, at least 25% of the ESF+ will be allocated to social inclusion (European Commission Factsheet 2018) of disadvantaged groups, such as long-term unemployed, children, marginalised communities such as the Roma, the most deprived and migrants.

Improved coordination of current funds within ESF+ is expected to allow a more holistic approach between material support – currently supported by the FEAD – and social support and professional activation – currently supported by the ESF. Another proposal relates to the simplification of procedures, including applying and reporting back to the European Commission. This was identified as crucial to enhance use of the funds by ESN members taking part in the questionnaire and the EU Consultation on the long-term unemployed in June 2018. Negotiations on the MFF are still ongoing, therefore Member States could still decide to review the proposals.

Social economy and entrepreneurship

According to OECD, social economy refers to the vast world of associations, cooperatives, foundations that work to respond to people's needs and are guided by their social objectives rather than economic performance (OECD, 2013: 16). Some of their key elements include social justice, participation, co-decision (staff, users, members) and democratic governance.

In many cases, social enterprises are also service providers and work closely with public social services. At the seminar, we heard about an example of how

Figure 5. European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)				
Employment, education & social inclusions (ESF)	Investing in youth (YEI)	Support to the most deprived (FEAD)	EU priority actions / Experimentation (EaSI)	Health

Shared Management

(In)direct Management

Source: European Commission (2018). EU budget for the future.

public authorities can boost social entrepreneurship in the City of Riga (LV). In 2016, the city's Welfare Department launched a grant programme for social enterprises, NGOs and foundations to promote employment for socially excluded groups. Grants of EUR11,000 have been co-financing beneficiaries for 12 months, with a financial participation of 10% for beneficiaries.

The overall goal of the project is the creation of new jobs for socially excluded people with complex needs, or the improvement of skills and training for people who are already employed but need more support. The criteria for awarding the grant included not only the creation of new jobs, but also the development of a sustainable social and business model. The benefi

ciaries of grants oversee the recruitment process and if necessary, public social services from Riga provide support for beneficiary organisations to reach out to vulnerable people.

St Luke Group, an organisation targeting ex-offenders, is one of the non-governmental organisations funded by this project. The programme trains carpenters, includes a co-working space, and will soon open a brasserie to employ ex-convicts who are willing to take part in an activation programme. The centre provides psycho-social support, coaching and personalised inclusion plans during the last months in prison.

Local authorities are also trying to involve service users in the design of their own careers as a way to boost in-

dividual entrepreneurship. The Employment Department in Aarhus (DK) launched a pilot project called 'Long-term unemployed take the lead.' where service users receive a grant to spend based on their own needs and desires according to their own career plan. The first results of the pilot showed that the grant was mainly being used to start a business. Annemette Kjølby, a long-term unemployed mother of three and carer for her husband who is affected by a chronic disease, shared her experience of using the funds to set up a business during ESN seminar in Vienna.
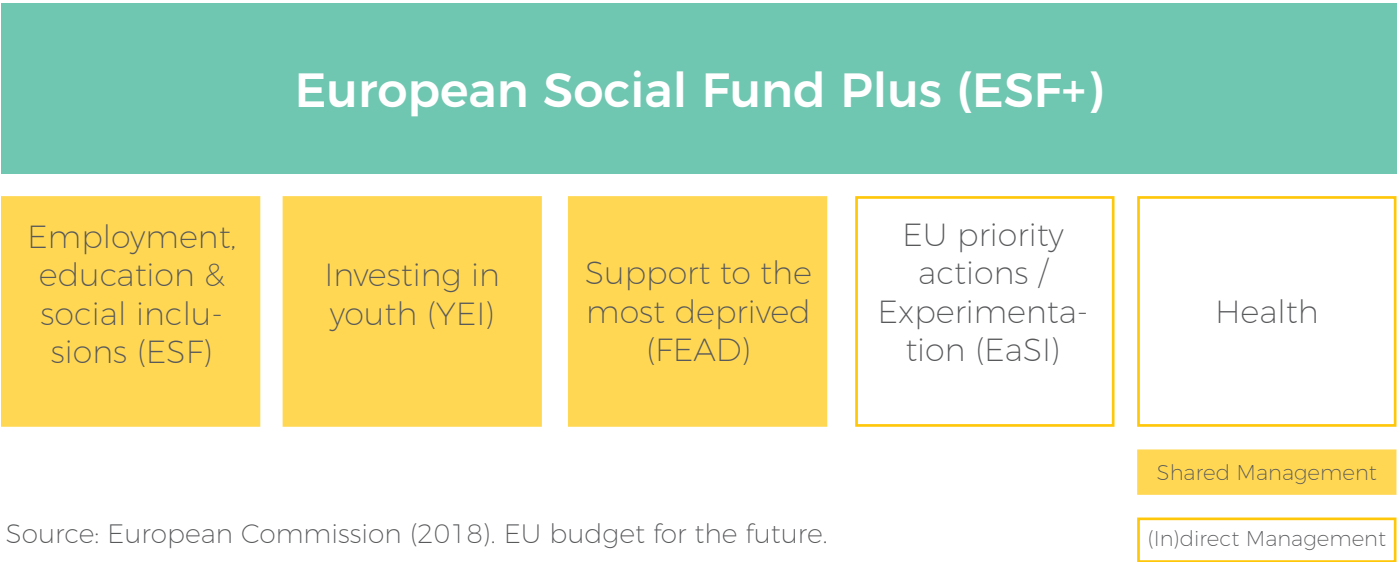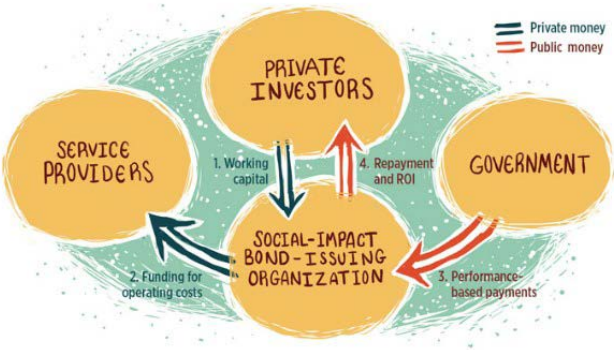
These two examples show that public authorities can have an impact on citizens' empowerment. In the first example, the provision of grants to social enterprises helps people at risk of social exclusion to receive support through a personalised plan and be integrated in the labour market. In the second example, citizens are no longer passive recipients of benefits, and they are instead able to develop their own business in line with their preferences.

Social Impact Bonds (SIBs)

SIBs are a loan made by an investor, where repayment is linked to the achievement of specific social outcomes (see Figure 6). They represent a way to build strong working relationships between social economy organisations, private investors and public authorities. The first SIB was launched in the United Kingdom in 2010, and since then public authorities in different countries have become increasingly interested in their use, especially to finance innovative projects. One of the main features of SIBs is that providers do not have to front the cost of delivery, since they receive funding for operating costs from the SIB-issuing organisation. Investors get their financial return if providers meet the agreed-upon outcomes.

A study from the OECD shows that youth and employment are the most targeted areas of SIBs (OECD, 2015: 9). For example, the Public Employment Service (VDAB) in Flanders (BE) launched their first Social Impact Bond (SIB) in November 2018. The project targets NEETs in Antwerp, who are difficult to reach and who are far from the labour market (VDAB, 2018: 1).

A social investor, Impact Capital, invests resources in BeCode, an organisation that offers vulnerable young people free training as a web developer. For every young person who finds a job, VDAB and the Public Procurement Programme (PIO) pay back the costs with interest. BeCode aims to target 270 NEET young people in the next five years. The objective is to train and guide them towards integration in the labour market for a period of six months (VDAB, 2018: 2).

Another example comes from the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. In 2016 the Ministry launched a SIB to trial a new social innovation programme to improve the integration of immigrants in the labour market (European Commission, 2018 (2): 1). The programme is designed to last for three years and aims to support the inclusion of migrants and refugees that arrived in Finland in 2015 and 2016. In this model, private investors finance measures that offer job matching assistance and training to migrants. Moreover, the programme provides them with additional support in the workplace.

Although SIBs are still considered a pilot tool, we know now that most of the success of SIBs is linked to the programme design and clear definition of indicators to measure social impact for target groups (OECD, 2015: 5). More time is needed to make an overall evaluation of SIBs effectiveness, but they are recognised as a new way of involving private investors in the solution of social issues.

Figure 6: How Social Impact Bonds work

Source: Michael J. Roy, Neil McHugh, & Stephen Sinclair (2018)

INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION IN PRACTICE

'Long-Term Unemployed Take the Lead',
Aarhus, Denmark
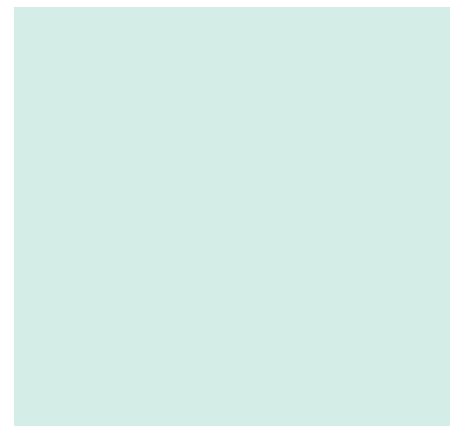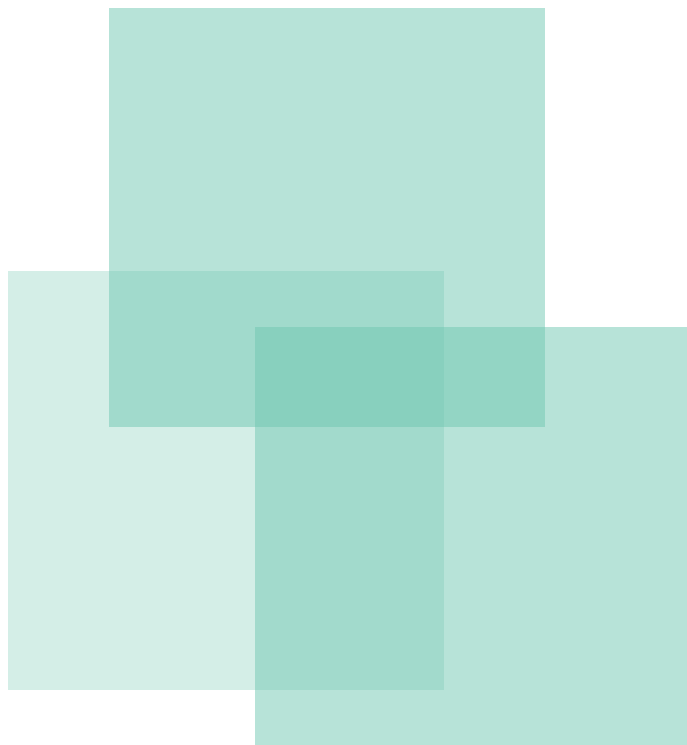
Within current Danish legislation, there are few tools to help unemployed citizens who want to start their own business. This project represents a way of encouraging beneficiaries to look beyond welfare benefits and provide them a grant with a view to start their own business.

The employment service in Aarhus has been implementing the project 'Long-Term Unemployed Take the Lead' in line with the welfare reform in Denmark. A crucial aspect of the reform is the **CO-CREATION OF SERVICES WITH CITIZENS** who are considered experts by experience. The project has provided 100 long-term unemployed citizens with a cash grant of up to DKK50,000 (approx. EUR6,700). Beneficiaries were responsible for how and on what they spent the money. A key criterion to be granted the income was the realisation that the participant had a great desire to start their own business.

The project is delivered through a **PARTNERSHIP** among the municipality of Aarhus, the University of Aarhus, the Social Development Centre and the Velux Foundation. The project has been financed by a **COMBINATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING** from the various partners for a total cost of about EUR1.5 million.

In 2017, the results were positive, with 14 of the 27 participants no longer on unemployment benefits. Participants claim that they feel this programme is something **NEW** and **TAILORED TO THEIR NEEDS**. They also feel that they are consulted, involved in planning to a much greater extent than in usual employment services, and in control of their lives.

Thanks to Vibeke Jensen, Head of the Employment Department in Aarhus for this practice contribution.

The full practice can be found here.

PATHWAYS TO INCLUSION

Traditional activation pathways might not be successful at providing support for people with complex needs. Therefore, social services can support employment services to develop alternative programmes for people who cannot be immediately included in the primary labour market and may require instead another type of support for their social inclusion.

In their answers to the questionnaire, respondents highlighted that they worked primarily with the long-term unemployed followed by people with disabilities and young people. Income support was the most common need they provide support for, followed by education and training, housing support, health, social isolation, indebtedness, support to care for family members and children.

Based on the questionnaire findings, discussions at the seminar revolved around three population groups:

- Minimum income recipients
- People at higher risk of social exclusion
- Young people with disabilities

Support for the three groups involves similar challenges. These include improving coordination between the services involved, reinforcing professionals training, enhancing service users' involvement, matching needs of service users and employers more efficiently, and implementing impact evaluation of the different policies implemented. Professionals in the three focus groups identified different ways of overcoming these challenges, which will be analysed in the following sections, each one dedicated to a population group.

Minimum income recipients

The 2008 European Commission Recommendation and the 2016 European Council Recommendation both highlighted the importance of providing adequate income support to people who have fallen out of the labour market. Adequate income support is an important element of the inclusive activation model proposed by ESN, especially when it comes to preventing the multigenerational transmission of poverty.

There are different models of financial support in EU countries to ensure a minimum standard of living. However, it is key to link financial support to personalised plans of activation to support people's autonomy. At the seminar in Vienna, practitioners highlighted that people who have been out of the labour market for some time lack confidence, hence promoting self-development should be part of personalised care plans. These elements were highlighted in examples discussed at the seminar from Spain, Austria and Iceland.

The Regional Government of Madrid (ES) implements a programme to facilitate the integration into the labour market of long-term unemployed people receiving minimum income support or who are at risk of social exclusion (Figure 7). The programme helps them to reinforce their skills and access the labour market. The employment and social services departments at the regional authority work together in the implementation of the programme, which consists of:

- Guidance plan for at least 15 months, including paid professional experience of at least 12 months;
- Between 90 and 120 hours of training for improving labour and social skills.

The initial assessment of skills is conducted by a job counsellor appointed from the social services department who will review the activation plan established by the employment office and provide orientation and support to participants in the programme. Job counsellors are also in charge of searching employment opportunities within business, trying to match the needs of local companies and participants' profiles.

Figure 7: Activation programme for minimum income recipients in the Madrid region
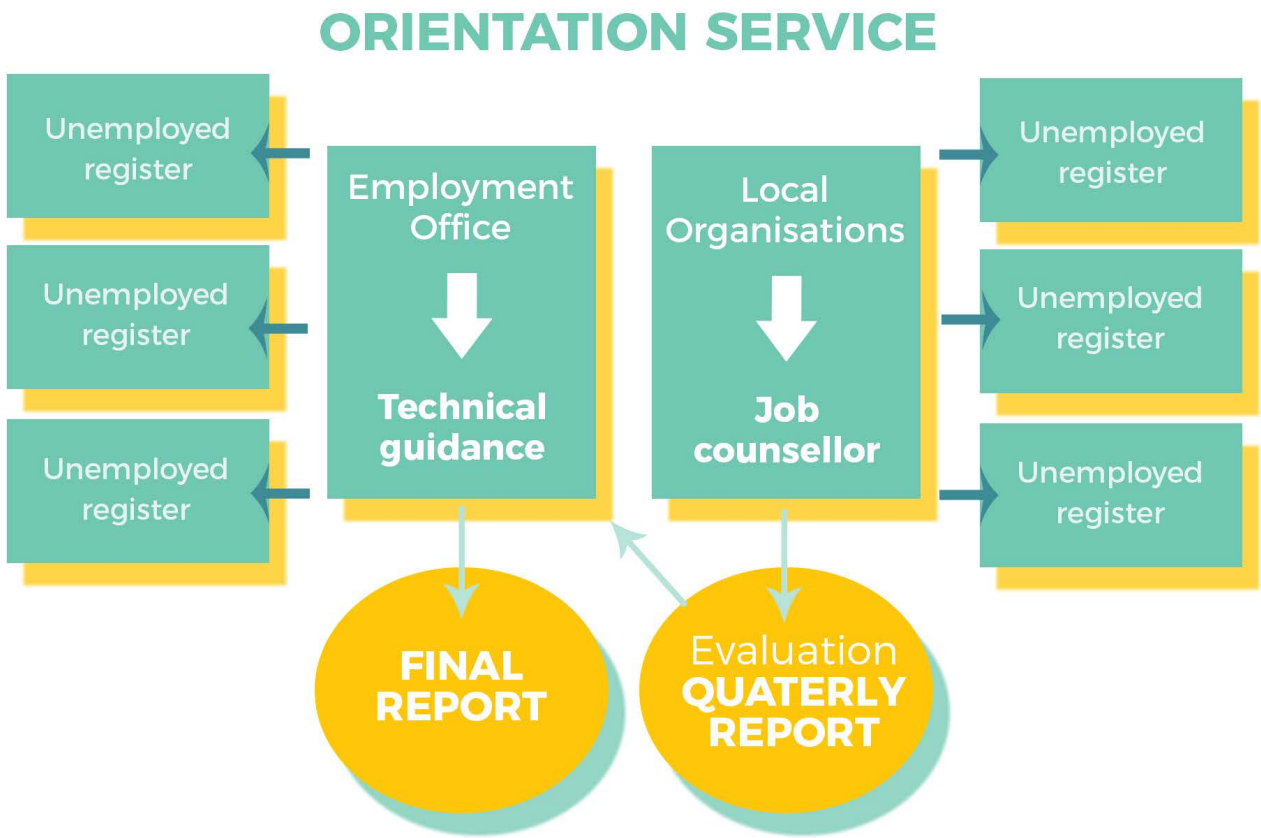
Source: Presentation at ESN Seminar in Vienna on 6 November 2019 (Day 2)

Similarly, the departments of Social Welfare, Public Health and Employment in Vienna (AT) launched in 2016 the project 'Back to the Future'. The project, which is implemented by two non-governmental organisations ('Start Working' and 'Craft Jobs') helps 200 young people aged from 18 to 24, who are minimum income recipients, to find employment. The programme provides them with paid work experience to give them the skills and confidence they need to enter the labour market independently. Only young people registered with employment services can be referred to the project, therefore social services play a pivotal role in reaching out to them and help them register with employment services.

At the beginning there is a preparation phase that lasts a maximum of 8 weeks, which is then followed by a 10 months' work placement. There are low qualification requirements for joining the project, and proposed jobs have different levels of difficulty. The main objective of the project is to provide participants with relevant work experience and to assist them in entering the labour market. Start Working and Craft Jobs are in contact with companies based in Vienna as a bridge for young people to be able to enter the labour market. During the training phase, participants receive a course subsidy, after which they receive a salary. If the course subsidy or the salary are lower than the minimum income, they receive an extra allowance so that it matches minimum income.

For people furthest from the labour market, building local networks can increase their chances of finding a job and be socially included. Public authorities can facilitate the dialogue that can lead to the development of these networks by talking with employers and work with them to provide opportunities in the primary job market to people with complex needs. This was referred to as 'job co-creation', when social and employment services support employers in creating employment opportunities for people with complex needs.

Finally, improving the quality of personalised care plans, starting with needs assessment and services referral, is seen as crucial for the success of these programmes. Reinforcing training for professionals, particularly case managers, was highlighted as an important step in this direction.

People at higher risk of social exclusion

At the seminar, participants learnt about two examples of programmes supporting particularly marginalised groups: Roma women who lack skills and ex-inmates.

In Hungary, a project implemented by the Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection trains and recruits staff from vulnerable populations, such as Roma women, to support community care services. The project initially recruited six people in the city of Berzence, three of whom are still working in supported housing built during the deinstitutionalisation process. Following the first pilot, 958 Roma people participate in three years' training funded by EU funds. Some of the participants now work as carers or mentors.

Representatives from the social affairs directorate explained that it was difficult to reach out to Roma women because of the lack of trust they have towards public authorities. Therefore, they created the figure of a mediator who acts as intermediary or point of entry for the community.

In the region of Galicia, north-western Spain, the regional government and local social services are implementing a network of support for a particularly marginalised group, ex-inmates. The project starts one and a half years before leaving prison to support them in the process of being re-integrated in society. After finishing the programme, they are supported by a dedicated team responsible for follow-up in their place of residence (see page 21 of this report).

Young people with disabilities

For this particular target group, discussions at the seminar focused on how social services programmes can support young people with disabilities to achieve their dreams in life.
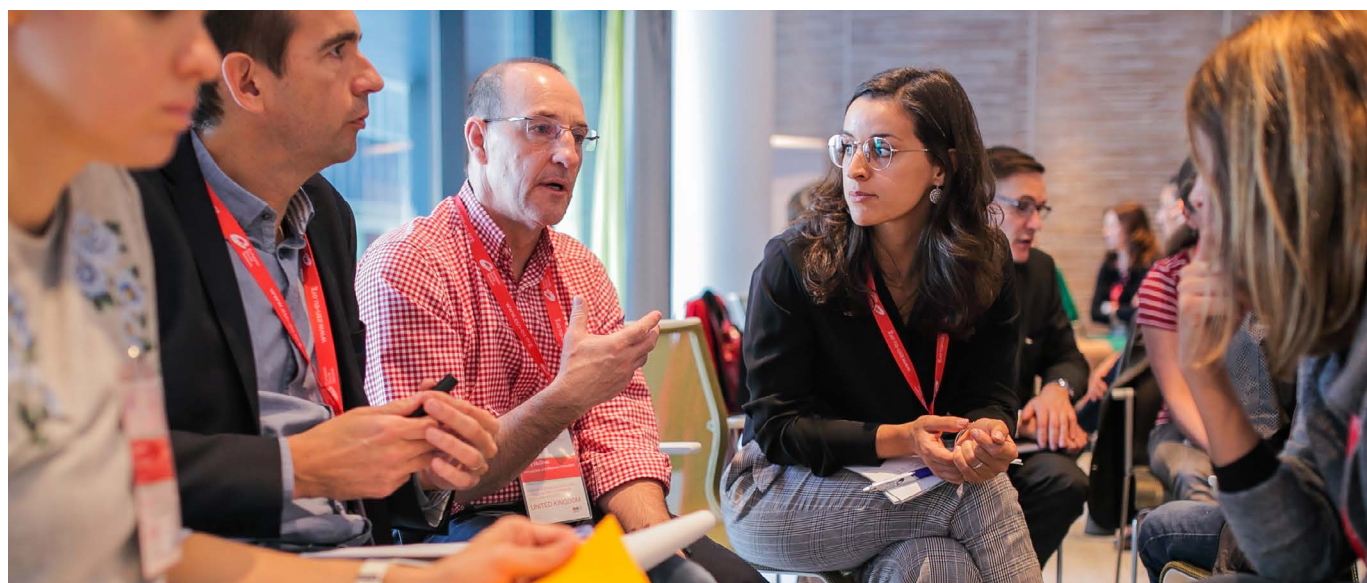
Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in the UK has a dedicated service for young people with disabilities. GCC tries to help them achieve their dreams by asking 'What do you want to be?'

Services help them achieve their goal via person-centred planning including providing them with experience in the primary job market. This helps build self-confidence and a sense of ownership of their own lives. In this model, the role of the coach is key because it enables young people with disabilities to realise aspirations and support the person throughout the whole journey.

During the seminar, Maco Buchiner, self-advocate working for an organisation defending the rights of people with learning disabilities called 'Lebenshilfe Salzburg' (AT), explained how a personal plan and social services support helped him overcome the obstacles he has faced over the years to access employment. When he finished school, he was sent to attend different training courses but without any success. It was only when he was asked what his aspirations were, that he could become a self-advocate and start working for his organisation.

The project 'Wasps' in Hafnarfjordur (Iceland) focuses on the school to work transition for young people with disabilities. People in the programme are offered the opportunity to work 3-4 times a week for four hours a day, with support if needed. Part of the project also involves a reflection on how to create more inclusive businesses, boost self-development and support people with disabilities to live more fully. The emphasis is put on helping them nurture their entrepreneurial spirits where they can design, create, and sell their own products. The project also provides participants with opportunities to learn about financial literacy, health literacy, future employment opportunities and the rights of persons with disabilities to help strengthen their self-image, enhance self-confidence, and improve their quality of life.
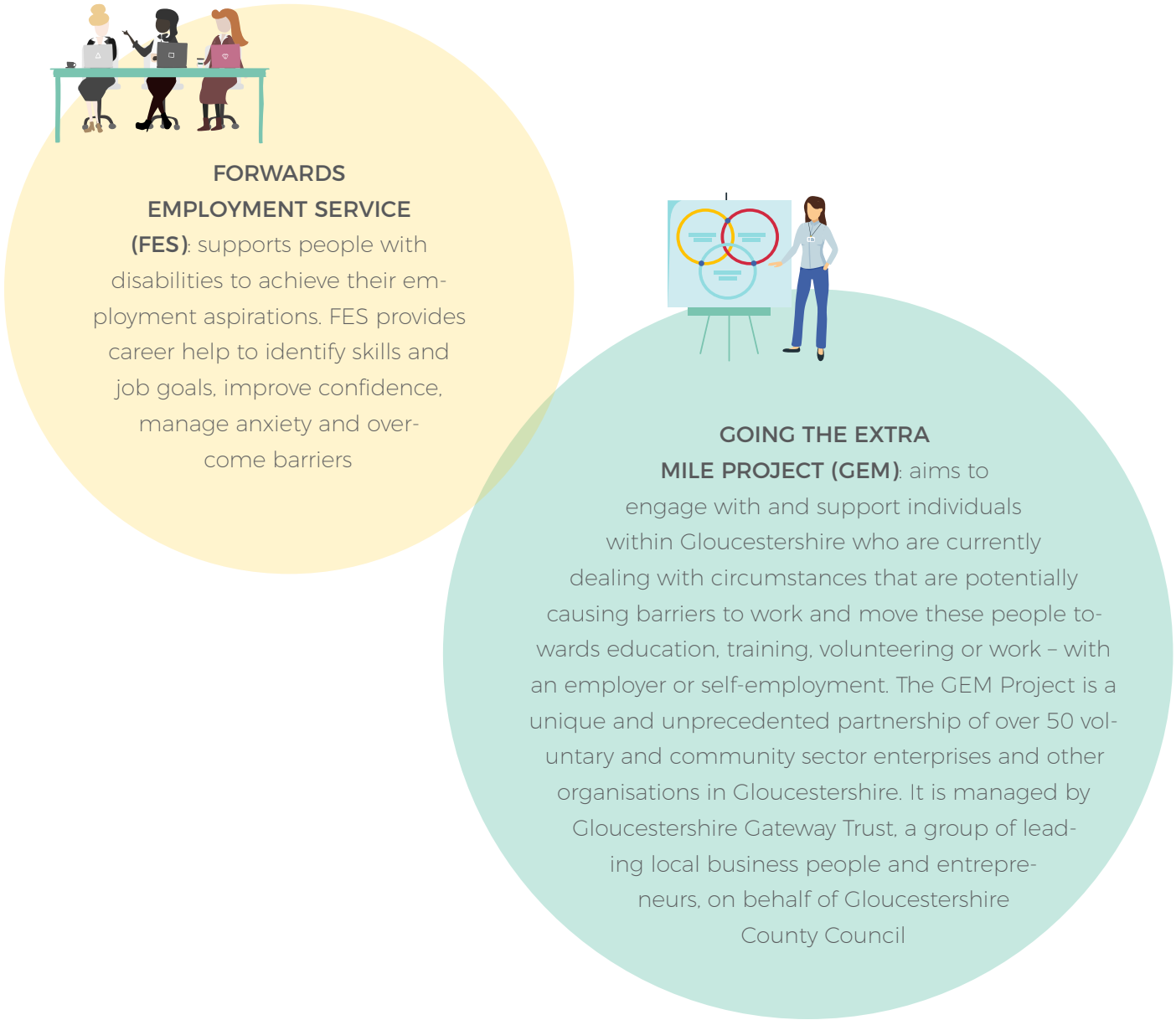
INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION IN PRACTICE

Disability and vulnerable people employment strategy, Gloucestershire County Council, United Kingdom
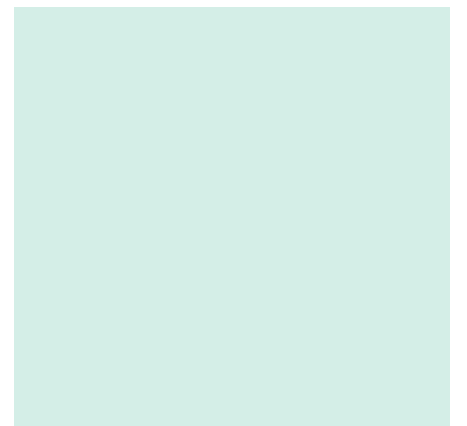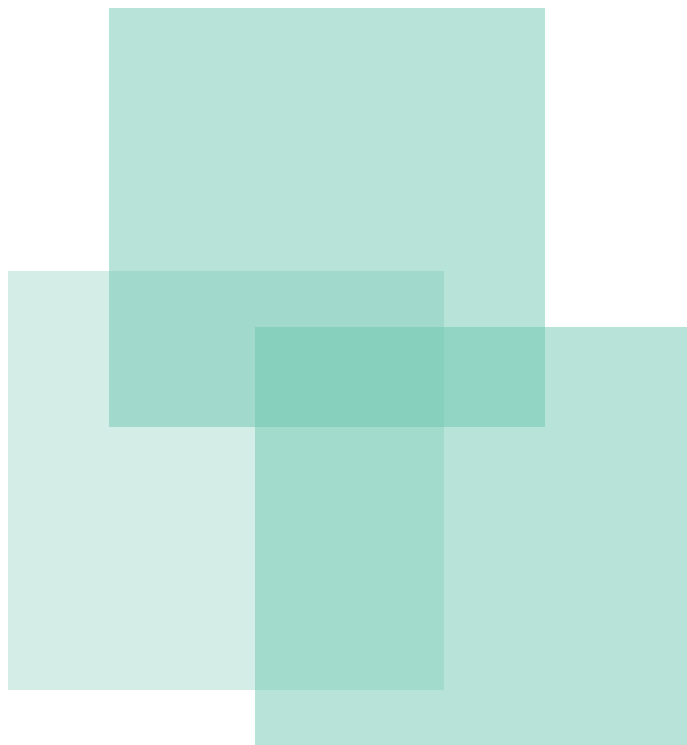
The overall disability – and vulnerable people – employment strategy in Gloucestershire (UK) aims to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background or ability, has access to employment opportunities. There are four main programmes, which Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) either commissions or delivers and which provide support across a wide range of groups:

AIM: is a supported internship and a work-based training programme helping 16-25-year olds with special education needs and disabilities develop the skills to gain and sustain employment

BETTER 2 WORK: service providing advice and practical support to people with severe and enduring mental health conditions to get into employment, voluntary work, education or training

FORWARDS EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (FES): supports people with disabilities to achieve their employment aspirations. FES provides career help to identify skills and job goals, improve confidence, manage anxiety and overcome barriers

GOING THE EXTRA MILE PROJECT (GEM): aims to engage with and support individuals within Gloucestershire who are currently dealing with circumstances that are potentially causing barriers to work and move these people towards education, training, volunteering or work – with an employer or self-employment. The GEM Project is a unique and unprecedented partnership of over 50 voluntary and community sector enterprises and other organisations in Gloucestershire. It is managed by Gloucestershire Gateway Trust, a group of leading local business people and entrepreneurs, on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council

GCC's primary focus are people with disabilities or long-term health conditions. However, they recognise that those who are furthest from the labour market have multiple and complex challenges that require a **HOLISTIC PACKAGE OF TAILORED SUPPORT**. GCC works with a network of partners across all sectors to ensure that people get the right support when they need it. It also ensures that all organisations, whether they are commissioned or delivered by GCC, are fully aware of their part in a person's journey to independence and work. GCC also ensures that services can reach those who are geographically isolated by delivering within communities.

GUIDANCE FOR INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION PROGRAMMES

IMPROVING DESIGN OF PROGRAMMES

Guidance

Reinforce the role of social services to reach out to the most vulnerable.

Why

Public employment services (PES) can only offer activation plans to people who are registered with them, but in many cases vulnerable people do not register with PES.

How

When coordinating social and employment services, assign social services the role of reaching out the most vulnerable to secure registration with employment services.

Guidance

Keep programmes flexible.

Why

Being able to respond more quickly to the needs of service users might help public social services adopt more cost-effective measures.

How

Adopt flexible cooperation protocols between different services and agencies.

Tailor services to service users' needs.

Guidance

Design programmes that account for the needs of people who may not be immediately employable.

Why

Service users with complex needs can be very far from the labour market and might need more time to acquire the needed skills, confidence and motivation.

Care duties towards children or family members can also hinder the possibility of finding and retaining a job.

How

Prioritise social inclusion in the medium term for very vulnerable populations.

Include support with care duties in inclusive activation programmes.

Guidance

Provide a combination of income support and social services.

Why

Income that allows for living in dignity and being able to provide for family members together with access to services is a pre-condition for successful activation.

How

Ensure that personalised plans include adequate income support and clear objectives linked to a time frame.

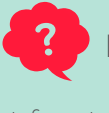Link objectives to the provision of needed services.

Guidance

Explore new mechanisms for funding projects on inclusive activation.

Why

Lack of local and national funding might hinder the development of programmes supporting people furthest from the labour market.

How

Tap into EU funding.

Explore mechanisms that look into the participation of the private sector to fund innovative projects (e.g.: SIBs).

Work with the third sector on the development of social enterprises.

Guidance

Improve mechanisms for co-production of services involving the population groups for whom it is most difficult to find and maintain a job.

Why

Service users are experts by experience and can help public social services design more effective services.

How

Include focus groups, e.g. consultations, training, feedback and evaluation, in services planning, design and implementation.

ENHANCING PERSONALISED CARE PLANS

Guidance

Design personalised plans that respond to people's needs and aspirations.

Why

Adopting a broad approach that responds to needs but also to aspirations is more effective in realising people's potential whilst at the same time might also be more cost-effective.

How

Help people define their goals and support them along the journey to achieve them.

Guidance

Improve monitoring and evaluation of implementation of personalised plans.

Why

Monitoring offers the opportunity to service users to have their say about the implementation of services or report any issues. Evaluation provides evidence on the effectiveness of services and policies.

How

Include an evaluation of the person's situation before, during and after the intervention

Ensure your evaluation includes both quantitative and qualitative data.

Guidance

Design personalised plans that involve continuous integrated support.

Why

Public social services work with service users that might have little or no experience of work. In addition, they may lack social competences, emotional management, conflict resolution skills; they may have difficulties in arriving on time or adjusting to rules of the workplace.

How

In-job support for at least the first six months.

DEVELOPING THE ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS

Guidance

Structure the provision of services around one-stop-shops.

Why

One-stop-shops can help service users have an easier journey in the system and increase the chances of addressing their needs. They can also help reduce people's non-take-up of services.

How

Centralise all services in one building or in one online portal.

Create single entry points.

Case managers can coordinate the needs assessment, identify services and coordinate access and provision.

Guidance

Reinforce the role of case managers.

Why

Service users with complex needs require care from different services. Case managers can help them navigate the services and ensure their take-up.

How

Have case workers taking decisions jointly and a case manager coordinating all services involved.

Guidance

Improve accessibility to services.

Why

Geographical accessibility and spatial coverage might have a negative impact for services take-up or difficulties in accessing services.

Complex systems and lack of coordination of services also have a negative impact on services take-up and accessibility.

How

Undertake an assessment of needs and socio-economic considerations of localities and use the data gathered to plan and establish services accordingly to ensure that they are geographically accessible.

Simplify procedures for service users or have a professional who can accompany them to navigate the system.

Guidance

Build local social networks.

Why

Isolation is one of the most recurrent issues of people furthest from the labour market and a cause of social exclusion. Building social networks helps people in situations of isolation develop significant links with other members of the community.

How

Create peer support or mentoring programmes.

Work with community centres, volunteers and local associations to reach out to those who are most at risk of isolation.

Work with schools to support and inform children and families of services available

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Guidance

Invest in continuous staff training.

Why

Staff training is key to allow better provision of coordinated services and to ensure service users' needs are met in a timely manner.

How

Organise regular joint training with staff from different services and agencies.

Guidance

Adopt IT solutions to support integrated services.

Why

Integrated recording of data can allow for the centralisation of all relevant information about service users. This helps professionals access all information and avoids service users having to retell their story multiple times.

How

Assess current platforms in organisation(s) to verify adaptability or explore the possibility of adopting a new platform.

Based on this first assessment, liaise with providers to develop a platform that takes account of the views of those who will use it, such as professionals.

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Youth Guarantee.

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European Regional Development Funds.

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Belgium	Public Centre for Social Welfare - Bruges
	Municipality of Mechelen
	PPS Social Integration
	Vereniging WOK
Bulgaria	City of Sofia
Croatia	Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy
Denmark	City of Aarhus
	Municipality of Esjberg
	Municipality of Randers
Finland	Municipality of Siunsote
	National Institute for Health and Welfare
	Regional Council of Hame
	Valvira National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health
France	Seine-Maritime County Council
	Eure County Council
Germany	Federal Employment Agency
	Baden-Württemberg
	Association of Local Employment Policy
Greece	City of Athens
	Municipality of Igoumenitsa
Hungary	Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection
Iceland	Association of Social Directors
Italy	Consortium Area 5 Atripalda
	National Research Council Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies
	Edenred Italy
Kosovo	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Latvia	City of Riga

Country	Organisations
Malta	Foundation for Social Welfare Services
Netherlands	Association of Directors of Social Services (Divosa)
	Municipality of 's-Hertogenbosch
Poland	Janusz Korczak Pedagogical University in Warsaw
	Mazovian Social Policy Centre
Portugal	Santa Casa da Misericordia de Lisboa
Romania	Municipality of Arad
	Municipality of Cluj-Napoca
Slovenia	Association of Centres for Social Work
Spain	Regional Government of Asturias
	Avedis Donabedian Research Institute - Autonomous University of Barcelona
	Regional Government of Basque Country
	Regional Government of Galicia
	Regional Government of Madrid
	Barcelona County Council
	Regional Government of Catalonia
	Regional Government of Andalucia
	Regional Government of Navarra
	Gipuzkoa County Council
	SIIS Research and Documentation Centre
	Spanish General Council of Social Work
Sweden	Association of Directors of Social Welfare Services (FSS)
	Municipality of Norrköping
Switzerland	Swiss Cities' and Towns' Social Policy Group
United Kingdom	Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS)
	Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children In Scotland (CELCIS)
	Social Work Scotland