



PES to PES Dialogue

The European Commission Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

PES approaches to low-skilled adults and young people: Work-first or train-first?

Toolkit for PES

September 2013

This publication is commissioned by the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013).

This programme is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the EU2020 goals in these fields.

The seven-year programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

For more information see:

<http://ec.europa.eu/progress>

For more information on the PES to PES Dialogue programme, please refer to:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/pes-to-pes>

Editor: DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Unit C.3 Skills, Mobility and Employment Services, European Commission

Authors: Ellen Murray and Helen Tubb, ICF GHK

In collaboration with the Budapest Institute

Please cite this publication as: European Commission (2013), PES approaches to low-skilled adults and young people: Work-first or train-first? Toolkit for PES, Authors: Ellen Murray and Helen Tubb

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. PES services to achieve sustainable integration	3
3. Work-first approaches for low-skilled adults and young people	15
4. Train-first approaches for low-skilled adults and young people.....	19
5. Challenges in the effective integration of low-skilled adults and young people.....	25
6. Conclusions: the way forward.....	26
7. References.....	28

1. Introduction

The European Strategy for Employment and Growth 2020 estimates that just over one quarter of the population in Europe, about 80 million people, have low or basic skills. In the past decade, there has been a collapse in the demand for a low-educated workforce and this is forecast to fall further. Low-skilled, particularly the young, have been severely impacted by the current global economic crisis; in the EU-27 by January 2013, almost a quarter of the young labour force were unemployed. Throughout Europe, just over half of the adults with low education levels are in employment and the highest long-term unemployment rates are found in the least educated segment of the population in every EU Member State. The low-skilled are also at higher risk of social exclusion and poverty.

Public employment services (PES) are recognised by the [Employment Guidelines](#) as having a central role in increasing labour market participation, developing a skilled workforce and tackling youth unemployment. The PES 2020 Strategy, recently endorsed by all European PES, addresses the role of the PES in response to changing environments and labour markets and the operational consequences for PES of the changed role in the EU 2020 Strategy. An activation policy with sustainable outcomes is seen as central to the PES approach to addressing the challenges generated by transitional labour markets, along with an increased focus on the demand side of the labour market. According to the strategy, PES should acquire a mandate to fulfil a conducting function within the labour market. The transition between education/vocational training and the labour market is one of the main career transitions that has to be bridged by conducting. Activation of school drop-outs or low-qualified jobseekers is proposed as a primary field of cooperation¹ between PES, education and training providers.

PES in the EU Member States provide a range of services and measures to support the sustainable activation of the low-skilled. Two main types of activation strategies have evolved – work first and train first:

- The work-first strategy emphasises fast entry into employment, with services provided to encourage direct employment and get individuals off the welfare roll. It has more 'demanding' elements.
- The train-first approach is focused on investment in human capital to improve the employability of those currently claiming benefits, particularly for people with a weak position in the labour market. It can be characterised as a more 'enabling' strategy in which employability is enhanced through the provision of training and education opportunities.²

Activation approaches differ according to the relative importance of demanding or enabling policies and the balance between the two can vary in the context of national policy-making. This is reflected in the differing formats and varying scope of PES services, measures and supports within individual Member States.

At a recent Peer Review in Vilnius, Lithuania, participants from 13 PES³ discussed results from research and their own evaluations and experiences with regards to what works best to integrate low-skilled adults and young jobseekers into the labour market. The Peer Review built on findings from a [Peer Review](#) and an [analytical paper](#)

¹ Public Employment Services: Contributions to EU2020: PES Strategy Paper, 2012, pp 1-10.

² European Commission (2013), PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?, Brussels, Author: Sue Leigh-Doyle.

³ Austria, Belgium Le Forem, Belgium VDAB, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Greece, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Macedonia and Spain.

on PES and youth integration in 2011, and the recent [analytical paper](#) on the sustainable activation of low-skilled adult and young jobseekers.

The discussions at the Peer Review focused on the two different activation strategies and which elements of these worked best for the target groups of adults and young people, given the likely differences in their levels of skills, work experience, motivation and family circumstances, as well as the core PES service concepts which are required to achieve sustainable integration. This paper summarises the main findings and discussions from the Peer Review which were guided by three questions:

Box 1. Guiding questions for the Peer Review

Guiding question 1:

What are the specific elements of PES service concepts to achieve good integration results comparing a work-first with a train-first approach?

Guiding question 2:

Work-first approaches: What are the differences between effective approaches for low-skilled adults and low-skilled young people?

Guiding question 3:

Train-first approaches: Which type of training works best for low skilled adults and which works best for low skilled young people?

2. PES services to achieve sustainable integration

Guiding question 1: What are the specific elements of PES service concepts to achieve good integration results comparing a work-first with a train-first approach?

2.1 Low-skilled adults and young people face different barriers to integration into the labour market; different activation strategies and services are therefore required

Young people in Europe, particularly low-skilled young people, have been severely impacted by the economic crisis. Low-skilled young people may face additional barriers to integration into the labour market compared to low-skilled adults, such as a complete lack of previous work experience, lack of informally and formally acquired competences and multi-dimensional problems such as housing or social problems. Early intervention is essential for the young low-skilled as long spells of unemployment in the early part of working life have been shown to have a significant effect on future career and earnings potential; many PES therefore aim to provide early activation for this group. Young people are predominantly channelled towards train-first approaches by PES in recognition of the challenges that they face in being integrated into the labour market. Train-first approaches (e.g. vocational education and training and encouraging a return to education) are proven to have sustainable outcomes, particularly when they combine gaining a qualification with work experience. Certain categories of low-skilled young people (e.g. those who are motivated to enter the labour market and who do not wish to return to education or training, lone parents and young people with a disability), however, may be more suitable for work-first approaches in certain circumstances⁴.

Low-skilled adult jobseekers are more likely to have previous work experience and formally and informally acquired competences, making them 'job ready' and therefore more likely to be integrated successfully through work-first activation. Adult jobseekers with family responsibilities may also be reluctant to take up training for longer periods of time due to the need to earn a wage. In some cases, however, train-first approaches may be required to integrate the most hard-to-place low-skilled adult jobseekers or those who need re-skilling due to restructuring.

The approaches which support the integration of jobseekers are increasingly tailored towards individual need as a result of profiling and development of individual action plans. They will also depend on the availability and resources for training within individual Member States.

2.2 Orientation is the first step towards effective integration, particularly for young jobseekers

Orientation is crucial for young jobseekers to help them assess their occupation options and employment opportunities, understand the reality of work and choose the

⁴ European Commission (2013), PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?, Brussels, Author: Sue Leigh-Doyle.

right training option; it can be offered by PES in-house or in cooperation with separate specialist guidance services. PES are involved in providing orientation to young persons in schools, and later on, through the provision of additional employment or vocational guidance, sometimes through qualified psychologists specialising in working with young people. PES can also offer more practical orientation schemes, which allow jobseekers to 'try out' different occupations for a week in a simulated environment (e.g. **Belgium Le Forem**).

Box 2. Orientation from an early age in Belgium Flanders

VDAB, the PES in **Belgium Flanders**, provides a range of orientation services to young people:

- At the early age of 11, the PES invite children to visit their Vocational Education Training (VET) centres for a day, to familiarise themselves with the technical professions, try operating machines and to find out what a job is really about.
- The PES visits schools to inform students in their last year of upper education about the labour market and to help them get started with their professional career and to advise teachers on how to train their students to enter the labour market. The PES provides a syllabus which teachers can use during their lessons.
- The PES organises 'speed dating' with employers and 'job fairs' for students to meet their future employers.

These actions help young people understand their occupational options and choose the right option for them. ⁵

Box 3. Practical orientation: the job try-out scheme in Belgium Wallonia

The 'job try-out' scheme is a practical vocational guidance method aimed at young jobseekers (under 25) without any professional experience who are finding it difficult to choose an appropriate occupation and for whom face-to-face interviews are not enough to gain a realistic image of the different occupations or to encourage them to begin a training course for a specific profession.

The method enables young people to learn about and try out three different occupations during the course of three weeks. It puts young people in real-life professional situations, immersing them in the reality of the most buoyant occupations in the labour market. Job try-outs are structured into three phases:

1. Candidates are informed about the general working conditions of practising occupations in different sectors (e.g. working conditions, salary), as well as the regional characteristics of the labour market. This two-day phase ends with an assessment interview and a decision from the jobseeker whether to continue the try-out on a voluntary basis.
2. The second phase, lasting 120 hours, focuses on real-life work simulations in training workshops; it gives candidates the chance to try out three occupations from the 11 training areas covered by the programme. The candidates' performance is assessed by the trainers.
3. In the final week, the candidates confirm their choices of occupation and receive feedback on their performance by the trainers and their personal job-coach.

Overall, the job try-outs allow candidates to choose a professional orientation (and avoid certain stereotypes about occupations), to acquire basic skills for an occupation that can be used directly in the labour market, and potentially, to begin professional training. Employment counsellors find this to be a particularly useful method because they are able to offer something practical to the jobseeker to assist them with making a clearer and more informed decision about their future career.

2.3 Guidance and counselling is critical for the effective integration of both adult and young low-skilled - low-skilled youth require earlier and more intensive support

Recognising the importance of early activation for young people, some PES provide **earlier or more intensive guidance to young jobseekers** to help secure faster integration into the labour market, often within the framework of a **youth guarantee**. For example, in **Finland**, every jobseeker under 25 years old and every recently graduated jobseeker under 30 years old is guaranteed an individual action plan according to his/her individual needs before reaching 3 months of unemployment, followed by further interviews at least once per month. Other similar cases based on youth guarantees can be found in **Austria, Poland** and **Norway**.

PES emphasise an increasing need for a **person-centred and holistic approach** given that their clients are now more likely to be those who are not able to find their own job through e-services or self-help because of their multi-dimensional barriers to work; such an approach is particularly important for the young low-skilled. Evidence

from **Germany** (Box 4) demonstrates the impact of a more intensive and holistic counselling service on the integration of jobseekers.

Box 4. Providing intensive and holistic counselling for customers with complex profiles in Germany

In **Germany**, through the introduction of 'Inga' (internal holistic integration service in SGB III), an intensive and holistic counselling service is offered as part of an improved care relationship with customers having complex profiles whose integration is particularly difficult. The caseload of an 'Inga' counsellor is 1:65, whereas a counsellor employed in a regular placement team is in charge of approximately 140 clients. According to the results of a pilot project in six local employment agencies, the approach has had a positive impact on integration rates; compared to similar clients counselled by regular counselling teams, the 'Inga' clients' chances of integration rose by 1.8 percentage points.

Box 5. Case management and youth coaching in Austria

In **Austria**, the 'C'mon 17' programme, provided by a contracted partner, offers intensive counselling and placement-oriented case management approaches for young people identified as facing particular challenges in completing their education and entering the labour market; it is provided until sustained integration into the labour market is achieved. Case management is an approach based on a collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation and advocacy for services to meet an individual's needs through communication and resources to promote quality cost-effective outcomes⁶. One counsellor provides counselling services for a maximum of 48 clients for up to 35 hours per young person within a 12-month period.

Coaching is also provided for young people, both in and out of the school system, through special youth services within the PES. This aims to prevent drop-outs either from the school system or from the labour market through needs-based support, diagnostic activities or guidance with a case management approach.

Both measures seek to prevent exclusion and realise sustainable integration. In order to achieve this objective, the cooperation between different partners, schools, job information centres, municipalities, projects, training institutions, and external counselling institutions is essential.

2.4 Professional assessment and action planning are increasingly used to determine whether a train-first or work-first approach is the most effective

PES participating in the Peer Review increasingly emphasise the importance of an individualised approach, based on profiling, assessment and the creation of individual action plans, to determine whether a train-first or work-first approach is most suitable for a specific individual. Apart from where legal rules apply which prescribe a train-first or work-first approach for particular groups, **PES employment counsellors have the crucial role of deciding which approach would be the most effective to**

⁶ Adapted from a definition developed by the Case Management Society in the USA. Available at: <http://www.cmsa.org/ABOUTUS/DefinitionofCaseManagement/tabid/104/Default.aspx> (as at 2 April 2007).

achieve sustainable integration of the jobseeker and **in which jobseekers' resources for training or other active labour market measures they should be invested in**. Thorough and professional assessment of the jobseeker is critical to enable counsellors to make the right decision.

The assessment process should encompass three areas:

- The competences (resources) of the jobseeker including those acquired by formal and informal learning, the jobseekers' hard and soft skills and the strengths of their personal situation. Competences are assessed using different tools including IT tools listing competences and tests. In Germany most hard skills are assessed via a web-based test which is completed at home; this allows more time during the interview to be focused on soft skills and the hard skills that are specific to the occupational goal of the jobseekers.⁷
- The jobseekers' interests and motivation: this can be a key facilitator or barrier to their successful integration, which is normally assessed during the first guidance appointment; more specific tools to assess motivation such as questionnaires or interviews with psychologists may also be applied in selected cases.
- The identification of weaknesses / need for action, be it a lack of experience in applying for a job, need for more intensive assessment, upskilling or VET, or other problems in the personal or social situation of a jobseeker.
- The needs of the labour market to determine in which occupations there is current or future demand.

Assessment, including the use of profiling tools, is the basis for the creation of an individual action plan between the jobseeker and the PES. Given the crucial role of employment counsellors in deciding which approach would be the most effective for an individual, including whether to allocate them to a training or work placement measure, it is essential that counsellors have sufficient competences and time to be able to make the right decision. The professionalism of employment counsellors is explored further in the analytical paper on 'Job profiles and training for employment counsellors' and the recent Dialogue Conference.⁸

Using specialists (e.g. career guidance counsellors, psychologists, social workers) to provide the assessment, guidance and counselling for low-skilled has proven to be effective given the sometimes challenging needs of this group. Some PES use in-house specialists whilst others cooperate with other public services or contracted partners with the required competences to provide more in-depth assessment and case management. Le Forem in **Belgium**, for example, offers a multi-dimensional pathway (with social and professional dimensions) for the most vulnerable jobseekers. This pathway is structured in close cooperation with partners, allowing jobseekers to solve problems which are excluded from the pure scope of professional integration (e.g. family problems and behavioural issues) in parallel with the implementation of the job-search action plan. The pathway can be organised for up to two years, which is longer than the standard individualised job-support process. One potential benefit of

⁷ Further information on PES assessment of competences is available in the [report](#) on the conference on 'Profiling systems for effective labour market integration'.

⁸ European Commission 2012, Job profiles and training for employment counsellors, Author: Lukasz Sienkiewicz.

using the contracted partners mentioned by PES is being able to specify how much time should be spent with the hardest-to-place individuals.

Box 6. Individualised approach based upon assessment and profiling in Germany

The **German** PES believes that strategies that are focused on the individual need for action are the most effective in generating positive labour market outcomes. The employment and the vocational guidance counsellors receive comprehensive training, which involves developing the counselling know-how ('guidance concept') and also learning about the individual steps of the integration process (the 4 phase model). This systematic process of competence development enables the employment and the vocational guidance counsellors to respond to the characteristics of different groups of people.

The integration process of all customers starts with a profound assessment and profiling exercise in the initial interview, where the strengths (resources) and potential (weaknesses) of the individual are analysed. The strength analysis is used to collect the professional and comprehensive competences. In the potential analysis, the areas of potential (which stand in the way of integration into the labour market in their target profession and which should systematically be improved as part of the integration work) are identified together with the customer. This approach distinguishes between the placement-relevant needs for action which reside either in the person or in his/her personal environment. The lack of a vocational qualification is only one of many aspects taken into account, and the focus of integration work is not only on weaknesses, but also on the strengths of the respective customer.

Since only precise knowledge of the resources and the consideration of strengths make the tailored placement and/or targeted support of customers possible, four new services for the assessment of soft skills have been offered by the in-house psychological service since 2012. They range from self-evaluation questionnaires on behaviour in professional life and comprehension tests to assessment centres ([see PES to PES Dialogue Profiling Conference, 2011](#)).

Based on this individual strength and potential analysis of the customer, the employment counsellor then estimates the resulting integration chances in the respective labour market context and verifies how the individual integration chances of the customer may be increased by targeted 'support' and/or 'demand'. On the basis of this profiling, the employment counsellor/vocational guidance counsellor and the customer agree upon an achievable goal in the following step (e.g. taking up employment in the local labour market). Subsequently, they agree upon the precise implementation method.

Box 7. Differentiation of client services in Lithuania

The **Lithuanian** PES differentiates services to clients taking into consideration their readiness for the labour market based on an assessment of the jobseeker's qualifications and competencies, their work experience and motivation.

Following assessment, jobseekers in **Lithuania** are attributed to one of four categories of clients. Each group of jobseekers has a set of measures to be applied.

Categories of jobseekers	Measures applied	Activity results 2012
Those prepared for the labour market and motivated (i.e. those with a profession and/or work experience in demand and a break between employment no greater than 2 years)	Job mediation services Individual employment activity plan oriented towards as immediate employment as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 59 % were employed within 3 months, using the e-services model
Those prepared for the labour market, but unmotivated (i.e. those with a profession and/or work experience in demand, but unmotivated to search for a job and unwilling to accept job offers and start working according to their qualification)	Motivational seminars Enhanced information and counselling services Individual employment activity plan oriented towards temporary employment measures and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 70 % participated in motivational seminars ▪ 38 % participated in temporary employment measures
Those unprepared for the labour market, but motivated (i.e. unqualified or people with professions that are not in demand and with long breaks between employments)	Vocational counselling services Individual employment activity plan oriented towards gaining or renewing a profession or working skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vocational counselling services were provided for 92 % ▪ 8 % were sent to vocational training ▪ 68 % were sent to work skills restoration measures
Those unprepared for the labour market and unmotivated (i.e. unqualified or people with professions that are not in demand with long breaks between employment and unmotivated to participate in the labour market measures to gain a qualification and develop job-search skills)	Individual employment activity plans are agreed that are oriented towards stimulating motivation and gaining or renewing a profession or working skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 65 % participated in motivational seminars ▪ Individual consultations were provided to all jobseekers in this target group

2.5 Effective follow-up and support during training and following placement into a work-first measure can improve integration outcomes

PES can adopt a variety of methods to prevent and deal with jobseekers dropping out of training - which can be a significant problem with the most disadvantaged young people and adults. These include maintaining telephone contact with the training provider to check attendance or maintaining contact with the jobseeker, either to simply check attendance, to provide ongoing guidance and counselling support or to arrange a placement interview with the jobseeker shortly before the training measure ends.

Maintaining telephone contact with the jobseeker following placement into a job has proven to be effective in promoting sustainable integration and reducing the length of future unemployment spells for jobseekers with a certain risk. Maintaining regular contact with employers following placement can also help to resolve any problems or issues before a placement breaks down; some PES have account managers for individual employers within their employer services division who maintain contact with the employer (e.g. **Belgium VDAB**). In practice, however, resource constraints may limit the extent to which longer term monitoring post-placement can be undertaken by PES.

Box 8. Securing the transition from training (ALMP measure) to a job and follow-up support after placement following integration into employment in Germany

Job search assistance before a training (ALMP measure) ends

The **German** PES has introduced measures for graduates of training measures which are designed to facilitate a timely and more sustainable permanent integration into the labour market. It is a strategy for action in the framework of the 4-phase model that starts shortly before the end of the qualification measure. Depending on the type of measure, guidance interviews take place with customers one to three months before the end of the measure, or immediately after it ends. This involves a revision of the applicant's profile (in order to update knowledge and skills) and a review of the customer's search strategies and own activities. Following this, placement activities begin and the employer service is commissioned with finding suitable vacancies.

Up to now, there have not been any studies on the effectiveness of managing graduates of qualification measures. However, a quality coefficient is being planned which will show the proportion of participants in measures for whom this management procedure was carried out⁹.

Evaluation-based service adjustment: Follow-up support after placement into employment

In 2012, the **German** PES carried out the first pilot test of a service providing additional support for jobseekers after integration into employment. This service comprises:

- At least three counselling interviews in the first six months following integration (additional interviews and contacts with the employer are carried out, if needed);
- Supply of services to the jobseeker during the integration process (target groups are defined locally and the participation is voluntary);
- Counselling interviews in order to identify employment risks and potential for stabilising employment and guidance to local supporting networks.

The results of the first pilot which was carried out in two job centres were positive. Compared to non-participants, six months after the end of support:

- The employment rate of participants was 20% higher;
- The duration of employment in first jobs was 38 days longer;
- Unemployment duration after job loss was 22 days shorter.

The project will be implemented in 30 local agencies and job centres in 2013 and the integration effects, the duration of employment and unemployment and the level of customer and staff satisfaction will be evaluated¹⁰.

⁹ PES (Germany) peer review 'PES approaches to low-skilled adults and young people: work first or train first?' Lithuania, June 2013.

¹⁰German PES presentation on 'Peer Review on Approaches for Low Skilled' Lithuania.

2.6 Partnership is essential for improved activation outcomes for the low-skilled

PES have an important **brokering role** to play in order to match skills supply and demand, both in sectoral and qualification-level terms; key to this is the collaboration with employers, and the education and training systems.

PES have established **cooperation agreements** with **education and training providers** that include a focus on services and measures for the low-skilled. These can operate at different levels and through different structures, as outlined below:

- Partnership agreement between the national PES agency/employment ministry and autonomous provincial, regional or local level **public authorities** with responsibility for the delivery of employment and training services (**Austria, Norway, Spain**);
- Specific partnerships at regional level with training and vocational education and training (VET) providers (**Poland**);
- Through **PES representation on Boards** of relevant national education, guidance and training institutions/agencies (**Belgium-Le Forem, Bulgaria**);
- Consultation and input from **external providers** into the development and review of PES Action Plans (**Belgium VDAB**).¹¹

Cooperation with **schools** is particularly important in order to help bridge the transition from school to work. PES can provide early career guidance and orientation to all young people and work with schools to identify those who are at risk of early drop out or who have already dropped out.

¹¹ European Commission 2013, Peer Review Comparative Paper: 'PES approaches to low-skilled adults and young people: work first or train first?', Author: Sue Leigh Doyle.

Box 9. Cooperation with schools to provide the follow-up of young people in Norway

In 2010 a national project, '*New possibilities*', was launched by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour in Norway, which aims to increase the rate of completion of secondary education from 70 % to 75 %.

'*New Possibilities*' aims to create a sustainable structured and targeted system of follow-up to motivate as many pupils as possible between the ages of 16-21 and to qualify them to participate in education leading to basic competence, vocational certificates or university and college admissions certification. The county educational follow-up service has the mandate by law to target young people (16 – 21 years) who are not in school or at work, and help them to get back into school or work.

NAV, the Norwegian PES, participates in '*New Possibilities*' at Ministerial, Directorate, regional and local office level. This implies cross-ministerial co-ordination, staff participation in managing the local projects and the joint improvement of competences among staff in schools and NAV. The county educational follow-up service and youth teams in the NAV offices co-operate to establish sustainable structured collaboration follow-up procedures and well-organised training to young people. Each NAV county has appointed a contact person to collaborate with the project. Measures from NAV, like work-practice, are provided in combination with training from school, adapted according to individual needs.

Agreements between NAV and the county education administration at central and county level structure and concretise local collaboration. Structures established during the project period are expected to be continued after the end of the project.

Partnerships with **employers** are essential for delivering better activation outcomes for the low-skilled in both work-first and train-first approaches. Employers are involved at the strategic level of some PES (e.g. **Bulgaria**) where they help to shape programme priorities and the allocation of funds to help meet labour market needs. In terms of service delivery, PES can cooperate with key employers to support (bulk) placements and involve them in the design of training programmes in order to ensure sustainable outcomes.

Box 10. Partnerships and cooperation agreements with employers in Lithuania

In **Lithuania**, the need for vocational training is determined in direct cooperation with employers. The PES use seminars and visits to employer premises to keep employers informed about the labour market situation, the services that the PES provides for employers, the qualifications of the registered unemployed and the possibilities of retraining them in accordance with the requirements raised by employers.

An employer survey is performed every quarter to analyse and anticipate the workforce demand and assess the quality of services provided by the PES. The most attention is paid to strategic employers that register the largest number of vacancies. Cooperation agreements are signed with such employers which set out the obligations of the PES and the employer. As part of the agreement, letters of intent are signed each year, which define specific measures (participation in active labour market measures, vocational training, etc.). The PES works with these employers to develop employer-specific training programmes for the jobseekers.

The PES also cooperates with employer associations, trade unions and other social partners at a more strategic level, for example, to jointly prepare and implement strategies, programmes and research for matters relating to the labour market.

Cooperation with **local health and social agencies** is another important area of partnership working to identify and closely guide those clients who have serious or multiple disadvantages. For example, in **Norway**, the in-house teams working with young people cooperate with multi-disciplinary youth task forces. These task forces have a holistic approach and make use of competences in the field of labour, mental and physical health, social services, education, substance abuse, and life skills, to name a few key areas.

2.7 Using external providers to provide training has benefits, but PES need to develop contracting systems to prevent 'creaming'

PES increasingly use **external providers to provide training**. According to PES, this can enable access to high quality trainers and equipment, and to providers which are better adjusted to the needs of the low-skilled. A problem that is sometimes encountered here is a long procurement process, which means that training does not meet labour market needs by the time a provider is contracted. Training vouchers have been used to circumvent this problem, although the sole use of vouchers to purchase training may not be effective for the low-skilled unemployed, so a mix of systems to manage access to training is preferable. As noted in the analytical paper, care must be taken to ensure that the outsourcing of training does not result in 'creaming' by external providers, who are reluctant to take on the most severely low-skilled or those with complex needs. This requires PES to develop a performance-based sub-contracting infrastructure, with differential payment systems for training and placement according to client needs, as well as a strong monitoring and evaluation system¹².

¹² European Commission 2013, [PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youths: work-first or train-first](#), Brussels, Author: Sue Leigh-Doyle.

3. Work-first approaches for low-skilled adults and young people

Guiding question 2: Work-first approaches: What are the differences between effective approaches for low-skilled adults and low-skilled young people?

3.1. Work-first approaches are predominantly used to integrate low-skilled adults, and in some cases, low-skilled young jobseekers

Work-first approaches emphasise fast entry into employment with services provided to encourage direct employment and get individuals off the welfare roll. Work-first approaches are predominantly used to integrate **low-skilled adults** if the individual is able to work, is job ready and there are suitable jobs available in the labour market.

They may also be used to integrate **young low-skilled jobseekers** if the PES does not have legal rules which require a train-first approach to be offered for young jobseekers. Work-first approaches are used in particular for those young people who are not able or cannot be motivated to undertake further training or where resources for further training or access to suitable training is not available. They can also move young people into self-employment as a viable work-first option.

PES measures and services which may be used as part of a work-first approach include:

- Job-search assistance, monitoring and sanctioning;
- Work practice/internships;
- Subsidised work placements;
- Guidance, training and financial support for self-employment;
- Mentoring schemes;
- Public works programmes;
- Motivational workshops; and
- Job fairs/virtual job fairs.

3.2. Targeted subsidised work placement can be an effective method for the fast integration of harder to place low-skilled adults and young people

Targeted subsidised placements are widely used by PES to compensate employers for a lack of skills and experience in harder to place low-skilled jobseekers and incentivise them to offer a work placement. International research studies and evidence from evaluations from the PES participating in the Peer Review indicate that subsidised employment programmes in the open market are an effective integration programme for the low-skilled unemployed. In order to avoid inherent risks such as

deadweight and displacement effects, they need to be carefully designed and also well targeted and monitored by PES and / or partners¹³.

Subsidised work placements can provide employment opportunities for jobseekers where no other option is available, giving them valuable work experience which improves their chance to re-enter the labour market. Co-payment from employers and differing or decreasing levels of subsidies according to the competences of the jobseeker may help to reduce the high level of deadweight which can be associated with these schemes. The schemes are most effective (as a stepping stone for permanent employment) when accompanied by guidance to identify a suitable placement and by offering follow-up support if needed by the employer and employee.

Box 11. Subsidised placements in Bulgaria

In **Bulgaria**, the National Programme 'From Social Assistance to Employment' provides subsidised employment in order to achieve social inclusion of the unemployed, including the low-skilled, who receive social benefits monthly and for whom this is the only opportunity to work and earn their income. Individuals are hired by employers or municipalities with a labour contract. Subsidies are offered to employers to compensate for the low-skill levels, lack of work experience or other disadvantages of the jobseeker. The scheme provided employment to 21 438 unemployed individuals in 2012, of these just under half [registered again at the PES after the programme ended](#).

Employers can obtain subsidies for recruiting individuals from different target groups who are at risk in the labour market, including low-skilled unemployed with lower secondary and lower education and young individuals under the age of 29. Employees who coach trainees are entitled to additional remuneration for the time of coaching, to unemployed hired for 'green jobs'. In 2012, 4 498 jobseekers were employed under other programmes and measures. Of these, only 618 registered again at the PES once the programme had ended. The plan for 2013 is to ensure employment for 5 110 unemployed persons and place 95 in training.

3.3. Job-search assistance, monitoring and sanctioning are a key component of work-first strategies

The provision of **job-search assistance** is a key component of work-first strategies; services and measures provided by PES can include information on job vacancies, vocational guidance and counselling, development of individual action plans and referrals to vacant jobs. Research has shown that job-search assistance and related programmes generally have favourable impacts, especially in the short term and that it is an effective active labour market method overall in supporting the transition from unemployment to work (Card, Kluve and Weber [2010]; analytical paper p.9).¹⁴ Sanctions may also be used by PES if the jobseeker refuses to take a 'reasonable' job

¹³ European Commission 2013, Peer Review Comparative Paper: 'PES approaches to low-skilled adults and young people: work first or train first?', Author: Sue Leigh Doyle.

¹⁴ European Commission 2013, [PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youths: work-first or train-first](#), Brussels, Author: Sue Leigh-Doyle.

offer (sometimes after a specified time period), however sanctions will only be effective if the jobseeker is in receipt of unemployment benefit.¹⁵

Mentoring schemes (e.g. **Lithuania**) and peer support groups such as jobseeker clubs (e.g. **Hungary**) have proven to be effective approaches towards providing job-search assistance in some PES. **Mentoring** approaches with more intensive support, between a significant adult person and a young lower-skilled person, have been found to be more effective in assisting groups such as immigrants and early school leavers to integrate into and sustain employment¹⁶.

3.4 Obtaining initial work experience is important for young jobseekers

A similar menu of work-first approaches is offered for both adult and young low-skilled jobseekers, but the level and intensity of support can be higher for young people. **Youth guarantees** in some PES ensure that young people are automatically offered a work (or training) placement within a certain time period. For example, in **Poland** the PES should present, within six months of the date of registration, a proposal of employment/other paid work or an instrument of activation (work practice, training or apprenticeship) to every registered unemployed individual aged 18 to 25 (or 27 years of age if they have completed education at the tertiary level).

Work practice/internships, which can include training elements, are considered to be particularly useful for young jobseekers to provide their first practical work experience.

Volunteering schemes (e.g. **Lithuania**) which place young people into charities or social enterprises as a volunteer are another useful method of providing first work experience, whilst also helping to instil a sense of social responsibility in the young person.

¹⁵ The use of sanctions is discussed in European Commission 2012, [Activation and integration: working with Individual Action Plans](#), Toolkit for PES, Author: Helen Tubb.

¹⁶ See: Walther and Pohl (2005), Thematic Study on Policy Measures concerning Disadvantaged Youth: Final Report. Vol. 2-Annexes 11-v1: Examples of Counselling Practice in Denmark and Slovenia. Pp.346-360; and European Commission (2011a) Analytical Paper – The role of PES in youth integration, PES to PES Dialogue, Author: Duell and Vogler-Ludwig, pp.18-19 referenced in European Commission 2013, [PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youths: work-first or train-first](#), Brussels, Author: Sue Leigh-Doyle.

Box 12. Internships in Belgium VDAB

In **Belgium Flanders**, VDAB offers two internships programmes for young low-skilled people:

- 'Instapstage' is an internship for young people who are low-skilled and who are in need of their first work-experience to help them build up their competences. The employer is responsible for implementing the training programme during the internship and afterwards for certifying the competences gained. The intern can in turn obtain a certificate for 'accreditation of prior learning' ('Elders verworven competencies EVC'). During this internship, s/he remains unemployed, but receives an allowance and some extra money on top of this. The programme is limited to three months duration.
- 'WIJ (Werk inleving jongeren)' is an internship for young people who are extremely low-skilled; as well as an internship, they receive very intense guidance. If an internship is not possible in the labour market, the programme searches for other ways to obtain extra competences. There are more possibilities in this programme than in the 'instapstage', because the needs of the young people are greater and the programme is longer (up to 18 months).

3.5 Public works may be the only option in difficult labour market conditions

Although **public works** are not considered to be very effective at integrating jobseekers into the open labour market, they may be the only choice for some PES in times of budget cuts and difficult labour market conditions, particularly for the most difficult-to-place jobseekers.

4. Train-first approaches for low-skilled adults and young people

Guiding question 3: Train-first approaches: Which type of training works best for low skilled adults and which works best for low skilled young people?

4.1 Train first approaches are often prioritised for the young low-skilled where resources for training are available

PES counsellors must strike a **challenging balance between achieving a fast placement into employment and sustainable integration**, considering the reality that for the low-skilled most job opportunities will be in temporary, often part-time jobs with low wages. Increasing the qualifications of the jobseeker is a pre-condition to change this reality. However, resources for training are not always available.

Some PES have **legal rules** which require all low-skilled young people under a certain age to be offered training, for example **Austria** (see Box 13), **Germany** and **Finland**. **Germany** has recently introduced a new initiative to focus more on sustainable integration; those aged 25-35 will be offered the option to complete vocational training. The first priority for low-skilled young people under age 25 is to take up an apprenticeship.

Even where legal rules do not apply, many PES will **prioritise train-first approaches for the young low-skilled** where resources for training or suitable training schemes are available given that young people are less likely to be job-ready (due to a lack of work experience and formally and informally acquired competences) and therefore less suitable for integration through work-first approaches.

Train-first approaches are most likely to be used for **adults** where a jobseeker's skills are out-dated and do not match the needs of the current labour market or during restructuring situations with mass dismissals.

Box 13. Training guarantee for young people in Austria

The primary goal for low-skilled 15-19 year olds in **Austria** is to help them to catch-up on their compulsory school education and after that, to complete an apprenticeship with an employer (or an apprenticeship in a training workshop).

The training guarantee for young people (15-19) who were unable to find an apprenticeship in the labour market offers apprenticeships in educational institutions or in private companies which includes theoretical training in a vocational school. This is accompanied by comprehensive case management support, provided by the PES. The goal is for the young person to transfer to a non-subsidised apprenticeship in a company.

The results of an evaluation of this programme in 2012 show that 80 % of these young people changed to a non-subsidised apprenticeship in a company, and 55 % were in jobs after completing their training. In 2012, 11 717 young people participated at an average expense of EUR 11 000/participant/year.

For low-skilled young people, between 19-25 years of age, the Austrian PES also offers vocational education (training) whilst the Austrian PES cannot place them into work in the labour market. For those who did not complete their apprenticeship in the past, the Austrian PES supports them to complete an 18-month long intensive training to become a skilled worker.

4.2 The most effective training is closely linked to the needs of employers and is certified

PES emphasised the importance of **closely linking training to the needs of (local) employers**. PES (e.g. **Finland, Lithuania**) have developed labour market analysis barometers, which use information from employers to predict future labour market skills needs, and many PES work with employers in order to design employer-specific training schemes. This linkage can extend to making **employer involvement a condition of training**; for example, in **Lithuania**, most training is conditional upon an employer agreeing to retain the jobseeker for 12 months after the training has finished. Whilst this can help improve integration rates after training and ensure that the needs of employers for a qualified workforce are met, it can make the organisation of training for the hardest to place low-skilled workers more difficult, as employers are less willing to offer placements to these jobseekers in the first place.

Box 14. Monitoring labour market needs: the occupational barometer in Finland

Finland is expanding an existing regional method for the short-term anticipation of labour market needs, the occupational barometer (OB), so that it covers the whole country. The OB will be published on the Internet in autumn 2013.

The OB aims to

- Assess the supply and demand of 250 occupations and classify them into three categories: shortage, balance and surplus of jobseekers;
- Summarise and collect knowledge from the local labour market gathered through interviews, studies and visits to employers;
- Promote the matching of the supply and demand for labour force;
- Promote the occupational and regional mobility of labour force –also immigration; and
- Support the decision making of employment, business and training policy.

The method is based on the expertise of the local employment offices about the short term (six months) prospects of the local labour market. Employment offices assess the balance between the supply and demand of 250 occupations. Assessments are made in local workshops involving PES officers. They are included in a database which has access to the unemployment and vacancy statistics of the Ministry of Employment and Economics and the national database of vacancies.

The OB will be used to inform the many aspects of the work of the employment services, including matching and vocational guidance of jobseekers, promotion of labour mobility, the employers' service – recruitment of new labour force, guidance of employers in new locations, the planning of adult and vocational training and planning of immigration. An example of one of the posters of the barometer that are displayed in the PES offices in Finland is included in the annex.¹⁷

¹⁷ PES presentation on short term anticipation activities in Finland, Helsinki, 23 April 2013.

Box 15. Employer involvement in the new vocational training model in Lithuania

In 2012, a new vocational training scheme was implemented in **Lithuania**, which aimed to more quickly meet the needs of the labour market and ensure the integration of jobseekers into employment. Under the new scheme, vocational training is only organised when it is needed to fill vacancies or to sustain an employee who has received a note of redundancy. Training can only be undertaken following the conclusion of one of the following agreements:

- Tripartite vocational training and employment agreements between the employer, PES and jobseeker, where the employer is committed to retain the jobseeker for 12 months and the employee commits to work for at least six months; in 2012, the vast majority of training took place under a tripartite agreement.
- Vocational training and self-employment agreement where a jobseeker is intending to become self-employed; or
- Bilateral agreement between the jobseeker and PES to fill future vacancies identified by employers.

Once one of these types of agreements is in place, training vouchers are issued and a jobseeker can choose their vocational training from a list of vocational training programmes offered by formal and non-formal vocational training providers. Employers can themselves be a training provider or can participate in the design and/or implementation of the training process. The goal is that they employ the person after completing the training programme.

The new model has seen a significant improvement in the placement results after completion of vocational training (from 52 % of participants in employment six months after completing vocational training in 2011, to 96 % in 2012-3). As noted above, however, the PES has found it more difficult to organise vocational training for individuals from groups who are less attractive to employers under this model and is considering alternative provision for such groups. In addition, the administration and monitoring of the vocational training measure (if participants discontinue participation in the training) needs to be simplified.

The **certification of training** which falls below the level of a complete VET (training modules, seminars, on-the-job-learning) is considered increasingly important. For example, in **Poland**, a modular approach is offered so that if the jobseeker drops out of training, they still retain recognition for what they have completed.

4.3 Train-first approaches for young people should include employer-based work experience

In order to address the dual barriers to job entry (a lack of work experience and skills), the most effective train-first approaches for young people are not solely comprised of vocational training, but include aspects of employer-based work experience, for example, **apprenticeships/dual training schemes**. The analytical paper¹⁸ states that recent research from CEDEFOP identified positive labour market outcomes for young people completing VET, particularly programmes with workplace

¹⁸ European Commission 2013, [PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youths: work-first or train-first](#), Brussels, Author: Sue Leigh-Doyle.

content.¹⁹ The research also found that jobs that are found after VET were more sustainable. Apprenticeships and other dual education training schemes are generally acknowledged as an efficient tool for fostering the employability of young people, through providing relevant work experience and specialised skills needed by the labour market. Combining core education components such as literacy, numeracy and language skills with vocational training is also considered to be effective.

Box 16. Vocational education and training: Strengthening workplace-related elements (apprenticeships) in Greece

The **Greek** PES, OAED, offers vocational education and training through 51 Vocational Education Schools (commonly known as Apprenticeship-EPAS). The schools offer a dual system of apprenticeship, with on-the-job training taking place in the morning, whilst afternoons are devoted to theoretical and laboratory classes in their respective fields of study. The educational policy of the Apprenticeship-EPAS is designed in cooperation with social partners, as well as trade associations and chambers, according to the needs of the local labour market.

Research conducted by the Moschato Apprenticeship-EPAS, Athens, and the Oreokastro Apprenticeship-EPAS, Thessaloniki, using a 20 % sample of the EPAS graduates of the years 2005-2007, showed the effectiveness of this approach: 68 % of the EPAS graduates were in employment during the research period and 73 % of the graduates who had completed their work practice in private sector companies were subsequently hired in the same companies.

Whilst apprenticeships are generally considered to be an effective approach to the integration of young people, it is recognised that early school leavers and people with a migration background have a lower chance of completing an apprenticeship than those young people with a completed secondary education or from a non-migrant background. **Pre-apprenticeship bridging schemes** which combine work experience and vocational training (e.g. **Germany**) are a useful approach to prepare those young people who are not ready to complete an apprenticeship.²⁰

¹⁹ CEDEFOP (2012) From education to Working Life: the labour market outcomes of VET.

²⁰ European Commission 2013, [PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youths: work-first or train-first](#), Brussels, Author: Sue Leigh-Doyle.

Box 17. Pre-apprenticeship bridging schemes for early school leavers in Germany

The **German** PES has an entry-level vocational training measure for:

- Applicants for vocational training with individually limited placement prospects who have still not found a training place, even following the national follow-up placement campaigns by chambers and the PES.
- Those looking for a training place who do not yet have the necessary readiness for training to the full extent, including slow learners and socially disadvantaged young people.

This measure aims to prepare young people in a company for vocational training so the content is oriented to the requirements of recognised training occupations. After concluding the entry-level vocational qualifying measure, participants are given a company report on the knowledge and skills that were imparted and a certificate from the competent agency (chamber). Companies that carry out an in-company entry-level vocational qualifying measure can receive support through grants towards payment for the work experience, plus a lump-sum share of the average total social insurance contribution. The support covers work experience from 6 to a maximum of 12 months.

From 2010 to 2012 around 75,000 people participated in an entry-level vocational qualifying measure; the integration rate achieved was 71.2 %. The scheme is considered to be successful because it includes:

- Regular attendance at a vocational training school, where possible in a specialist class; and
- Additional support alongside training for slow learners and socially disadvantaged young persons.

4.4 Shorter, job specific training can enable fast, sustainable integration for adults

In general, **shorter, job-specific, practical training** (e.g. to obtain a specific driving or machine licence) is considered to be the most appropriate to support fast, sustainable integration for adults. According to the analytical paper, research on the differential impact of the duration of training remains inconclusive. However, comparative research in West Germany found that for skills-upgrading training, short duration courses of up to 5 months were found to have a more positive employment impact for adults in comparison to long duration (9 to 12 months) programmes when lock-in effects were taken into consideration (Lechner et al. 2011; analytical paper p.19). Similar results were also found in other evaluations in France and Germany (Crepon et al. 2007 and Fitzenberger et al. 2010; analytical paper p.19).²¹

PES emphasised that it is important for the training to be linked to a specific job offer, however, some PES also raised a concern that if training is too specific, then it may not have lasting effects on integration. Training should contain market-relevant elements going beyond the specific needs of an individual employer.

Financial support during training is important to enable the jobseeker to participate. The PES in Poland offer a variety of financial support for jobseekers including interest

²¹ European Commission 2013, [PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youths: work-first or train-first](#), Brussels, Author: Sue Leigh-Doyle.

free training loans; financing of examinations for beneficiaries to obtain certificates, diplomas or professional titles, and the costs of obtaining licenses needed to get a job; and scholarships for continuing school education for unemployed individuals with low family incomes who enter further education above the compulsory level.

Box 18. The apprenticeship for adults programme in Poland:

In the Polish PES, the work-first approach gives better results in the short-term, whereas partial data shows that employability after training increases over a longer time period. To ensure both fast and sustainable integration there is therefore a need to combine training and experience elements.

The apprenticeship for adults programme was developed to enable the jobseeker to gain both professional experience in a company and a qualification; 80 % of the programme is intended for practice and 20 % for theoretical topics. Participants receive a monthly scholarship equal to 120 % of unemployment benefit. There is an obligatory exam at the end of the programme.

The programme takes two forms: job-training for adults (12-18 months) and qualification upgrading for adults (3-6 months). A contract is signed between the Local Labour Office, the employer who cooperates with a training institution, and the institution responsible for exams. There were 1 700 participants in the programme between 2009-2012, with integration rates of 36 % in 2010, 42 % in 2011 and 54 % in 2012.

Success factors of the scheme based on the Polish experience are that the scheme:

- Is flexible and allows the opportunity to collect one or more qualifications during a professional career;
- Can be quickly adapted to labour market needs;
- Offers an alternative to school education and a validation scheme for competences gained;
- Offers the low skilled a second chance;
- Enables employers to prepare future workers for their company and receive a premium if participants pass the exam; and
- Is particularly successful in the craft sector.

4.5 The accreditation of prior learning can help to gain ground in building up and recognising the skills potential of adults

The **accreditation of prior learning, including competences acquired through informal learning**, is an option to prevent 'starting from scratch' in re/upskilling a jobseeker (e.g. **Belgium Flanders, Austria**). However, it can be quite costly and requires an established (probably national or sectoral) accreditation system. The **Belgium Flanders PES** is currently working with all public VET centres to accomplish an **exchange of the accreditation of prior learning**. No matter where a person obtained a certain competence, there will be a mutual acknowledgement of this certification, whether it was received during regular education, at work or in evening classes.

5. Challenges in the effective integration of low-skilled adults and young people

The Peer Review highlighted several **divergences and shortcomings**, which would merit further consideration by PES as they move forward.

Further investment in monitoring and evaluation could strengthen, design and better target services and measures

Although PES may prioritise a train-first approach for young people, the reality is that training is expensive and resources are not always available to provide training. This may mean that a young person is placed within the workplace even though it is unlikely that this placement will be sustainable. **Monitoring and evaluation** of the results of the different approaches to the sustainable activation of young people may help to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of the approaches and inform future decisions on resource allocation.

Further emphasis on monitoring and evaluation in general could help to build a better knowledge base of what works and what does not work in relation to the activation of different types of low-skilled jobseekers. This knowledge could inform better design and targeting of services and measures which is crucial given the budgetary constraints and resource pressures under which many PES are currently operating.

Employment counsellors play a crucial role in the integration of the jobseeker and require adequate resources, training, support and guidance

In many countries, **employment counsellors play a crucial role** in deciding whether a train-first or work-first approach is most appropriate for an individual through undertaking an assessment and individual action planning. However, the type of assessment and individual action planning undertaken varies considerably between PES; it will depend on the caseload of the employment counsellor, the amount of time they have available for each jobseeker and their competences. Some PES indicated that they are under significant resource pressure and therefore their counsellors may not be able to undertake a thorough assessment in order to design a suitable action plan.

Employment counsellors also face the ongoing challenge of balancing fast integration with sustainable activation; they need sufficient training, support and guidance from their managers to support them in making these difficult decisions. **Performance management systems** can play a role here through ensuring that targets to achieve fast integration are balanced with targets which emphasise the sustainability of placement.

Although many PES acknowledge the value of providing **ongoing follow-up and support** to jobseekers and employers following placement into a job or a training course, the provision of this support is resource intensive and is not standard within many PES; it is more commonly provided under European Social Fund programmes which require ongoing monitoring of beneficiaries. The provision of ongoing follow-up and support should remain an important consideration in how to achieve sustainable integration.

6. Conclusions: the way forward

PES are increasingly focused on the activation of the low-skilled, particularly the young low-skilled. In this respect, PES play a key role in the facilitation of the transition of young people from school to work. Given the resource constraints under which many PES operate, efficient and effective solutions to the activation of the low-skilled are therefore required. The key conclusions are outlined below:

- **Early activation of young low-skilled jobseekers is important;** many European PES prioritise activation services and measures for this group, in some cases within the framework of a youth guarantee.
- Effective integration of low-skilled jobseekers starts with orientation (which is particularly important for young people), followed by professional assessment and individual action planning. Employment counsellors generally have the autonomy to decide whether a train-first or work-first approach would work best for a low-skilled individual and whether to allocate (scarce) ALMP training resources to an individual. However, they require the **right competences** to do this, as well as **support from managers** in order to effectively balance the need for fast integration with sustainable activation. In order to enhance professionalism, the [Dialogue Conference on The professionalism of Employment Counsellors](#) identified that there is a need for further work between EU PES to develop a shared understanding of the core competences of employment counsellors, and understand how to achieve and to maintain these. The development of a shared competence profile which could sit as the focal point of all skills-related activities for employment counsellors requires further investigation.
- Although resource implications mean that **follow-up and support** for jobseekers once they have been placed into employment is rarely offered, this remains an important consideration for sustaining placements.
- **Partnership working** is essential for better activation of the low-skilled. In particular, PES can act as brokers between employers and education and training providers to help to match skills supply and demand. Collaboration with schools is also important as a preventive measure, both in terms of orientating young people at the earliest opportunity and minimising the risk of early drop out.
- **Work-first approaches** are primarily used for low-skilled adults, or low-skilled young people who cannot be motivated to undertake further training or where resources for further training is not available. **Job-search assistance and targeted subsidised placements** are widely used by PES and are considered to be an effective approach. **Job placements and internships** are particularly useful for young people to give them their first work experience.
- **Train-first approaches** are most often used for the young low-skilled where resources for training are available. The most effective training is **closely linked to the needs of employers, is certified and includes elements of work practice** where possible, particularly for young people. Training is one of the most costly ALMPs so it must be carefully targeted, based on assessments and profiling, in the light of scarce resources.

- Further **monitoring and evaluation** of the effectiveness of the elements of work-first and train-first approaches would be particularly useful to better inform the design and targeting of services and measures.

There is a variety of interesting practices in place in the EU PES, the elements of which can be further explored and transferred taking into account the national conditions. Some of the main elements identified by PES with the potential for transfer include:

- approaches to identifying the future skills needs of employers, including occupational barometers;
- methods for linking training directly to the needs of employers;
- using a multidisciplinary approach to meet the diverse needs of jobseekers;
- the approach to the follow-up of jobseekers after placement; and
- the development of systems for the accreditation of prior learning.

Further support is available for participating PES who are interested in transferring practices to their own PES through a follow-up study visit supported by the Commission. More information on the Peer Review is available [here](#).

7. References

European Commission 2013, PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?, Brussels, Author: Sue Leigh-Doyle.

European Commission 2013, Peer Review Comparative Paper: 'PES approaches to low-skilled adults and young people: work first or train first?', Author: Sue Leigh Doyle.

European Commission 2012, Job profiles and training for employment counsellors, Author: Lukasz Sienkiewicz.

AMS Austria (2013), Peer PES paper Austria Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?', PES to PES Dialogue European Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Brussels.

Bulgarian Employment Agency (2013), Peer PES paper Bulgaria Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?', PES to PES Dialogue European Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Brussels.

Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2013), Peer PES paper Germany, Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?', PES to PES Dialogue European Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Brussels.

Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2013) Peer PES presentation Germany, Peer PES paper Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?' PES to PES Dialogue European Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Brussels.

CEDEFOP (2012) From education to Working Life: the labour market outcomes of VET.

Directorate of Labour and Welfare (NAV) (2013), Peer PES paper Norway Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?', PES to PES Dialogue European Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Brussels.

Le Forem (2013) Peer PES paper Le Forem Belgium, Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?', PES to PES Dialogue European Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Brussels.

Lithuanian Labour Exchange (2013), Host PES paper Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?', PES to PES Dialogue European Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Brussels.

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (2013), Peer PES paper Poland Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?', PES to PES Dialogue European Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Brussels.

Ministry of Employment and the Economy, PES presentation on short term anticipation activities in Finland, Helsinki, 23 April 2013.

OAED (2013), Peer PES paper Greece Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?', PES to PES Dialogue European Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Brussels.

Public employment Services: Contributions to EU2020: PES Strategy Paper, 2012, pp 1-10.

VDAB (2013) Peer PES paper VDAB, Belgium Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable activation of low-skilled adults and youth: Work-first or train-first?', PES to PES Dialogue European Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Brussels.

Annex 1: Example of a poster from the occupational barometer in Finland

Southwest Finland's Occupational Barometer 2011 /1

The occupational barometer is based on the view of the employment and economic development offices on the development of the labour market situation in the coming half year. The situation concerning some occupations and professions may change quickly. The estimate was done in January 2011.

SHORTAGE	BALANCE	SURPLUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting work in care and medical examinations Bookkeepers, accountants Bricklayers Building maintenance workers Chefs, cooks, restaurant cooks in charge of cold food Children's nurses, nursing Cleaners Computer operators Crane operators Dealers of fixed and movable property Dental hygienist Dental nurses Dentists Engine officers Engineers and technicians in electric power engineering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurs Floor layers and tile setters Head waiters, waiters Home aids, home helps Hospital nurses House managers, stock clerks Institutional catering managers Interviewers Kitchen workers, restaurant workers Laboratory nurses, radiographers Nursery school teachers Occupational therapists Pharmacists Physicians Physiotherapists Practical nurses, orderlies, institution based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal care workers Psychiatric nurses Psychologists Sales representatives and telemarketers Senior social workers and administrative managers Social welfare workers, personal assistants, home based personal care workers Social workers Special education teachers Speech therapists Steel fixers, concrete placers, concrete finishers and related work Steel fixers, concrete workers Truck drivers and drivers of special articulated vehicles Veterinarians
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation business managers Advertising and marketing managers, designers and researchers Architects, construction architects Asphalt, rail and road construction workers Assemblers of engineering works products and metal industry products Bakers, pastrycooks and confectionery makers Boatbuilders, panel process operators/joiners Brewing and soft drink industry workers, distillery workers Buildings painters Bus drivers and car drivers Business executives Butchers, meat processing workers Buyers Casino and arcade game managers Child day care workers Childminders, day care Civil engineers and construction technicians Class teachers Cleaning and forwarding agents, transport planners Clergymen Couriers, delivery service staff Deck hands and engine crew Deck officers Earth moving machine operators Electrical line installers Electrical mechanics fitters Employees in organizations and unions Employment and recruitment service officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineers and technicians in chemistry and technology Executives in organisations and unions Financial management planners, cost accountants Fire fighters Gardeners Gardening assistants Gardening managers Hairdressers, beauticians, bathing aids Housekeepers, household managers, domestic workers Industrial painters and varnishers Insulation workers Insurance employees Laundry and cleaner's shop workers Legal advisers, counsellors and experts Lifting truck operators Machine and engine mechanics Mail carriers and mail sorting staff Market vendors, door to door salespersons Meal service workers and salespersons in cafes, canteens etc. Measuring engineers and technicians and cartographers Metal coating workers Office sales representatives Other officials in post and telecommunications Pharmaceutical assistants Plastic workers Police Precision mechanics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserved (canned) and frozen food workers Process operators Processed food workers Road traffic and transport management Sales executives Salespersons School headmasters and principals Securities and financial service dealers Security guards Senior civil servants Senior officials in local government Service station staff Sewers in the garment industry Shoemakers Shop managers Sports and physical education instructors Stevedoring and loading workers Switchboard operators Timber workers Trainers and instructors Translators, interpreters Travel consultants, travel organisers and secretaries Trial lawyers University teachers and teachers in other institutes of higher education Upholsterers Warehouse assistants Wholesalers and retailers Word processor operators, typists Youth workers and temperance work instructors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising designers, coordinators Archive clerks and museum employees Assemblers of electric, electronic and teletechnical products Bank employees Biologists Bookbinders and related workers, finishing room workers Builders Cabinetmakers Carpenters and joiners Chemists Chocolate products and confectionery makers Designers Directors, stage managers Drama artists Electricians Engineers and technicians in electronics, information technology and telecommunications Environmental and other nature protection work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General construction workers General workers, industry Goldsmiths and silversmiths Hand packers HR managers, consultants Information officers, press officers IT managers, designers, programmers, consultants and experts IT operators, IT support persons Journalists, reporters Library clerks Life science technicians, laboratory assistants Machine fitters, mechanics Machine tool setters, setter operators and toolmakers Mechanical engineers and mechanical engineering technicians Musicians Office caretakers Office workers Photographers, cinematographers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pipe workers Platers, sheet metal workers Researchers in the humanities and natural sciences Printers Researchers in social sciences Secretaries Stereotypers and electrotypers Subject teachers, lecturers Tailors, atelier dressmakers and dressmakers working at home Technical drawers and other technical fields Telecommunications engineers and electronics mechanics Textile designers, pattern cutters Travel agents, guides Visual artists Warehouse operatives Welders, gas cutters Woodworking machine setters and setter/operators



Centre for Economic Development,
Transport and the Environment
Southwest Finland

Ratapihvieksi 35, P.O. Box 236
20100 Turku
Tel 020 836 006
www.ety-kokius.fi

