

National Employer & Partnership Team (NEPT)

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UNITED KINGDOM

NEPT focuses on working with employers to move people into, or closer to, work, developing an understanding of employers' needs while helping them to shape recruitment practices that support DWP's customers. If employers are prepared to support the NEPT's priorities, they are offered a bespoke recruitment service with a single point of contact. The partnership programme addresses key challenges faced by DWP, in particular reducing employment gaps among disadvantaged groups and increasing diversity in recruitment. The Tesco (retail company) Regeneration Partnership Programme is one of many exemplary employer partnership programmes. It specifically targets long-term unemployed jobseekers, guaranteeing job placements for people who are out of work for more than 6 months.

Name of the PES

Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)

When was the practice implemented?

The National Employer Service Team was introduced in the early 2000s. It underwent internal restructuring in November 2015 when it merged with the National Partnership Team leading to the establishment of the National Employer and Partnership Team (NEPT).

What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?

National employers want to have a single point of contact with DWP; rather than agreeing to local solutions across all their branches/outlets they prefer to have a strategic relationship at national level. Companies need to agree nationally how their branches support the UK government's 'welfare-to-work' programme. NEPT turns this agreement into operational delivery across the country by joining up local DWP Jobcentre Plus offices with DWP Jobcentre Plus District offices.

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

The main partners involved in this programme are:

- ▶ National Employer and Partnership team (DWP)
- ▶ Jobcentre Plus
- ▶ National employers
- ▶ National trade associations

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

The NEPT provides access for employers to a wide pool of jobseekers. In the case of the Tesco Regeneration Partnership Programme introduced in the early 2000s, the main target group is long-term unemployed jobseekers who live close to the new store and are representative of the local community.

What were the practice's main objectives?

The NEPT aims to provide tangible returns on investment. Its main objectives are as follows:

- ▶ To establish and maintain strategic relationships with large employers, trade bodies and partner organisations
- ▶ To deliver a consistent quality service to employers
- ▶ To identify employer and sector opportunities to support the hardest-to-help customers into, or closer to, work
- ▶ To develop new employer business and build the capability and professionalism of employer-facing colleagues

What activities were carried out?

The NEPT builds strategic relationships with large employers by operating as a single point of contact. NEPT works closely with employers and partners to access and support jobseekers, enabling them to gain skills and experience in the labour market.

The Tesco Regeneration Partnership Programme guarantees job placement for people who are long-term unemployed (out of work for more than 6 months), for up to 30 % of their new store vacancies in deprived areas of the UK. Candidates take part in pre-employment training and are offered a work placement on site (at the store) upon successful completion of that training. During training, candidates are taught soft skills such as motivation and communication skills. The placement provides an opportunity for candidates to experience what it is like to work in retail.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?	NEPT works with local Jobcentre Plus colleagues to develop local partnership programmes. NEPT facilitates local relationships and works with DWP Districts to ensure that the programme meets employers' expectations. By working closely with the DWP's national employer contact, NEPT can monitor the effectiveness of the programmes and gain information on case studies and success stories.
What were the source(s) of funding?	The programme is financed through DWP's District budgets.
What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?	NEPT works with 168 national employers and has relationships with 52 trade associations, representing half a million employer members across 17 sectors. For example, since 2000 the Tesco Regeneration Partnership Programme supported the opening of 50 stores across the UK, creating more than 5 000 jobs for the long-term unemployed.
What outcomes have been identified?	One of the most important outcomes the NEPT has been able to identify is that the partnership programme has supported more consistent delivery of quality services to employers and management of their expectations. This has been achieved through relationships that create joined ownership and engage employers on sectoral campaigns in areas of growth.
What are the lessons learnt and success factors?	The main lessons learnt from the implementation of the NEPT are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Each local community is different. Therefore, close collaboration between NEPT and DWP Districts are key to secure buy-in from employers. The programme needs to adapt to the specific needs of each community and address the multiple barriers to work encountered by jobseekers. It is crucial to work closely with work coaches and employers. ► The programme operates on a voluntary basis, which reduces the likelihood of unmotivated participants joining the programme. Once engaged, the retention rate for this programme is higher than the rate achieved through normal recruitment channels.



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