

Overview

What is this Standard about?

This standard is about enabling those people who have disabilities and/or disadvantages to raise their aspirations and to make informed decisions about employment. It also identifies how the supported employment practitioner works with families, communities and other partners to address their concerns and to enable prospective job seekers to raise their aspirations for work.

In the context of this standard the term "job seeker" applies to an individual seeking some form of supported employment.

Who is this Standard for?

This standard is for all supported employment practitioners.

Assist prospective job seekers to aspire to paid employment

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. engage with individuals, local services and communities with access to disabled and/or disadvantaged people who may benefit from or aspire to paid employment
2. provide accessible information about the social and financial benefits of paid employment, including **better-off calculations**, to prospective job seekers to enable them to make informed job decisions
3. engage with families, community support organisations and individuals who can influence job seekers' aspirations and choices
4. develop partnerships, networks and **circles of support** to develop and support the individual's aspiration to work and have a career
5. address the concerns of families and **circles of support** about the prospective job seeker entering paid employment
6. **advocate** for the job seekers with families, employers and other interested parties
7. negotiate **work trials** and criteria to enable employers and prospective employees to determine if their respective needs will be met through **supported employment**

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. the range of local services and communities with access to disabled and/or disadvantaged people who may benefit from or aspire to **supported employment**
2. the types of accessible information and the media within which they are presented that may be available for those with specific needs
3. how to engage with families and community support organisations and individuals in order to raise aspirations for employment and career progression
4. the value of partnerships, networks and **circles of support** for the prospective job seeker, and how to build them
5. why families and other interested parties may be concerned about the prospective jobseeker taking paid employment and how to overcome those fears
6. why it may sometimes be necessary to **advocate** for job seekers
7. the value of establishing **work trials** for some job seekers as appropriate to need
8. how to determine criteria against which to measure the success of work trials
9. the financial and social benefits of being in paid employment

Values

For a supported employment practitioner to practice competently he or she must apply skills and knowledge that is informed by a set of values. Supported employment practitioners are expected to be aware of and to apply a value based and ethical approach in their practice.

It is also recognised that the values as well as the NOS may need to be placed within the local, national, social and political context in which supported employment activities are undertaken.

Values of Supported Employment

1. An understanding of the positive contribution people with disabilities and/or disadvantages can make in the workplace.
2. Understand the main components of a real job (wages are paid at the going rate for the job, with the same terms and conditions as all other employees; the job helps the person to meet their life goals and aspirations; the role is valued by managers and colleagues; the job has similar hours and times at work as other employees, with safe working conditions).
3. Understand the "zero rejection" philosophy of supported employment and that everyone can work, with the right job and the right support.
4. Supported employment does not adhere to a work readiness model. It is about getting people into competitive employment first with training and support on the job: a "place, train and maintain" approach.
5. Job search should happen at the earliest opportunity.
6. Choice and control – people are presented with a variety of experiences, options and support to achieve their career aspirations. Support is built around an individual, promoting choice and career satisfaction. All options assume successful employability.
7. Partnership – there is genuine partnership between the person, their family carers, employers, community supports and the provider of supported employment.
8. Full inclusion – people are supported to be full and active members of their workforces and wider communities, both socially and economically.
9. Support services recognise the importance of the employer as a customer of supported employment in their own right with requirements that need to be satisfied.
10. Draws on Social Role Valorisation (SRV) in recognising that people with disabilities and/or disadvantages are often regarded as of less value

than others in society, resulting in poor life outcomes. Employment is a valued social role and becoming employed can help reverse societal devaluation, with wider positive consequences for the person.

11. Draws on the social model of disability recognizing that disability is the product of the physical, organizational and attitudinal barriers present within society leading to discrimination. The removal of discrimination requires a change of approach and thinking in the way in which society is organized, in this case removing barriers to employment.

12. Recognises that not many people stay in the same job for the whole of their working lives and people with disabilities and/or disadvantages are no different in having to adapt to changing labour markets and wanting to improve their working lives. Supported employment should encourage the career development of individuals by promoting training opportunities and seeking options for increased responsibility by offering time unlimited support.

Glossary

Advocate: To support or defend the rights of the job seeker

Better-off Calculations: This is a calculation that aims to show jobseekers whether they will be better off in work than when living on welfare benefits. It will take into account details of the amount of welfare benefit income and the amount of money they can earn in paid work, along with any welfare benefits they can receive when in work, and shows if they will be better off going into paid work.

Circles of Support: A Circle of Support is a group of people who help an individual in achieving their personal goals in life,. Often used in person centred planning, the Circle acts as a community around that person (the 'focus person') who, for one reason or another, is unable to achieve what they want in life on their own and decides to ask others for help.

Supported Employment: Supported employment is the term for high quality, personalised support for people with disabilities and/or disadvantages which enables them to seek, access and retain employment in the open labour market. It is a "place, train and maintain" approach that does not rely on long periods of pre-vocational training or a basic level of qualification or experience.

Work Trials: Work trials are time limited placements in real jobs that allow the job seeker to learn more about what they are good at and what they want to do, enable employers to find out more about what the person can do.

External Links

British Association for Supported Employment:
<http://base-uk.org> for England, Scotland and Wales

Scottish Union of Supported Employment:
<http://www.susescotland.co.uk/>

Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment:
<http://www.niuse.org.uk>

European Union of Supported Employment:
<http://www.euse.org/>

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