

## **REMPLOY RESPONSE TO STRATEGY UNIT REPORT** **'IMPROVING THE LIFE CHANCES OF DISABLED PEOPLE'**

1. Remploy welcomes the report, in particular the recommendations in Chapter 7, as a significant analysis of the employment situation for disabled people and constructive recommendations for improvement. We share the Unit's view that currently the transition to employment for disabled people is "risky and complicated" and believe that the bulk of the implementation effort, as it affects employment, should be concentrated on making the client's experience of this process simpler and lower risk.
2. We share the Unit's view that the best time to secure employment for a person who becomes disabled is while they are still in employment. Remploy is working with several large employers to devise adaptations to the physical work environment, working times etc, or job role changes to help employers retain the valuable skills of the employee. Small and medium sized employers are not always aware of the support available and may therefore be less effective at retaining employees. We believe that a campaign to stress the financial benefits of retaining employees who become disabled and the support available to help, would make a significant impact on retention statistics. We believe greater investment in this area would pay for itself by keeping disabled people in work and avoiding them becoming dependent on benefits for the long term.
3. Early intervention when a person becomes unemployed is critical. Remploy's practical experience supports the analysis that the chances of disabled people finding work are massively higher in the first months after losing a job, than after a prolonged period of unemployment. Jobcentreplus' Pathways to Work programme is being successful in placing people more quickly back into work, but for those people with greater barriers to work, we believe that the earlier intervention of specialist job brokers like Remploy could significantly improve the success rate. We are keen to work with Jobcentreplus to find improvements to overall effectiveness and to develop ways to improve links between job brokers, local health services and providers of the condition management programme.
4. We strongly support Recommendation 7.12 of the report:

### **" Job broker activity**

By 2006, subject to resources, DWP should improve referral arrangements across to NDDP brokers, both via self-referral and

Jobcentreplus case managers. In addition the role of the Job Broker should be developed to include:

- A clearer set of core activities
- Proactive job search
- More accurate job matching to enhance retention
- Better links with employers, but ensuring that vacancy filling is client led “

We believe that the process can, and should be re-engineered to:

- Give Jobcentreplus more control over the referral process and better information on the effectiveness of individual brokers
- Give Jobcentreplus better control over the service provided to the individual client, so that they receive relevant and cost effective interventions
- Focus Job Brokers on proactive job search and more accurate matching of clients to jobs, rather than the current costly, wasteful task of advertising for disabled clients.

5. Remploy's initial thoughts on process improvements are attached as an annex . We would welcome the opportunity to test these ideas possibly as part of the BoND and Pathways pilots.
6. Remploy believes that the proposed changes to Incapacity Benefit will significantly increase the incentive for disabled people to seek work. The challenge for Jobcentreplus, and the specialist employment brokers like Remploy, is now to build on these changes to devise a process which makes the transition to work simpler and lower risk for this important group of clients.
7. We strongly support recommendation 7.7 Welfare to Workforce development and believe that skills development is critical to creating sustainable employment opportunities for disabled people. We have established learning centres, often in partnerships with local LSC's, in all of our factories to enable our employees to develop their vocational and life skills. In our Interwork business, we work with our employer partners to develop and deliver training for disabled people, which provide them with the appropriate skills to meet the vacancy requirements and ensure sustainable employment for the disabled individual.
8. We agree with the recommendations in 7.13 on the Workstep programme. We deliver more than three-quarters of all progressions from the Workstep programme to open employment each year and recognise it as a key driver in achieving government objectives around social inclusion.
9. We support recommendation 7.14 on Employer Awareness and, as one of the largest employers of disabled people in the UK would

welcome the opportunity to play a role in delivering on this objective. We consider employer engagement to be essential in developing policies which tackle the current social exclusion that disabled people can face. We already work with employers to raise awareness and champion those with positive track records of employing disabled people through our Leading the Way Awards.

10. Remploy believes that the Life Chances Report offers an opportunity for radical changes which would materially improve employment prospects for disabled people. We are enthusiastic to play our full part in turning that opportunity into a reality.

**Remploy**  
**April 2005**

**REMPLOY'S IDEAS FOR MAKING THE EMPLOYMENT PROCESS LESS  
'RISKY AND COMPLICATED'**

1. The amount and depth of support given to an individual client should be tailored to the individual's needs, both to suit the client and ensure that valuable resources are targeted at those in greatest need.
2. The screening tool (as used in the Pathways pilots), perhaps in conjunction with the Capability Report, should be used to screen new clients into four groups
  - I. People for whom prospects for work are limited who would go immediately on to long term incapacity benefit.
  - II. Those with a recent work history and limited impairment who would be expected to move into employment fairly quickly. (This may be the two thirds of the current NDDP client group closest to the labour market ). This group would move to Work Focused Interviews with a personal advisor under Pathways, who would use the Pathways toolkit to help the client into work.
  - III. Those clients who need greater support to move into work, either because they have no recent work history or a moderate impairment. (This may be the remaining third of the NDDP client group). These clients would be referred to specific NDDP job brokers for the compulsory Work Focussed Interview (WFI) or the job broker might attend the WFI with the Personal Advisor. Jobcentreplus would keep a record of the outcome of each reference and would direct clients to specific brokers based on their overall success rate in placing people into work and any specific skills or sector strengths which the broker might have.
  - IV. Those clients needing continuing support for the medium term, both in finding work and ongoing support in the job. (Typically this would be the existing Workstep client group). This group would be directed to Remploy for the WFI, for job placement and continued personal support until the clients were ready to 'progress'. Clients might be directed to other Workstep providers, where they have a specialised knowledge of a particular disability or a particular local strength.
3. There is some academic support for using 'screening' of some kind to identify which people need what kind of support. A recent example is DWP working paper no 17, 'The profile of exits from incapacity-related benefits over time' by Prof. Richard Berthoud for DWP suggesting that instead of being a two-way screening (i.e those who could work soon

anyway and those who will not), the screening tool could look at three groups: 1. those with good enough prospects not to need help; 2. those whose prospects are poor and help would not be productive; and 3. those in between for whom help might be most effective..

## **ADVANTAGES OF THIS APPROACH**

4. The client would be supported and directed to the most effective source of support. Jobcenterplus would keep track of their progress with the job broker and would be available for further intervention if necessary.
5. Jobcentreplus would have much better information to assess the performance of job brokers, eliminate 'creaming' and have a stronger basis for contract management.
6. Job brokers would have a guaranteed client flow and would hence save the currently abortive expenditure on finding clients, but they would have to re-orientate their skills towards job placement, rather than client soliciting.
7. The approach preserves the current public sector / private sector partnership approach, by sustaining and clarifying the role of the private sector / charity job brokers and at the same time clarifies the relationship with Jobcentreplus and reduces the areas of potential overlap.
8. Employers should benefit from greater clarity of the process and from significantly enhanced volumes of suitably screened and developed candidates from Pathways, Remploy and the other job brokers, because the focus of job brokers would be redirected towards preparing clients for work, rather than finding clients.
9. The average unit cost per job placement should be minimised because:
  - Jobcentreplus will be placing the bulk of the clients at a fixed total cost under Pathways, rather than a 'per client' fee.
  - NDDP job brokers should be able to be more efficient because they will save a considerable amount of the current fee which is paid for client soliciting.
  - It would avoid the wasted cost of Work Focussed Interviews being duplicated in JobcentrePlus (under Pathways) and in job brokers.
10. It gives Jobcentreplus much greater visibility and control of the overall process and allows DWP to deliver the ambitious targets set out by Alan Johnson in January 2005.