

# IMPROVING THE LIFE CHANCES OF DISABLED PEOPLE

## Response to Analytical Report - Executive Summary from Dr E Sarah Burnett, Director, WTCS Limited

### The Issues Relating to Employment

#### 1 Specialist Provision

##### *Current situation:*

- "Disabled people face multiple barriers .... and fewer employment opportunities" (slide 4)
- "The additional and varying needs of disabled people across employment .... are responded to on a piecemeal basis" (slide 4)
- "People claiming incapacity benefits are the largest and most challenging client group" (Building on New Deal: Local solutions meeting individual needs - page 24).

##### *Proposal:*

Enable "expert" organisations to deliver particular services; such as employment, where mainstream providers do not have the skill and expertise to deliver an effective service for disabled people.

- The failure of previous arrangements is shown by the fact that disabled people are 3 times more likely to be unemployed as their able-bodied counterparts.
- The potential success of the proposed arrangement is shown by the results achieved by effective specialist providers of NDDP (see Shaw Trust/WTCS Limited report - 14`" June 2004).

#### 2 Specialist provision aimed at clients and employers

##### *Current situation:*

- "Government committed to help meet additional/varying needs of disabled people in employment" (slide 12).
- "Forty-four per cent of existing Incapacity Benefit claimants and eighty-one per cent of new Incapacity Benefit claimants said that they wanted to work at some time in the future" (Building on New Deal - bottom page 16).
- "Employers' perceptions and awareness of disability issues is one of the key barriers to hiring or retaining disabled people" (Slide 23).

##### *Proposal:*

Enable "expert" organisations to deliver a wide range of free employment-related services to disabled people and employers.

##### **Specifically:**

- Carefully selected organisations, with a track record of successful employment-related work with disabled people and other disadvantaged clients, able to

provide the appropriate services from the "New Deal menu of help" (Building on New Deal page 46).

- Alongside services to clients, offer free Disability Equality Training, consultancy and advice services to employers relating to the employment of disabled people and other disadvantaged clients using skilled and experienced staff to deliver these services.

### 3 Specialist provision contracted out by Jobcentre Plus

#### *Current situation:*

- Personal Advisers facilitating Pathways to Work Pilots are all Jobcentre Plus employees (slide 28).
- "Employment Zones (working with JSA clients) ... have proven the value of more radical flexibility" (Building on New Deal page 17).
- "..... people should be treated as individuals and .... receive the customised support they need" (Building on New Deal page 20).
- "There will be fewer rules on eligibility, programme, mix and lengths, with more flexibility, variation and local innovation" (Building on New Deal page 20).
- "... current routes via named programmes will be unnecessary. This will give clients direct access to the help that they require individually, in agreement with their Personal Adviser" (Building on New Deal page 20).

#### *Proposal:*

In some of the prototype districts (see page 39 of Building on New Deal) enable private and/or voluntary sector organisations to deliver the proposed "menu of help" to clients on Incapacity Benefit with Jobcentre Plus providing details of new claimants to Personal Advisers working for these organisations.

- This model is a development of previous arrangements including the Personal Adviser Service pilots, private sector New Deal contractors in Districts such as Exeter and East Devon, and Employment Zones.
- This arrangement would enable a comparison to be made between the effectiveness of Jobcentre Plus-led provision and that of the private and/or voluntary sector.

Dr E Sarah Burnett

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