



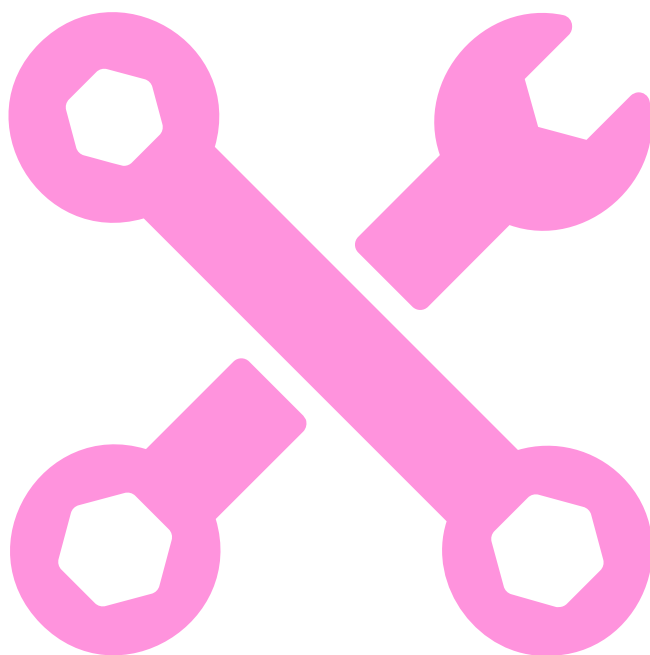
Section 1

# Introduction

## 1.1

### Purpose of the practitioner toolkit

This toolkit was developed by the ACA PES<sup>1</sup> project as a response to limited detailing of employment guidance, and its implementation and practice in community based employment services.



While there are existing models, most notably the Local Employment Service (LES) specialist occupational guidance model, developed in the mid-1990s, there is now a need to update and renew this and similar employment guidance models and ensure their relevance for the contemporary labour market.

The toolkit is aimed at practitioners and organisations delivering employment guidance services to people experiencing unemployment, including those who are first time job seekers, part-time workers, long term unemployed (LTU) or who find themselves at career transition-points between education/training and work, or between jobs.

The toolkit provides a set of guidelines and options to support those delivering and implementing services appropriate for a range of job seekers, job changers and in particular those more distant from the labour market.

The toolkit content has been informed primarily by best practice demonstrated by practitioners working in the LES, through the ACA PES project and other research (e.g. Whelan, 2018) and by international best practice models and academic studies, some of which will be referred to throughout the pages which follow.

## 1.2 Who is it for?

Many organisations are involved in delivering employment supports, for some it is their core function, for others it supplements their main activity which may include, for example, education and training, health, or housing.

Organisations delivering these services include public, private and not-for-profit organisations, who often deliver various employment assistance programmes to different cohorts of the unemployed based on certain criteria e.g. duration of unemployment. In the formal Public Employment Services (PES), the level of service available to individuals seeking employment support is often based on profiling systems which direct people into distinct types of services, with rules about compliance and participation which are often connected to welfare payments.

<sup>1</sup> ACAPES is based at Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute  
<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/social-sciences-institute/research/ACAPES>





# 1

## MEEG

Employment related guidance, as a specific service, can seem fragmented at local and national levels with little cohesion with regard to models of delivery, service outcomes, continuous professional development of practitioners, or collaboration between services. Services working in this space include the LES, Intreo, Job Path, Employability, community organisations, youth services, adult education, private career coaches and more specialised services including addiction, homelessness, and social services.

This toolkit is aimed at practitioners working in public (e.g. Intreo) or community based employment guidance (e.g. LES, and Employability) or private sector (e.g. Job Path) who deliver employment guidance within the broader context of active labour market policy, but may also be of use to services on the periphery of more formalised PES.

This toolkit focuses specifically on the daily practice of employment guidance within these services rather than on the wider employment supports offered (e.g. activation, job seeking support, job matching, job placement). It encourages organisations to reflect on the level and type of employment guidance offered, and to consider how public, and other employment services can support and enable people seeking employment to access sustainable and decent jobs.

The toolkit aims to support and develop a professionally-led employment guidance service, that understands

- the route from unemployment to employment
- the supports required during career transitions, and across the life cycle
- the approaches to career planning that enable people to achieve their potential

## 1.3 Layout and how to use it?

The toolkit is designed in a way that allows practitioners to quickly access sections relevant to their daily practice.

Following this brief introduction, **Section 2** aims to define employment guidance within the context of lifelong guidance, distinguishing it from other forms of guidance, for example education guidance or school guidance.

**Section 3** presents the theory of an enhanced model of employment guidance based on a work-life conceptualisation of employability.

**Section 4** details the six stages of the Work-Life Model of Enabling Employment Guidance - The MEEG. It focuses on delivery and therefore we expect that this section will be most useful to practitioners in their daily practice and can be used with the complimentary practice poster.

**Section 5** outlines important aspects of implementation recognising the importance of practitioners, resources, leadership and community.

**Section 6** provides a framework for understanding outcomes and a measurement tool to assist organisations, practitioners and individuals assess distance travelled towards chosen careers, and progress in implementing career plans.

