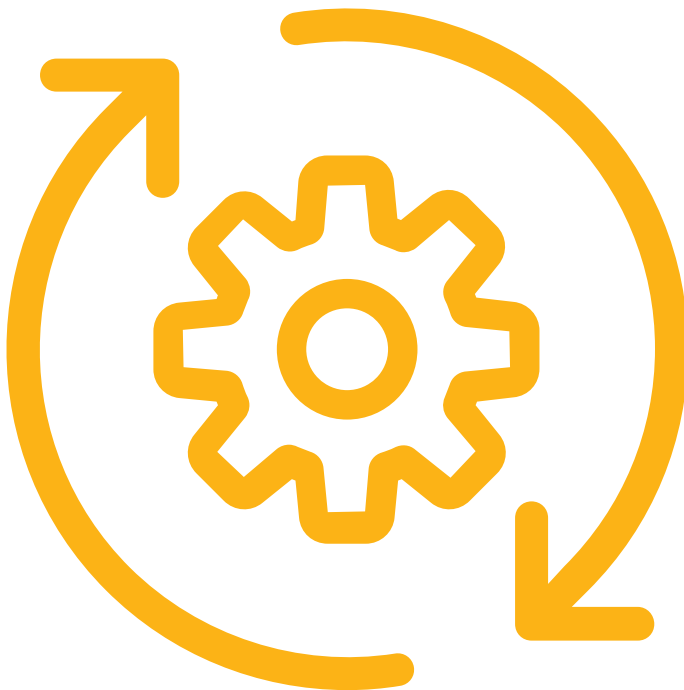**Section 5**

Implementation and environment

This section outlines some important considerations for practitioners and service managers when implementing an employment guidance service.

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Employment guidance generally involves a one-to-one interaction between a person using the service and an employment guidance practitioner, who work together to explore options and decide on the actions required to progress these options. The process aims to empower individuals to utilise their resources to make employment related life decisions and to manage their own careers.

While it is predominately delivered through one-to-one meetings, in some instances group sessions such as career information sessions or sessions delivered as part of pre-employment or Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes are common. It is a multi-channel activity with multiple roles and approaches to access.

Community based employment services often have low threshold entry points i.e. the individual does not need to be 'job ready' or meet specified employability criteria to access services, as may be the case in a private recruitment agency. These services allow walk-ins, are person oriented and person centred.

In some cases, service users are involved in the design of the service, others offer career 'crafting' where the individual creates their own unique way to relate to work. The co-creation approach is mostly 'strengths-based' using principles of positive psychology and coaching in its delivery. It includes people as equal partners with equal voice and say over the design of their employability plans.

5.1
Principles of employment guidance service delivery

The ELGPN outlined ten key principles to support the development of career guidance systems (Hooley, 2017), all of which could equally be applied to the development of employment guidance systems:

1. Lifelong and Progressive
2. Connected to wider experience
3. Recognises the diversity of individuals and their needs
4. Involves employers and working people, and provides active experiences of workplaces
5. Not one intervention but many
6. Develops career management skills

7. Holistic and well-integrated into other services
8. Ensures professionalism
9. Makes use of career information
10. Assures quality and evaluates provision and impact

5.2
Practitioner skills

Practitioners working in employment guidance come from a range of backgrounds and disciplines. We focus here on outlining skillsets and core competences rather than recommending specific training or qualifications.

Practitioner core competencies

Core competences refer to the skills, knowledge and attitudes common to all career development practitioners, regardless of their employment setting[8]. The following core competencies were adapted from The **Canadian Standards & Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners** used extensively in Canada in shaping professional practice. They have been recognised by the OECD and underpin the competency framework established by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG).

- People working in an employment guidance capacity should demonstrate certain **attitudes**. They need to be:
  - *insightful*
  - *honest*
  - *open-minded*
  - *results-oriented*

- People working in employment guidance need to have certain **skills**. They need to:
  - docum*ent interactions and progress with people who are job seeking*
  - *accommodate diversity*
  - *collect, analyse and use information*
  - *convey infor*mation clearly when speaking and writing

[8] https://career-dev-guidelines.org/the-standards-guidelines/core-competencies/

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- People working in employment guidance need to have certain **knowledge**. They need to know:
  - career de*velopment models and theories*
  - *the change process, transition stages, and career cycles*
  - *components of the career planning process*
  - *the major organisations and resources for employment guidance and career develop*ment

- People working in employment guidance need to be guided by a **code of ethical behaviour**.

Employment guidance competencies

The National Forum on Guidance (2007) devised a Competency Framework[9] for Guidance Practitioners for the Irish context and grouped competencies into five main areas – these have been adapted below for employment guidance. For a further expansion of these competencies see Appendix 2.

These competencies may vary depending on the nature of the specific service or the wider organisation within which the employment guidance services are offered. In some services practitioners may demonstrate all competencies whereas in other services these competencies may be spread out across the wider staff.

1. Theory and practice of vocational, employment and personal/social guidance throughout the lifespan

2. Labour market education and training

3. Coaching (see Appendix 1 for brief outline of coaching approaches)

4. Information and resource management

5. Professional practice

Organisations delivering employment guidance could consider developing in-house training or continuous professional development (CPD) for staff in methods, approaches or specialist skills.

This ongoing focus on practitioner skills will give people using the service confidence that the employment guidance activities offered are provided by staff that have the knowledge, skills and competences required to do so[10]. It also serves to ensure that staff can respond better to the needs of their clients, and enables those clients to make meaningful employment choices.

[9] https://www.ncge.ie/sites/default/files/nationalguidance/documents/NGF_ Competency_Report%20Final.pdf

[10] ELGPN Tools no.6. Guidelines for Transversal Components of Lifelong Guidance Policies and Systems (2015)

In addition to CPD and in-house training for practitioners, services can achieve good practice through ensuring that they:

- Promote ethical standards and behaviour
- Use evidence-based practices
- Strengthen links with appropriate professional, research and training associations

The following diagram illustrates how staff skills such as active listening and mentoring (amongst others) impact on important relational aspects of the employment guidance process such as developing trust and setting realistic career goals, as well as wider outcomes including quality services.

	Casual mechanisms →	Impacts →	Outcome
Staff Skills →	Active listening Analytic skills Mentoring Researching Challenging Curiosity Caution	Hearing individual needs Setting realistic career goals Developing trust Regulating speed and intensity of the engagement	Quality individualised service Autonomy Freedom and scope Job satisfaction

Figure 5.1
Staff-related factors: causal mechanisms, impacts, and outcomes (Whelan, 2018)

Boundaries of employment guidance practice

Frontline practice often involves addressing a range of persistent employment barriers (including for example, health related issues, domestic and caregiving issues, low education, and social issues amongst others), in addition to personal issues that the individual may be experiencing at that point in time, while also implementing active labour market policies. Practitioners need to be aware of these employment barriers, and in some cases, personal issues, in order to put career and employment options into an appropriate perspective (Ali and Graham, 1996, 2003).

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Being able to deal appropriately with these issues, and their level of impact on the person (from the issue being an ongoing frustration for the person to a full-scale crisis), requires practitioners to be clear about what is within their range of expertise and the amount of support they can offer. Within this context support typically ranges from listening to active referral.

- **Listening** offers the person space to voice their issues. This may be the first time the person has spoken about the issue 'out loud'. Practitioners should have some basic awareness training in, for example, mental health first aid, dealing with challenging behaviour, suicide awareness, domestic violence awareness, homelessness, and addiction, to enable them to actively listen and support the person in an appropriate way.

- **Active Referral** requires understanding and knowledge of local networks, and this can be enabled through interagency and collaborative working. Having an up-to-date directory of local services in your organisation will assist the practitioner in seeking appropriate support and enable them to make referrals to specialist services.

A work-life employment guidance model requires recognition and focus on these challenges, however, there are limits to the amount of time and support that a practitioner can realistically offer. Ideally, it should be sufficient to assess the potential impact on the person and their employment, and to offer moral support and understanding of their situation. Dealing effectively with these issues within the boundaries of guidance practice may require the practitioner to restate the focus and limits of employment guidance.

Ali and Graham (1996, 2003) identify a number of steps that may enable a practitioner to assist the person to access further support while remaining focused on their role as an employment guidance practitioner:

1. **Recognising the need for referral**: the practitioner recognises that he/she is approaching the boundaries of his/her knowledge and expertise. The practitioner may feel the need to check (with colleagues or a specialist) how to progress or resolve the issue. If the client keeps returning to the personal issue and cannot seem to focus on the employment guidance process, then it is likely that a referral may be needed.

2. **Being aware of other services and specialists**: having this information to hand can reassure the client that they are in good hands and that these types of referrals are normal practice. This information should be kept up to date by the organisation (and not individual to each practitioner!)

3. **Raising the issues of referral**: practitioners may not feel comfortable broaching the issue of a referral with a client as they may be concerned that they are 'letting the client down' or abandoning them. Suggesting to the client, for example, 'this is not my area of expertise, but I do know a

service/practitioner who would be able to support you with this. Would you like me to make a referral?' or 'Would you like to contact them from here to make an appointment?' The client may decide not to take up the offer, but the practitioner can come back to it in future meetings if the personal issue keeps arising.

4. **Making an effective referral**: ideally this should involve the person, practitioner, and specialist so that it is a collaborative and consented process. The specialist should receive sufficient information (verbally or in writing) from the practitioner and person so as to understand why the referral is being made. If it is not possible to make the referral there and then, an agreement should be made that either the practitioner or person will follow-up to make the appointment and a date set to have this completed by.

5. **Following up a referral**: It may be possible to agree that the person return to the employment guidance process in a few weeks' time when sufficient support has been received. The door should be left open to discuss re-engagement should the person and specialist see it as beneficial to continue the process in tandem with the additional supports.

Balancing employment guidance and activation administration

Frontline practice is often strongly influenced by different labour market policy frameworks. Practitioners' capacity to provide holistic support may be reduced in more work-first oriented policy implementation (often time bound and more administratively oriented) or increased in work-life balance approaches. Practitioners are often required to move between these administrative routines and the demands of professional practice (Nothdurfter and Olesen, 2017), creating ambiguity and tensions.

Acknowledgement by policy makers and employment services managers, of this on-going tension for practitioners and for their practice, is important for staff morale and organisational culture. Support structures including supervision, peer support, or a community of practice may be useful in discussing these tensions and progressing employment guidance practice within PES and activation oriented labour market policies.

5.3
Supervision, peer support and community of practice

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Support around professional practice in jobs where there is intensive interaction with people is important for staff well-being and CPD. The focus is often on practice and providing the best possible service for clients. However, it also serves as a personal development and self-awareness opportunity for practitioners, described by Carroll (2010) as a learning-through-reflection process. A reflective practitioner develops 'the capability to reflect critically and systematically on the work-self interface ... fostering a personal awareness and resilience' (Gillmer and Marckus, 2003, p. 23).

In some settings 'supervision' offers practitioners this type of support in their professional practice and provides a 'safe space' to tackle stressful situations and feelings. It is often provided by an independent external practitioner who understands the employment guidance work.

Peer-support is a less formal support process, often set up within an organisation for (and by) a group of practitioners, as a 'safe space' to support and challenge each other, facilitating learning and shared practice. It enables practitioners to reflect on their practice with the assistance of colleagues. Within this context, practitioners use case study discussions, role play exercises and observer learning to discuss their practice, and to support each other's understanding of their own practice, and develop skills and capacity within the organisation.

Similarly, a **Community of Practice** is a group of people who come together to build and share knowledge, to build and share skills, to build networks, and to build recognition. Three key components of an effective community of practice were identified by Wenger (1998) and maybe a useful starting point for practitioners wishing to establish their own Community of Practice:

Mutual Engagement: practitioners share or commit to a professional development program to engage in their learning, professional development and practice.

Joint enterprise: by committing to their professional development, practitioners embark on a joint enterprise toward a shared goal – in this case the shared goal is to improve employment guidance practice.

Shared repertoire: practitioners share knowledge and learning experiences, resources, methods and activities that have been developed for effective employment guidance practice.

You may already be part of a Community of Practice or a peer support network within your own organisation, but it might not be formalised.

5.4
Guidance settings

The space where Employment Guidance happens is important. We can think of space on a number of conceptual levels from physical space, for example, an office or room, to online space where information is easily accessible.

Most employment guidance services are based in public offices or community based centres.

We suggest that settings should be:

• Friendly and Welcoming

• Perceived as part of the community

• Recognisable as offering employment guidance

• Professional yet non-threatening

• Trusted and perceived as high quality

EXAMPLE:
LES are generally located in local communities with good visibility to people on main streets or close to town centres. This is important for accessibility.

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Physical space

Within employment services private rooms suitable for one-to-one collaboration and discussion are recommended. These spaces enable confidentiality and privacy.

Health, safety and security requirements should guide the design of these spaces, with some visibility to the outside office, good lighting, enough space for required physical distancing etc. The office should offer privacy but also a connection to the larger employment service.

These spaces could include a desk, chairs, a whiteboard or flip chart where ideas can be collected, a PC for use of online tools, a phone, career resources and information, a notice board with up-to-date opportunities.

The following diagram illustrates how service setting such as community based and non-formal (amongst others) contribute towards the creation of trusting, supportive and respectful environments.

Service Setting	Casual mechanisms	Impacts	Outcome
	Community based service (Non-public office)	Facilitated person centred process Created an environment where it was ok not to know	Open trusting environment where real needs are identified
	Reception	Warm & friendly atmosphere	Respectful 'non official' environment, puts person at ease
	Separate from conditionality / penalties	No fear of financial penalty driving the interaction No punishment Supportive environment	Focus is on meeting the needs of the person rather than directing the person based on maintaining payment Facilitates person if they make the wrong decision – they can come back
	Non – system driven	Flexibility Person centred	Focus is on the person rather than facilitating a system

Figure 5.2
Service setting related factors (Whelan, 2018)

Virtual space - digital inclusion and support

Digital and online service delivery platforms (e.g. Zoom, Teams) provide alternative possibilities for expanding employment guidance services.

Employment guidance offers a multi-channel platform for supporting and assessing career choices, opening access to education and training opportunities enabling job search, and also connecting people with employers and labour market information (Arnkil et al., 2017). It changes how we think about employment guidance by enabling shared collaborative career exploration spaces and enabling co-construction of careers.

There has been a shift in this direction in terms of emergency responses to Covid-19 however the use of mobile phones (text and phone calls) in the first instance has been preferred by practitioners and people using the services. The move towards the integration of digital and virtual communication challenges practitioners and services as it moves beyond the traditional way of working and requires a mind-set and cultural shift.

The shift towards 'digital first' or digital-by-default as seen in wider employment services in some countries (e.g. Belgium, the Netherlands, Australia), where jobseekers register for employment assistance services online and access services via video conferencing and messaging platforms, has not, so far, been replicated in employment guidance in Ireland.

There is a risk that people who face digital skills challenges and digital access will be at a significant disadvantage if employment guidance were to move completely online. Conversely, some shift in this direction e.g. the automation of repetitive and administrative tasks, could enable practitioners to spend more time on the therapeutic elements of employment guidance (Murphy et al., 2020).

Blended approaches are more likely (post-Covid 19) with the use of telephone guidance, and online platforms (e.g. Teams, Zoom) in addition to face-to-face meetings. Therefore, it is important for practitioners to consider how their existing skills can be transferred to these other mediums. Resources such as **GUIDANCE FROM A DISTANCE:** *A Guideline promoting good practices & processes in online Mediation/Guidance within LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES* and the **NCGE's** WEBINAR RECORDING - Telephone and Remote Platform Approaches to Career Development | NCGE - National Centre for Guidance in Education are useful in thinking through the requirements for your own workplace and staff, and ensuring that practitioners have the skills, expertise and confidence to move towards a more blended delivery.

Face-to face services could also be enhanced and supplemented through the use of online tools for assessment (e.g. interest inventories, values, work readiness) and for the provision of up to date career and labour market information. Traditional tools are widely available online and often use gamification as a way of engaging people and motivating them to complete assessments. Other tools such as worksheets and Mind Maps are also visually appealing in online formats and could be considered by practitioners to enhance existing services.

For a more detailed discussion, the ELGPN (2015) outline seven policy and implementation challenges associated with the integration of digital and virtual platforms and ICT more generally in widening access to employment guidance:

- coherence and consistency in service design

- channelling

- differentiation

- penetration

- targeting

- marketing

- co-creation the services

A wider discussion on the shift towards more blended approaches is recommended for individual services, taking into consideration the people who use the services and the supports which may enable more effective delivery.

Mental space

Employment guidance also provides the mental space to think about work, careers, aspirations, and futures. Our lives are busy, and it can be difficult to find focused time to really think about, and reflect on, strengths, skills, disappointments, challenges, the meaning of work in our lives, the opportunities available, and the steps and actions that could lead us there.

It provides the time and space to develop career understanding, career plans, and recognise and develop strengths and skills.

Importantly, this space could enable both learning and social development.

EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE AS AN 'ENRICHMENT SPACE'

- a service that supports individuals to mould and shape their working life

- provides individuals with time and freedom to think about their personal relationship with work, the working life options they have and how these interact in a supportive dialogue with practitioners and their peers.

- the concept 'space' refers to a learning space, psychological, social, physical and virtual space for development.

(Arnkil et al, 2017)

5.5
Time

Sufficient time is an important aspect of service delivery. It enables the development of long-term meaningful career plans rather than 'revolving door' type outcomes, such as one-day training courses (in the absence of a career plan) or unstructured 'hap-hazard' job search. It allows the person space to think about options and limits quick decisions. It allows participants to change direction and return to the service if the option is not right. Importantly it is an essential component of building a trusting relationship between the person and practitioner.

Ideally services should offer a no-time limit engagement and flexibility for the practitioner and person to decide on length of meetings. However, tensions exist between the longer-term focus of employment guidance towards sustained employability and the short-term focus of PES in supporting people into employment as quickly as possible. This issue of adequate time to provide sufficient employment guidance, to fulfil administrative tasks, and to meet service targets is an important consideration for practitioners and organisations delivering services within a labour market policy context.

While this longer-term perspective can be time consuming, its potential benefits have impact at individual, organisational and societal levels. For people accessing the service it may enable longer term career thinking and goals, and create a culture within which career self-identity and self-efficacy can develop; for practitioners it may lead to increased job satisfaction and adherence to ethical obligations; and for society it can lead to more inclusive labour markets and a more resilient labour force.

5.6
When does employment guidance happen?

Guidance is a life-long process however services are generally accessed at **Transition points** in individual's lives, for example at the transition from second level to third level education, transitions between jobs or careers, transitions due to a redundancy or return to work, or transitions due to family care or sick leave. Transition points are challenging, presenting risks to individuals and

their families in terms sustainable futures. It is important that employment guidance offers security, hope, and access to resources to connect people to the world of work.

Within PES, guidance is generally delivered as part of an ALMP, and the individual is therefore required to attend meetings with a guidance practitioner. The conditional nature of the engagement can impact the way services are delivered and received, as non-attendance can lead to sanctions in the form of welfare cuts. Recent evidence from the UK has found that a work-first model with associated sanctioning does not lead to sustainable labour market outcomes (Taulbut, Mackay, and McCartney, 2018).

This approach may suit people who are short term unemployed and others who are close to the labour market, but there remains much debate over its effectiveness for people more distanced from the labour market, and whether it leads to low pay and poor quality employment. As mentioned earlier, tensions exist between activation and employment guidance and whether the two can operate to their full potential within one system is unclear.

The approach outlined in this toolkit moves away from work- first and towards a work-life approach arguing for more personalised engagement, tailored to meet specific needs, that takes the individuals wider social context and life needs into account, and that co-creates a plan that can be implemented over a longer timeframe. It seeks to offer the security, hope, and access to resources and opportunities required by many when faced with the challenges of unemployment.

Recent research findings from Ireland identified five important outcomes from a tailored employment guidance process (Whelan, 2018):

- Increased confidence

- Increased motivation and goal setting

- Increased ability or belief that career goals could be achieved

- Increased career clarity

- Hope for the future

In this study, participants identified a number of important contributors to the achievement of these outcomes (see Figure 5.1) including the approach, the process, the practitioner skills, and the service setting.

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DRIVERS OF CHANGE	CASUAL MECHANISMS	OUTCOMES
The Approach Staff Skills The Process Service Setting	Personalised service Supportive approach Challenging the barriers	Increased Confidence Achieving Career Goals Career Clarity Goal Setting and increased Motivation Hope for the future
→	→	
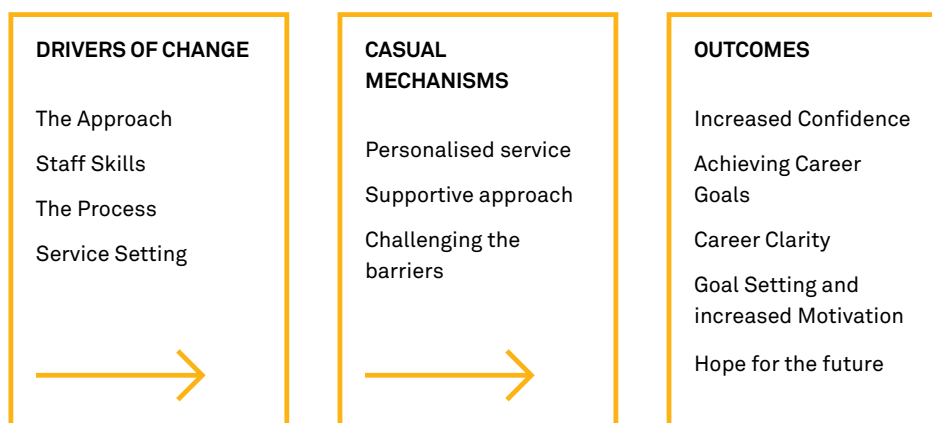
Figure 5.3
Key drivers of change, causal mechanisms, and outcomes as identified by participants (Whelan, 2018)

5.7
Ethics in employment guidance practice

The purpose of a Code of Ethics is to provide a guide for employment guidance practitioners who offer services to the public. Many organisations delivering employment guidance will have their own set of ethical principles that guide service delivery and assist the organisation in achieving high standards of service provision (e.g. through quality standards such as Q Mark, ISO). The following ethical principles may overlap with existing codes but relate more specifically to the role of the employment guidance practitioner and aim to assist in thoughtful decision making and resolving ethical dilemmas.

• Client safety

• Practitioner competence

• Respect for the client's self-determination

• Contracting – between the individual and the practitioner

• Confidentiality

• Practitioner accountability

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- Referral

- Supervision – one to one and peer

- Duty to maintain the professions reputation

Practitioners need to be aware of the ethical and moral assumptions and values that they bring to their work and have a responsibility to act in an ethical manner (Kidd, 2006).

It is advised that organisations develop their own code of ethics to guide practitioners in their daily work.

Equity, diversity and discrimination

A person's career development can be affected by factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, age, religion or disability (amongst other factors). Assumptions and attitudes towards minority groups can impact on education and employment opportunities, resulting in unequal life chances. Awareness by employment guidance practitioners of structural barriers and equal opportunity issues is essential in countering the negative effects of discrimination. Similarly, an understanding of complex lives and the additional challenges faced by some people, for example people experiencing homelessness, is important in planning and implementing career action plans.

Awareness of your own behaviours, use of language, thoughts and expectations is essential to the provision of equitable and unbiased employment support. This means reflecting on the ways we as individuals see differences. Often our biases are unconscious, so taking time to slowdown and reflect on our thoughts, attitudes and behaviours when we encounter differences or diversity is essential in understanding our unconscious biases.

The Diversity Wheel below helps us see the many ways that people differ from each other.

EDUCATION

POLITICAL BELIEF

WORK EXPERIENCE

AGE

RACE / ETHNICITY

FAMILY

APPEARANCE

GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION

MENTAL/ PHYSICAL ABILITY

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

GENDER

RELIGION

NATIONAL ORIGIN

ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE

INCOME

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Fig.5.4
Diversity Wheel (John Hopkins)

Nathan and Hill (1997, 2006) provide equity and diversity promoting guidelines to enhance career counselling practice which are equally relevant to employment guidance:

- Develop an understanding of how society is structured and how the system operates with regard to education and employment opportunities

- Reflect upon and examine your own unconscious biases, the language you use, the assumptions you make, and how your own gender, cultural background, and social class impacts on your practice.

- Think about factors which may affect how you listen and empathise effectively with people accessing your service

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- Accept as legitimate the anger and frustration that people faced with and experiencing discrimination may feel in their employability.

- Encourage the examination of a broad range of career options so as to reduce occupational segregation and limiting people to gender or racially stereotyped occupations.

- Consider the cultural appropriateness of the approach, methods and interventions used in your practice.

5.8
Locally based services and Interagency working

Employment services are generally based in towns and local communities serving, in the first instance, the employment needs of local people. Many have been formed locally and are considered an important part of the community fabric. They concentrate on helping people, and on issues in the immediate locality, and in doing so, proactively listen to the community needs. They have the flexibility to be innovative in their solutions and responses.

They are frequently the first point of contact for local people, and many operate a no wrong door policy, connecting people with relevant and appropriate services including housing, health, education, and social welfare. While their purpose and vision relate to employability, they recognise the life needs of the community and have an insider view of the challenges and issues specific to that community. This important contextual information enables appropriate employment guidance which acknowledges and respects the life needs of each person and enables an integrated services approach, drawing on its local interagency partners to provide holistic support.

Interagency working

The changing world of work and the complexity of challenges faced by many who seek sustainable employment requires an approach which operates within an interagency or networked system. At national levels, PES have formal, informal, and legally binding relationships with a wide variety of public, NGO, and private institutions (PES Network, 2020). These types of partnerships are increasingly important to meet the challenges faced by services supporting employability. Similarly, employment guidance and locally based employment services cannot

alone meet the specific needs of each individual. An interagency approach enables effective and efficient referrals ensuring quality at transition points between guidance and other services e.g. health, housing, education, training, youth services. This type of coordinated approach has the advantage of ensuring access to the range of services needed to tackle multiple barriers.

Interagency networks and partnerships can realise new ways of working together, can capitalise on the experience and expertise of partners, and can help identify gaps and solutions (Devlin, 2015), thus having real impact on the range and quality of supports available and accessible to individuals.

Lloyd et al (2001) defines the various forms of coordinated service delivery as follows:

Interagency working: more than one agency working together in a planned and formal way, rather than simply through informal networking (although the latter may support and develop the former). This can be at strategic or operational level.

Multiagency working: more than one agency working with a client but not necessarily jointly. Multiagency working may occur as a result of joint planning or replication due to poor interagency co-ordination. The terms 'interagency' and 'multiagency' are often used interchangeably.

Joined-up working, policy or thinking refers to deliberately conceptualised and coordinated planning, which takes account of multiple policies and varying agency practices.

While the above are the most common types of partnership working co-configuration is a participatory model, where 'interagency' relationships include clients as well as practitioners. The advantage of this form of cooperation is that it encompasses more actors and different forms of knowledge including the experiential knowledge of service users. More recently this is known as **co creation or co-production**.

The culture of the organisation delivering employment guidance is fundamental for successful partnership working as it can enable or prevent collaboration in local and national contexts. Sustainable partnerships require adequate resources, good management and buy-in from all agencies involved.

Many local areas already have some form of interagency networks established which could be drawn upon as a supportive network for employment guidance services.

A small mapping of services study (Murphy, Whelan & McGann, 2021) conducted as part of the ACA PES project indicated that LES operate within an interagency network consisting of the following types of services:

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Care
Childcare and elder care Providers City and County Childcare committes

DEASP Employment Services
Intreo, job path

Local Partership Employment Services
Employability, SICAP Jobclubs

Public Services
Transport, Housing, Health

Mental health
HSE Community Serivces

Human Resources
Basic skills (e.g. Literacy, IT, safe Pass, Driving)
Education and Training Career guidance

Local & Community
Community Development
Sports/Schools etc
PPN

Labour Market
Measures Commuity Employment, TUS, YESS etc

LESN

Other

Local Labour Market
Area Based Partnership
Chambers of commerce
Trade Unions
Regional Skills Foras

Specialist Support,
addiction, crime, probation, Domestic Violence

Recruitment
Local Employers Recruitment Agencies

Equality & Discrimination
womnen, youth, ethnic, disability

Policy Change/ Campaigns
National NGOs
Poltiical actors

Welfare and Money
Advice MABS and CICs
Society Vincent de Paul Credit Union

Self Employment
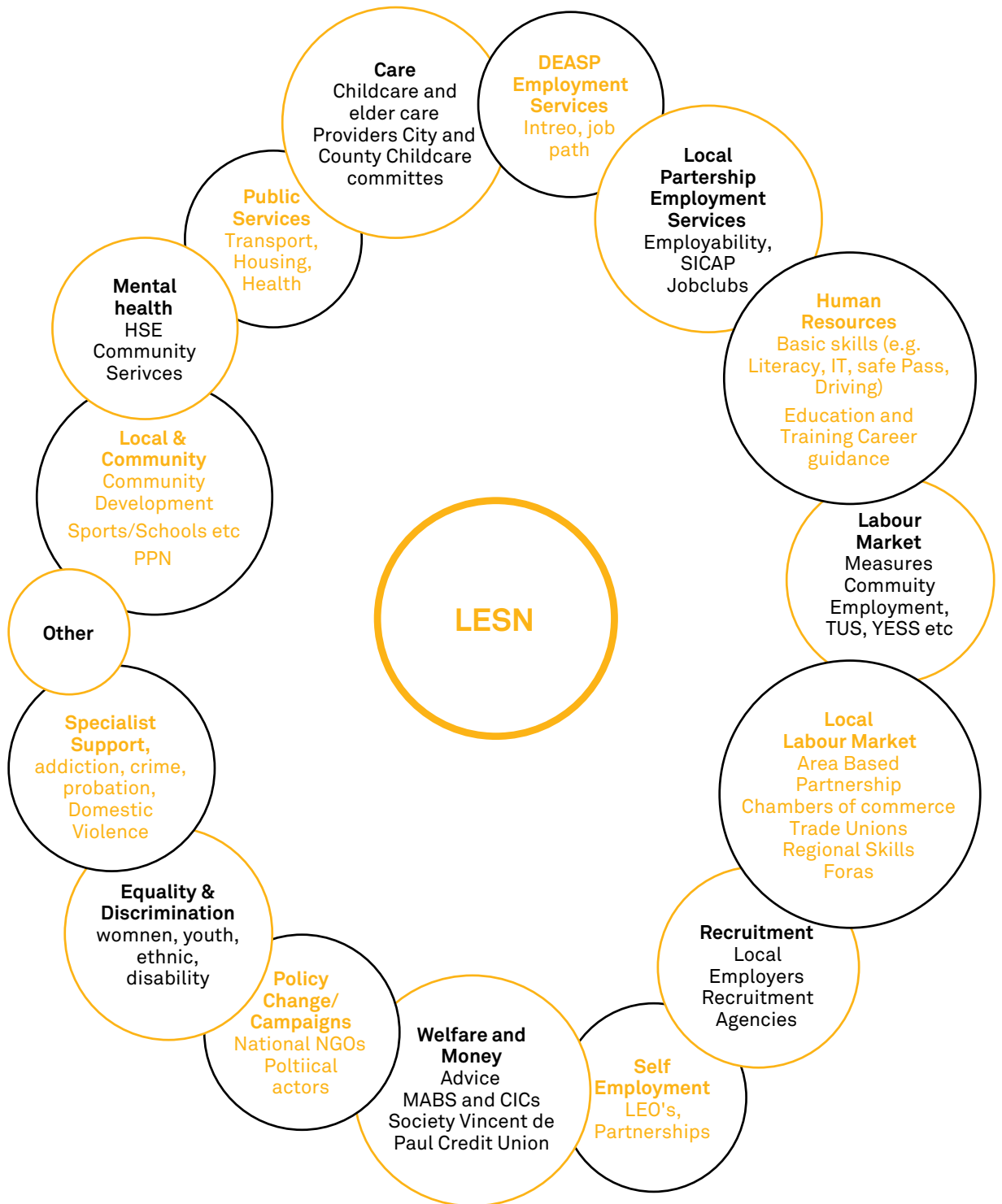LEO's, Partnerships

Figure 5.5
A Collaborative Approach to Public Employment Services –
Mapping Local Employment Services Referral Networks

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5.9
Leadership

How the employment service is managed and governed, including its purpose, strategy and vision, impacts on the type and range of employment guidance delivered. Leaders implement the organisational strategy and set the tone of the workplace and service. Good leadership is crucial to the success of any organisation, however leading a community based employment service requires adaptability and flexibility to steer the service within continuously changing community and labour market environments. For example, changes in the types of jobs available (and their quality), and the restructuring of jobs (and their conditions), requires a wide overview of the labour market. Similarly, as these organisations operate within communities, many with their own specific challenges, the leader must guide the organisation within the community and its network, remaining conscious of local politics, tone and relevance.

Alongside this, employment service leaders are often concerned with governance issues related to funding, the labour market policies in place at national levels, their relationship with the wider public employment services, the quality of the employment guidance provision and building relationships with employers. This range of challenges requires various leadership strategies to enable employment guidance to be meaningful to the individual, appropriate to their specific needs and relevant to a contemporary labour market.

Heifetz and colleagues (2009) identify the importance of technical and adaptive leadership strategies[11] and recognising when each is required depending on the type of challenge faced. Thus, different types of leadership strategies are required for different types of leadership challenges.

TECHNICAL   **TO**   **ADAPTIVE**

[11] https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/module-2/leadership-drivers

MEEG

Technical leadership is required when the challenge is clearly defined and when there is a clear path to the solution. These types of challenges can be managed and require the leader to 'be in charge'.

Adaptive leadership is required when the definition of the problem is unclear and when the views of a range of stakeholders are required to come to viable solutions and pathways to that solution. Often getting to the solution is a learning process for all involved. The leader is a facilitator of this process.

Within the context of community based employment services moving between adaptive and technical leadership approaches may be required to effectively manage employment guidance provision within a complex community and labour market environment.