

School for Social Care Research

Scoping Review

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

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The School for Social Care Research

The School for Social Care Research is a partnership between the London School of Economics and Political Science, King's College London and the Universities of Kent, Manchester and York, and is part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

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CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Keywords	i
Acknowledgements	i
Background and focus	1
Methods	2
Client group/scope	2
What we mean by employment	3
Mapping employment support models	3
Overview and typology	3
Consideration of different costing methodologies	19
Observations from a cross-client group perspective	22
Summary and conclusions from a commissioning perspective	23
Recommendations for future study	26
References	28

ABSTRACT

Supporting disabled people into paid work is a policy priority for local authorities, and commissioners need evidence on which to base investment decisions. The School for Social Care Research (SSCR) commissioned the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) to carry out a scoping review to see what economic evidence is currently available within published literature. The review particularly focuses on two client groups: people with learning disability and those with mental health problems.

The review found that the field of employment support in the UK is currently characterised by a complex, interrelated array of approaches, pilots and schemes, which frame the issue in a variety of ways. In order to present evidence relating to these different approaches, we grouped them into six main categories and presented them in tabulated format, referencing any related economic evidence found for each approach.

We found that there is a limited body of economic evidence, mainly focussing on particular kinds of employment support e.g. Supported Employment, and Individual Placement and Support (IPS). The evidence is often comparative (e.g. forms of cost-benefit analysis) rather than absolute (e.g. looking at cost-effectiveness, and how many successful job outcomes can be expected for a given financial input). There are also many gaps and inconsistencies in the evidence, compounded by variable and liberal interpretation of certain models as practiced, particularly Supported Employment.

The review concludes by making a number of recommendations for future study, and raising further questions that need answering in order to help local authorities commission effective support.

KEYWORDS

Employment support, commissioning, cost effectiveness, economic evidence, learning disabilities, mental health

BACKGROUND AND FOCUS

Supporting disabled people into paid work is a policy priority for local authorities – driven largely by the national policy framework¹ in which this goal has been increasingly stressed, both by previous administrations over the last decade, and by the current coalition government. In order to deliver on the goals stated within these policies, most authorities are investing in employment supports/services. Commissioners need evidence on which to base investment decisions, and particularly evidence about cost-effectiveness. Yet the current economic evidence base is thought to be limited beyond studies of a few major and dominant models (namely Individual Placement and Support (IPS) in mental health services and Supported Employment in learning disability). There have also been few, if any, attempts to collate and share economic evidence in order to learn about ‘what works’ across client groups.

This review aims to build on recent publications within the field of employment support (for example the Sayce review, Valuing People Now publications and other employment evaluations and reviews²) by drawing together, from a commissioning perspective, an overview map of the different models of employment support currently being used for people with learning disabilities and mental health problems in the UK and further afield. The review will then highlight the current state of economic evidence currently available to commissioners wishing to choose between these models; at the same time informing future research by identifying key outstanding questions that would merit further study.

The review was commissioned by the National Institute for Health Research School for Social Care Research (SSCR) and conducted in June/July 2011. The review refers to evidence published up to July 2011. Further literature relating to this topic may have been published since.

¹ Key policy documents relating to this review include: *Valuing People* (DH 2001); *Valuing People Now* (DH 2009a); *Valuing Employment Now* (DH 2009b); *No Health Without Mental Health* (HMG/DH 2011); *New Horizons* (Mental Health Division 2009); *Work, Recovery and Inclusion* (HM Government 2009); and *Realising Ambitions* (Perkins *et al.* 2009). The recently presented special education needs (SEN) Green Paper (DfE 2011) also highlights the vital role of early planning for employment.

² Key recent research publications relevant to this review include: Sayce 2011; DH 2011a; DH 2011b; DH 2011c; Campbell 2011; OPM 2011; *Pure Innovations* 2010; *Valuing Employment Now* 2010; Kilsby and Beyer 2010; FPLD 2009; Beyer 2008; Beyer and Robinson 2009; Schneider *et al.* 2009; Perkins *et al.* 2009.

METHODS

This review was commissioned as a scoping review rather than a literature review; the distinction being that it is designed to provide a structured analysis and overview of what has been done (as opposed to looking in greater depth at the evidence in published literature), and to ask:

1. what is our state of knowledge in terms of key issues currently facing the field; and
2. what are the implications in terms of future research?

The review was desk-based and utilised online literature search engines, website searches and a targeted call for evidence (including a series of ten telephone conversations with key research and delivery figures in this policy and practice area³) to identify and map current models and related evidence.

The original focus of the search for economic evidence was on the relationship between 'absolute' (i.e. total) financial resources invested and jobs achieved/sustained as a result of those investments.

However in addition we set out to identify costed evidence that:

- provides an economic comparison of different models aimed at getting people into – or keeping – paid employment;
- explores in economic terms the relationship between/part played by different component mechanisms within a particular model or approach.

Client group/scope

The review is concerned with employment supports for people eligible for social care services, and particularly focuses on two client groups, people with learning disability and those with mental health problems, as these were felt to be the most likely to share similar issues relating to the gaining and retaining of paid employment. That said, this review also sought to identify and record where the needs of these client groups may still differ, in order to inform further discussion regarding employment support on a cross-client group basis; these differences, as well as similarities, are discussed later in the report.

Finally, it is worth noting that, as conversations with those in the employment support sector highlighted, there are also many other groups of people who might benefit similarly from the kinds of support discussed, for example ex-offenders, homeless people, single parents, 'looked after' children, people with a physical disability, or older people looking to retain or enter employment.

³ A list of people with whom we spoke as part of this review is provided at the end of this document.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

What we mean by employment

This review assumes, backed by previous evidence and policy⁴, that paid employment is a desirable outcome for people with mental health problems and /or learning disabilities. Furthermore, we define the ideal goal as being a retainable, paid role within an open, competitive employment market (which includes the option of self-employment), which provides a significant number of hours of employment (often defined as 16 hours per week or more). It is worth noting that this definition of employment is not necessarily shared by all in the field, and the need to change culture and aspirations around employment possibilities for people with mental health issues and learning disabilities has been highlighted as a key issue within the literature and by those with whom we spoke as part of this review. For example, activities and interventions such as sheltered employment, employment-related volunteering, and day services focusing on 'work' activities, are currently viewed by some as employment outcomes in themselves. While on their own these would not match our definition of open paid employment, another line of argument is that these kinds of interventions can form part of work preparation, and have 'stepping stone' potential in helping people towards reaching mainstream employment. This review therefore includes the full range of such models and activities, in their capacity as alternative routes to the kind of paid open employment described above. However it is important to bear in mind this variance in expected outcomes, which can lead to challenges in making economic comparisons of projects and models (as discussed later in the review).

MAPPING EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT MODELS

Overview and typology

Within this review we have used a fluid definition of 'model' to include any documented approach, pilot or scheme, relating to supporting people with mental health problems or learning disability in employment, that has been evident in the literature and online material. The field of employment support in the UK is currently characterised by a complex, interrelated array of such approaches, which frame the issue of employment in a variety of ways. In order to present evidence relating to the different models in a logical order, we have attempted to classify these approaches and have identified six key categories:

1. models targeting job retention/career advancement;
2. models that begin with finding a particular paid role, then provide support to perform that role or stay in it;

⁴ Most recently in *Valuing Employment Now* (DH 2009b) and *No Health Without Mental Health* (HMG/DH 2011).

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

3. models that provide training or job preparation in the setting of a mainstream workplace (but not necessarily the one the person will go on to work in);
4. models that provide training/job preparation in a sheltered and/or unpaid environment, as a route into open employment;
5. models and approaches that focus on specific life stages and client groups;
6. approaches that focus on mechanisms – how support might be accessed and/or funded.

Many of the current models under discussion start from the position where a person needs helping into, or back into employment. However, our first (notably smallest) category of support identifies the role of prevention: support that is geared mainly towards helping people keep a job or career they already have. It has tended to be within the mental health field that job retention has been the focus, or starting point, for employment support. However, it should be noted that assistance to retain jobs also forms a part of other broader support models, including those geared towards people with a learning disability. One question for future consideration might be whether this current level and intensity of 'retention' support (i.e. as part of a wider package), and the length of time for which the availability of this support continues, is enough for those people with a learning disability who have been supported to gain jobs; or whether more of a specific focus on this would be helpful. This also links to wider issues around the pros and cons of time-limited support. Although it is arguably beyond the scope of this review (with our focus on those in receipt of social care services) it is worth noting that Lelliott *et al.*, in a 2008 review of evidence around mental health and work, also identify studies from the UK, US and France that show positive economic impact of even more upstream, preventative interventions, including workplace screening for depression followed by telephone-based care management by mental health professionals. Upstream interventions such as these are likely to be of increasing significance, due to emerging evidence identified by, for example, the Centre for Mental Health that 'presenteeism' (issues of underproduction in the workplace due to health issues) may be costing the UK economy double the amount (at £15.1 billion per year) that absenteeism is thought to currently cost (£8.4 billion per year)⁵.

Of the models looking at supporting people to enter, or re-enter, work, there appear to be two major conceptual approaches. First, the more traditional models of employment support that focus on rehabilitation and preparation for the workplace, often in a sheltered environment, prior to people looking for paid jobs on a more open market. These approaches are often described as 'train then place' models.

In contrast to this approach, there is a second group of models that advocate starting with finding and getting the paid job itself, and then providing the training and support in

⁵ <http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/employment/presenteeism.aspx>

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

that job, to enable the person to gain confidence and skills in the open workplace environment – described as ‘place then train’ models.

We have also identified a third category of job support approaches that appears to bridge the gap between these two, whereby people are trained and supported within an open workplace environment, but on a time-limited ‘placement’ basis, such as an internship or apprenticeship, i.e. they are not guaranteed/necessarily going to continue with a job at that place of work at the end of this time period.

Many emerging employment support approaches appear to be led very much by a particular life stage and/or set of issues for the people they aim to support, most notably a collection of pilots looking at transitions from childhood to adulthood for young people with learning disabilities, and how seeds for successful future employment can be sown much earlier on. Like the preventative models highlighted in the first category, these could be classed as forms of ‘upstream’ models, although with an emphasis on preparation rather than prevention. This emphasis on preparation is grounded in the policy agenda of recent years (*Valuing People Now*, *Valuing Employment Now*, and the special educational needs Green Paper), which highlights the need to raise expectations and aspirations regarding employment early on in people’s lives, for example before or at ‘year 9’ (age 13–14) review – and not just wait until they turn 16 or 18 before considering and planning for their career.

However, this perspective also serves to highlight that other life stages, for different client groups, do not seem to have been receiving as much attention when it comes to employment support. Whether this is because common issues around employment do not exist to such an extent within other life stages and client groups, or because they have not yet been the focus of policy drivers, is a question that might merit further study.

Finally, there is a distinct group of models and approaches that appear to be mechanism-led, and in particular, driven by exploration around ways in which employment support can be accessed by people (for example mechanisms for getting the right information and support to the right people at the right time) and *funded* (for example the ways in which different resources can be combined, or released, in order to pay for employment support).

Tables 1 to 6 provide an overview of the models and approaches that we are currently aware of in each of these categories, including key features and a summary of the types of existing costed evidence relating to each model.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 1. Models targeting job retention/career advancement

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis*	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Working for Wellness Employment Support Service	MH	Pilots in 15 London Boroughs, as part of IAPT.	<p>Integrates psychological therapy and employment support pathways.</p> <p>For commissioners: investment fund for service re-design, e.g. employment of job advisers co-located with mental health team.</p> <p>For workers: advice, guidance, signposting, in-work support, help with employer/adjustment issues.</p>	Economic impact report published 2011 – mainly CBA: every £1 spent generates £2.79 of benefits: £0.84 for the individual and £1.95 for the state. Of the 1319 individuals referred to the employment support across the five sites covered by the evaluation, 260 were supported to retain their employment and 95 were supported to move into work (Office of Public Management 2011).
Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA)	Both (wider)	Tested in US (from 1999) and UK (from 2003), implemented by Jobcentre Plus in six regions	<p>Input such as employer engagement, individual case management, guidance and career coaching, in-work training and skill development – aimed at people who, following welfare to work placement, have become trapped in low-wage work (as described by Foster and Purvis 2011).</p> <p>UK ‘demonstration’ project was targeted at long-term unemployed aged over 25 and unemployed lone parents.</p>	Learning from these projects provided in Foster and Purvis (2011), but no apparent economic evidence.

Notes:

* The client group field in which the model has been generated, and/or most used to date, but many models will have relevance to a wider range of people.

MH = Mental Health , LD = Learning Disability, while ‘Both’ indicates that the model crosses or extends beyond these client groups.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 2. Models that begin with finding a particular paid role, then provide support to perform that role or stay in it

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Supported Employment	LD	Widely tested in US. Now fairly widespread in UK via Supported Employment agencies, though to differing levels of intensity and fidelity	<p>Overarching pathway framework with five core principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. vocational profiling 2. job finding 3. job analysis and placement 4. job training 5. follow-along services <p>Emphasis on bringing employer and employees together.</p> <p>Other key mechanisms include job coaching and systematic instruction.</p>	<p>Substantial amounts, especially from US, usually comparing SE with sheltered workshop approaches, and showing savings to taxpayer after 4-5 years (Beyer and Robinson 2009).</p> <p>Main evidence to date from UK is research carried out by Steve Beyer and colleagues (Beyer and Robinson 2009), including most recently in North Lanarkshire and Kent, cost-benefit analysis indicating net savings of £6,894 and £3,564 per person per annum (DH 2011a; Beyer 2008; Kilsby and Beyer 2010). Beyer does however point out that potentially significant costs were not fully included in the North Lanarkshire calculation. Cost-effectiveness analysis in North Lanarkshire showed an overall cost per job gained of just over £7,000 pa, compared to around £15,000 for alternative day services (Beyer 2008). The most recent study on Kent Supported Employment Service identified an averaged cost of £9,000 per person placed in paid work (Kilsby and Beyer 2010).</p> <p>Some Social Return on Investment analysis has been implemented, e.g. in Edinburgh (showing £4.86 return on each £1 invested) and Northern Ireland (08/09 figures showing £13.46 return on each £1 invested) – and SROI is being planned in Blackpool (Coutts and Durie 2011; NOW 2009).</p> <p>Also three basic costed case studies published by DH, highlighting potential savings from a lifetime perspective (Pure Innovations 2010).</p>
Support to set up self-employment and micro-enterprises	LD	Tested in US/Canada. At least two pilots/ programmes in UK: 'MiEnterprise' and 'In Business' (pilot in four sites by FPLD)	<p>Will be relevant to a small but important minority of people.</p> <p>Micro boards one mechanism used to aid this approach.</p>	<p>No costed evidence emerging from this review, although a more focused search for evidence within the US and Canada may highlight financial analysis.</p>

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 2. Models that begin with finding a particular paid role, then provide support to perform that role or stay in it (continued)

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Customised employment	LD	Demonstration programmes in US. Not widespread as a distinct model in UK, but we believe key elements of the approach have become part of standard practice in some Supported Employment agencies.	<p>Emphasis on getting to know individual and tailored matching.</p> <p>Mechanisms: establishment of client preferences strengths, interests and choices; coordination of services, negotiation with employers, rapid placement, unlimited ongoing support.</p>	<p>Demonstration programmes in US showing increased individual earnings as one outcome (Beyer and Robinson 2009).</p> <p>Nothing from UK uncovered through this review, though elements of this model may be part of the Supported Employment models costed above.</p>
IPS – Individual Placement and Support	MH	Tested in six sites in Europe, including UK. Also tested in US, Canada and Australia. Increasingly widespread in the UK.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. competitive employment is the primary goal 2. everyone who wants it is eligible for employment support 3. job search is consistent with individual preferences 4. job search is rapid, beginning within one month 5. employment specialists and clinical teams work and are located together (key mechanism that distinguishes IPS from supported employment) 6. support is time-unlimited and individualised to both the employer and the employee 7. welfare benefits counselling supports the person through the transition from benefits to work 	<p>Substantial amounts: RCTs have provided costed evidence that IPS is more cost-effective than ‘traditional’ vocational rehabilitation models (e.g. prevocational training), with better outcomes (e.g. employment rates) for the same or less cost (Parsonage 2009; Lelliott <i>et al.</i> 2008; Rinaldi and Perkins 2007). Parsonage also addresses affordability, suggesting an annual direct cost of IPS, per person, of £2,000.</p> <p>However model fidelity is an important issue, and one RCT study by Howard <i>et al.</i> (2010) has shown a substantially cheaper implementation of ‘IPS’ (at around £442 per client) to be far less effective, calling into question the reliability of the current IPS fidelity scale as an indication of effective model implementation (Latimer 2010).</p> <p>SROI and CBA of IPS at Remploy is planned/has been carried out (no documents accessed).</p>

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 3. Models that provide training/job preparation in the setting of a mainstream workplace (but not necessarily the one the person will go on to work in)

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Project Search	LD	Originated in US in mid-1990s, currently being piloted in 14 sites in the UK, coordinated by the Office for Disability Issues (ODI).	<p>'Employer led' – provides rotation internships in workplace settings, e.g. hospitals. Partnership approach, with training establishments (often colleges in UK) providing training, job coaches (e.g. provided by Remploy in UK) providing on-job support.</p> <p>Work is unpaid.</p>	<p>A DH report quotes savings experienced by sites including £5,500–£6,000/yr in recruitment costs and £16,000/yr in overtime payments (McCourt 2011).</p> <p>SROI of Remploy Project Search sites currently being completed by Remploy, likely to show around £7 return on each £1 invested. Not sure of the degree to which this costing reflects outcomes in terms of paid jobs resulting from the programme.</p> <p>ODI's evaluation of pilot sites due December 2011 – to be mostly qualitative, with some description of set up costs and funding structures, but not CBA.</p>
Apprenticeships	Both	<p>This seems to be a relatively unexplored area.</p> <p>The National Apprenticeships Service, in partnership with Remploy and Skill, is to deliver 350 apprenticeships for disabled young people by March 2012 (DH 2011b)</p>	<p>Apprentices earn a wage and work alongside experienced staff to gain job/industry-specific skills. Off the job, usually on a day-release basis, apprentices receive training to work towards nationally recognised qualifications. (From: DH 2011b and http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Be-An-Apprentice/The-Basics.aspx)</p>	<p>No costed evidence found, though some lessons and issues are included among the learning from Valuing People Now demonstration sites (DH 2011b).</p>
Transitional Employment Programmes	MH	At least three examples within the UK	Employer has contract with group of people rather than an individual (often organised via clubhouse/job club model).	No costed evidence emerging from this review.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 4. Models that provide training/job preparation in a sheltered and/or unpaid environment, as a route into open employment

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Employment related further education/ classroom based vocational rehabilitation (including residential training colleges)	Both	Examples of colleges using funding more creatively to secure work include the ROSE project in Havering.	<p>In 'traditional' versions of this model, learning takes place within a classroom environment rather than workplace, although in more recent/creative examples (e.g. ROSE) courses take place in college and workplace, with people carrying out work placements supported by job coach (and with travel training also provided) (DH 2011b).</p> <p>The Sayce review refers to residential training colleges as providing a range of services including independent living skills and vocational courses. (Sayce 2011)</p>	<p>'Traditional vocational rehabilitation' often quoted as a less cost-effective alternative to IPS, RCTs showing it to cost around twice to three times as much as IPS with less quality of outcome (e.g. Parsonage 2009; Grove <i>et al.</i> 2009; Lelliott <i>et al.</i> 2008).</p> <p>Residential training college vocational courses are reported in the Sayce review as having supported 230 people into jobs in 2009-10, at an average cost of around £78,000 per job (Sayce 2011).</p> <p>ROSE is reported to have supported at least 73 people into paid jobs, but no information about overall costs (DH 2011b).</p>
Employment preparation projects that are identified as 'social enterprises' and 'social firms'	LD	Widespread in Europe and US, growing in UK (though with variable aims and structures)	<p>Social firms are businesses that achieve 50% or more of their income through sales and must have a paid workforce that comprises people with disabilities or who would otherwise be disadvantaged in the labour market (definition from Beyer and Robinson 2009). Examples include bakery, printing and gardening businesses.</p> <p>As with other models, there appears to be considerable variation both in terms of how social enterprises and firms operate (e.g. how well people are paid, the hours worked, etc.) and how or whether they are explicitly used as a route to further employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Beyer and Seebohm (cited in Beyer and Robinson 2009) carried out a financial net cost research study in 2003, looking at three authorities at different stages in developing social enterprises, which highlighted the importance of high trade income and reduced use of benefits in making these beneficial to the tax payer.</p> <p>A more focused search of European literature may provide further costed evidence, although little evidence is thought to exist about how social firms are delivering jobs (Melling <i>et al.</i> 2011).</p>

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 4. Models that provide training/job preparation in a sheltered and/or unpaid environment, as a route into open employment (continued)

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Engagement approaches	MH	Emerging approach in UK, one example being partnership between Charlton Athletic Football Club and Status Employment (funded by the football foundation).	Using an indirect lever to engage people; e.g. CAFc provides professional football coaches to enable individuals to improve coordination, teamwork, self-esteem and confidence while raising their personal fitness levels. In addition to the football lessons the candidates have training sessions (in various employment related topics) at the Status Employment office twice a week. (Status Employment, no date)	No costed evidence emerging from this review.
Club house/job club models	MH	Some examples in the UK (e.g. Falkirk, Ayreshire, London) and US (New York)	Provides mutual/peer support and provides sense of purpose, inspiration, etc. – e.g. chance to practice interview techniques, contribute to club community etc. Often provide transitional employment programmes (see above).	No costed evidence emerging from this review.
Volunteering (as a route to paid employment)	LD	Thought to be widely used in UK, though not always with same/clear goal of paid employment.	Volunteering can be used by people to develop their CV and skills, find out what they do and do not like doing, etc.	No costed evidence emerging from this review. Beyer and Robinson (2009) describe the impacts of volunteering on employment as 'unclear'.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 4. Models that provide training/job preparation in a sheltered and/or unpaid environment, as a route into open employment (continued)

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Sheltered workshops e.g. Remploy factories – as a route to open employment	Both	Sheltered workshops are widespread in UK, Europe and US, though the degree to which they target open employment as an end goal is less clear.	Paid employment in a workplace that is specifically geared towards the needs of people who need support to work. Methods used to progress people from sheltered employment to open paid work are not clear from the information reviewed, but the Sayce review describes Remploy Employment Services as ‘supporting much larger and increasing numbers of disabled people ... into a wide range of jobs’ (Sayce 2011).	<p>Sheltered workshops often appear as ‘counter factual’ or alternative comparison models e.g. in the CBAs of supported employment described by Beyer and Robinson (2009) – however comparison commonly concentrates on the immediate outcomes of support provided (e.g. in terms of individual income) rather than the numbers of people who have left the workshop and progressed to paid work. This lack of evidence around transition from sheltered employment is also highlighted by Delsen (2001).</p> <p>Remploy factories feature in the Sayce review as employing around 2,800 disabled people at an annual cost of £22,700 per person (Sayce 2011) – however the Remploy Employment Services geared towards transition to open employment are not similarly costed.</p> <p>See also SROI of Project Search sites involving Remploy (above, under Project Search, Table 1c).</p>
Work preparation as part of day service activity	LD	Widespread in UK, though (as above) with variable aims and structures	Work-related activities (such as volunteering projects, working in a café, etc.) that take place as part of local authority day service provision. There appears to be a degree of overlap between this and some of the social enterprises /social enterprises, etc. described above, and once again a variety of delivery mechanisms and aims.	Day services often appear as ‘counter factual’ or alternative comparison models e.g. in the CBAs of supported employment described by Beyer and Robinson (2009) – however comparison commonly concentrates on the immediate outcomes of support provided (e.g. in terms of individual income, social networks etc) rather than the numbers of people who have left the service and progressed to a paid job.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 4. Models that provide training/job preparation in a sheltered and/or unpaid environment, as a route into open employment (continued)

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Vocational Rehabilitation as part of Assertive Community Treatment	MH	ACT widely implemented in the US, Canada, and England	<p>ACT is an overall approach to treating/supporting people with mental health problems (especially severe mental illness such as schizophrenia) that includes assistance with employment. The nature of the employment support is not specified, but in some examples has included elements of supported employment and IPS (Lelliott <i>et al.</i> 2008; http://www.actassociation.org/actModel/ Gold <i>et al.</i> 2006).</p> <p>Latimer describes the key success factor for people who need the expertise of different kinds of professionals as 'improved synthesis and use of individual-level clinical information – which are more easily achieved by a team' (Latimer 2005)</p>	<p>The ACT association website states that ACT (as a whole) has been extensively researched and evaluated and has proven clinical and cost effectiveness.</p> <p>Gold <i>et al.</i> (2006) describe the comparative effectiveness of an integrated ACT/IPS model with a 'traditional' programme within a rural area of the US, finding that more ACT/IPS participants held competitive jobs (64% versus 26%) and earned more than comparison participants. Gold <i>et al.</i> also cite an extensive evidence base relating to the integration of supported employment techniques with mental health services in urban areas of the US.</p> <p>Interestingly, Latimer (2005) compares ACT with supported employment as distinct models, and finds ACT to be more effective than SE in offsetting its costs against reductions in hospital days – although both approaches are described as being more cost- effective than other alternatives.</p>

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 5. Models and approaches that focus on specific life stages and client groups

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Getting a Life	LD	UK based pilot – 12 demonstration sites	Three-year cross government project (until March 2011) focusing on the transition period between ages 14 and 25. Each site developed an employment pathway based on evidence of what helps young people with a learning disability go into employment and the real experiences of young people and their families. The sites are now implementing this pathway to employment, and mechanisms are thought to include aspects of supported employment (see above) and use of ‘Saturday’ and holiday jobs (see below). (DH 2011b).	<p>A GAL evaluation report presents learning from the programme but no economic evidence (Beyer and Kaehne 2010). The Department for Health describes GAL pathway implementation as ‘leading to better value for money’ among other outcomes (DH 2011b), but no financial evidence was found among this or other documents reviewed.</p> <p>The Office of Public Management (OPM) is reported to be working with Getting a Life to develop a methodology to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the pathway into employment compared with other routes that do not have employment as a goal (Campbell 2011; DH 2011b). This was described as being due for publishing in March 2011, but was not located during this search/review.</p>
Support to get ‘Saturday’/holiday jobs	LD	Some examples in UK, e.g. Merthyr Tydfil and Manchester Youth Supported Employment Programmes (YSEP)	YSEP brings together non-disabled teenagers with teens who have a learning disability in a mutually supportive initiative to find the person with a learning disability a part-time evening or week-end job. It provides experience, raises awareness and enhances people’s CVs, as well as providing money and first steps on the career ladder (Melling, Beyer and Kilsby 2011).	Reported to have been evaluated, and DH reports describe learning around effectiveness (2011b) but no costed evidence found during this review.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 5. Models and approaches that focus on specific life stages and client groups (continued)

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Aspirations for Life (DfE)	LD	UK-based campaign	Aspirations for Life is a one-year campaign (until March 2011) funded by the Department for Education, to raise aspirations and expectations about jobs and careers amongst children and young people with a learning disability aged 0–14 (DH 2011b)	Qualitative data and effectiveness learning produced (case studies, quotes, posters, etc.) but no costed evidence (DH 2011b).
Work experience placements	LD	Tried in the UK, e.g. in GAL sites	Work experience placements for young people with learning disabilities while still at school. Described as needing to be well-structured, individually tailored, flexible and supported work experience if people with a significant disability are to benefit from it in relation to employability (DH 2011b; Beyer and Robinson 2009; Beyer <i>et al.</i> 2008).	Described (by Beyer and Robinson 2009) as having a strong case for effectiveness, but no costed evidence emerging from this review.
Sustainable Hub of Innovative Employment for People with Complex Needs (SHIEC)	LD	Under development in Kent	The project is working with a range of partners, including families, support providers, education providers and employers, to deliver paid employment outcomes for people with complex needs.	None found yet, though work by the Tizard centre is believed to be planned/underway.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 6. Approaches that focus on mechanisms – how support might be accessed and/or funded

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Family led jobs	LD	LA funded project based in SW of England and B&NES, 2008-09	A series of four workshops aimed at demonstrating/ enhancing the role of families of people with learning disabilities in their gaining paid work. The project aimed to assist a group of nine young people, aged 17 to 29, to secure a regular, paid job of at least 16 hours per week, by building support networks, raising expectations, addressing concerns around employer expectations and income, and sharing positive stories about what had been achieved (Robinson 2010).	Three of the nine young people were in paid work at the end of this project, one in a new full-time post, one in a higher paid part-time post, and one who was enabled to retain her job (Robinson 2010). No costed evidence available (relatively small pilot).
Pathways Advisory Service	MH	DWP led pilot project, commenced in 2006	Location of employment advisers (known as Pathways Support Advisers – PSAs) from Jobcentre Plus in GPs surgeries. Described as a ‘gateway’ model of delivery, where advisers act as a link, or ‘gateway’, between patients at a surgery and the range of services and support available through Jobcentre Plus and other organisations.	An evaluation study was unable to measure the effectiveness of the pilot quantifiably, although qualitative data showed the approach to be popular among GPs, who noticed positive impacts on patients (Sainsbury <i>et al.</i> 2008).
(Work Step) Work Choice providers	Both	DWP led programme delivered across the UK (Work Choice from Oct 2010, previously Work Step)	Access route whereby people are referred from Job Centre Plus to a Work Choice provider organisation, who have won a contract to provide sheltered/community jobs. Mechanisms for providing jobs vary by contracted organisation, and sometimes have included (e.g.) job coaching – although this is not thought to be a dominant model, a factor which has been said to limit the degree to which Work Choice providers have been able to cater for people with higher support needs (Melling, Beyer and Kilsby 2011).	No costed evidence emerging from this review.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 6. Approaches that focus on mechanisms – how support might be accessed and/or funded (continued)

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Access to Work	Both	DWP led programme delivered across the UK	Funding that can be accessed by those with a disability or health condition in order to cover costs associated with work, e.g. transport costs, equipment, communicator for job interviews (www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG_4000347)	The Sayce (2011) review praises the ‘economic sense’ of Access to Work, which has reportedly helped 37,300 people in 2009/10 at an average cost per person of around £2,600 (although the review also highlighted that many people are unaware of it and it has therefore been underused). No other costed evidence has emerged from this review.
Using personal budgets to buy support	Both	Thought to be limited (see right)	People would use their personal budgets to buy support such as job coaching, increase qualifications and skills, etc.	Some costed evidence: Employment was not covered in depth in the recent POET and Demos surveys of personal budget users, though these studies did highlight that few (if any) people with LD or MH problems had successfully used their PB to help get a job (Hatton and Waters 2011; Wood 2010). Early findings from Jobs First suggest that it costs approximately £11,000 in total to support and sustain an individual with a moderate to severe learning disability into sustained employment. This is more than some individuals are able to pay out of their social care budget <i>a/one</i> , hence the need to explore co-funding options – see Jobs First below (DH 2011b).
Subsidised employment	Both	This has been used widely elsewhere in Europe, but avoided in the UK due to conflict with the policy ideology that all people are able and have a right to work (Thornton 2005).	Payments to employers, to incentivise employment of people with disabilities, help cover in-work support costs, and/or compensate for reduced or fluctuating productivity (Thornton 2005).	Nothing uncovered during this review, though more focused search of European literature may provide costed evidence.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Table 6. Approaches that focus on mechanisms – how support might be accessed and/or funded (continued)

Model/ approach	Client group emphasis	How/where used and tested	Key distinguishing characteristics and mechanisms	Brief overview of existing economic evidence
Jobs First	Both	DH led project piloted for one year (until March 2011) in seven demonstration sites in the UK, although only five have participated fully (Stevens and Harris 2010).	<p>The project aimed to explore how people with a moderate or severe learning disability can use their social care personal budget alongside other funding streams such as education budgets, Access to Work, and in some instances, Work Choice to buy support to get and keep a job. Demonstration sites overlapped with other schemes including Right to Control, Getting a Life and Project Search. Mechanisms explored hence varied by site, but included work with frontline staff in day services, training for staff and people with learning disabilities, employment-focused review and conditional approval of support plans on the basis that they prioritise employment goals.</p> <p>(DH 2011b; Stevens and Harris 2011; Melling <i>et al.</i> 2011)</p>	<p>Economic analysis was carried out and published by DH (in Allott 2011) as part of the Jobs First project, using data from the Kent and North Lanarkshire supported employment studies described above. This analysis explored various different approaches to calculating average costs of gaining employment via supported employment, resulting in average figures of between £9,000 (over two years) and £11,000 (one-off cost, including allowance for ongoing support). Alternatively, calculations using a 'pay as you use' style of costing resulted in employment costs of between £7,183 (assumes employment secured over two months) and £12,516 (if employment secured over 12 months) (Allott 2011).</p> <p>Evaluation of Jobs First by King's College has so far provided qualitative learning, and there are plans to focus on outcomes in terms of employment, and costs of services delivered, in the second part of the evaluation, due in 2012 (DH 2011b; Stevens and Harris 2011; Melling <i>et al.</i> 2011).</p>
Work Programme, including Results Based Funding	Both	New government approach to employment support, replacing previous programmes (from October 2010)	The Work Programme aims to increase value for money for the taxpayer by basing payments largely on results, and paying providers from the benefits saved from getting people into work.	Beyer and Robinson highlight some costed evidence from the US concerning the benefits and pitfalls of results based funding (RBF) compared to traditional funding formats. Benefits identified include greater cost-efficiency and accountability, as well as increased emphasis on outcomes and improved customer choice and satisfaction. Potential pitfalls of RBF include cherry picking, poor matches for quick short term outcomes, lack of attention to career development and inadequate overall funding to provide quality service (Beyer and Robinson 2009).

CONSIDERATION OF DIFFERENT COSTING METHODOLOGIES

There are a variety of ways in which researchers and commissioners can explore the economic aspects of policy implementation.

A recent briefing resource produced by the Institute for Public Care (2011), to aid commissioners undertaking economic analysis, highlights that 'central government is keen to ensure that no policy, programme or project is adopted without first having answered two questions: are there better ways to achieve this objective? And are there better uses for these resources?' (p.1).

Assuming, as stated above, that the employment of people with learning disabilities and those with mental health problems is a priority objective for commissioners, then it could be argued that it is the first of these two questions that critically sets the scene for more detailed cost-benefit analysis of different employment models, and hence the remainder of this review.

The Institute for Public Care goes on to explain and compare three key methods for answering these questions, namely:

- Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA);
- Social Return On Investment (SROI); and
- Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA).

It is the first (arguably the more traditional) of these methods that appears to dominate the costed research evidence published to date around employment support, although as the previous section highlights there are also a growing number of examples of SROI being used to explore and capture the wider value of Supported Employment⁶ (at a local level) and Project Search pilots⁷ (at a national level). There has been no discernable use of MCA in this field.

Sefton *et al.* (2000) provides a critique and helpful explanation of the use of economic evaluation in social care, drawing the distinction between:

- Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA), described as the 'most complete form of economic evaluation', where the various costs and benefits of each alternative are identified and weighed against each other to provide a comparable benefit/cost ratio; and
- Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA), described as the 'more common' form, whereby the overall cost of the scheme is weighed against the number of physical outcome units – such as number of jobs gained. The overall cost can be divided by the number of

⁶ Coutts and Durie 2011; NOW 2009; telephone conversation concerning Progress (Blackpool).

⁷ Telephone conversation concerning SROI underway at the time of writing of REMPLOY Project Search and IPS pilots.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

outcomes achieved in order to provide a cost per unit of outcome, enabling the comparison of two or more schemes – as long as they have the same objectives.

Sefton also highlights key principles common to all forms of economic evaluation, including that:

1. it should involve a comparison between at least two options: for example a new 'pilot' scheme against an existing programme, or two variants of the same programme
2. it is goal based, the assumption being that all programmes have clearly defined objectives which are set out in advance and against which their performance can be assessed.

Sefton acknowledges that, in practice, a programme's objectives may not be so well defined and may vary between stakeholders. Indeed, as described in the Methods section above, the definition of 'employment' we are working to (at least 16 hours per week of paid employment in the mainstream, competitive work market) may not be shared by all stakeholders and schemes that form the subject of this review, and this has important implications for how employment outcomes are measured and compared.

One common feature of employment support that our review has highlighted is the complexity and interconnectedness of different, sometimes overlapping, pilots, projects and approaches that (quite understandably) target employment from different angles, at various life stages and different parts of employment pathways, and hence with different types and levels of expected impact within the lifetime of the project or programme. Hence CBA can prove a helpful tool in enabling comparison of this array of models and approaches currently in operation. However, it could also be argued that Cost-Effectiveness Analysis, or CEA, provides a clearer sense of absolute scale, affordability and degree of overall input versus output, which can be particularly helpful at a national policy and commissioning level – and, therefore, this effectiveness perspective also has an important role to play in the evidencing of different approaches to employment support. As the previous section demonstrates, examples of both CBA and CEA are evident, in varying degrees, in the literature reviewed in this study.

IPC (2011) describes common weaknesses of option appraisal (identified by the National Audit Office) as including:

- appraisal of too few options;
- exclusion of some relevant costs;
- discounting costs over an inappropriate period; and
- inadequate sensitivity analysis.

These factors provide a helpful checklist against which to review the costed evidence existing on employment support to date.

In aggregate terms, certainly one observation of the costed evidence reviewed is that, where comparisons between models do exist, these often seem limited to two approaches

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

that do not necessarily share the same goals – for example, supported employment and IPS are often compared with sheltered employment or day centre activities, which are not necessarily aimed at getting people into open, paid employment. Also, given that IPS and supported employment are often described as different versions of a similar model, none of the studies examined appear to have compared the relative effectiveness of these two; a study which might have relevance when looking from a cross-client group perspective (while bearing in mind the similarities and differences in support needs across these client groups).

The costs that are included or excluded appear to vary considerably from study to study, and the lack of a consistent approach to costing employment supports is a key finding of this review. Recent studies have ranged from very simplistic case study-based estimations of social service provision costs/savings (e.g. Pure Innovations 2010) to full CBAs and SROI studies that have attempted to build in an array of complex indirect costs and benefits, such as displacement costs (e.g. the ‘cost’ to society of a disabled or supported person gaining a role that otherwise a non-disabled person may have filled) – and longer-term costs to the government in the form of tax credit payments, as well as eventual ‘flow back’ savings through productivity and VAT and/or National Insurance payments, etc (e.g. Beyer 2008; Coutts and Durie 2011; NOW 2009). However, despite attempts to include all relevant costs, Beyer’s (2008) analysis of the North Lanarkshire supported employment programme was retrospective and reliant upon limited data gathered at the time, which impacted on the reliability of his findings.

A further important element of economic analysis is the question of perspective: who is paying which costs and who is receiving which benefits? These are important, as some elements will be both a gain to one stakeholder and a loss to another. Much of the costed evidence from the US (reviewed by Beyer and Robinson 2009) has attempted to weigh up costs and benefits of employment support from a variety of perspectives, including most commonly from the perspective of individuals (usually relating to increased earnings balanced against reduced income from benefits, etc.), and from the perspective of the tax payer at local or national levels. Costed evidence from the UK to date has tended to focus on local authority and taxpayer perspectives.

Another limitation of the costed evidence around employment support to date, highlighted both in the literature (e.g. Parsonage 2009; Lelliott *et al.* 2008) and in the telephone conversations carried out as part of this review, is that much of the cost analyses undertaken, especially in the UK, have been over relatively short time periods (1–2 years). It is recommended both in the studies and in this review that a longitudinal approach is necessary in order to examine lifetime costs, although we recognise that there are significant challenges involved in carrying out research over such timescales.

Finally, in terms of sensitivity analysis, there has been little evidence uncovered by this review that explores in economic terms the relative roles played by the different variables (for example, the varying ways and intensity with which each of the different mechanisms involved have been employed) within each approach, and the impact that changing those

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

variables would have on the overall cost outcome. Bond (2004) starts to unpack this issue, but also recommends further research around 'principles'. This seems to be an especially significant gap, given that, as we highlight later in this review, some models (most notably the overarching conceptual models of supported employment and IPS) include great scope for variation in the way that they are delivered. The degree to which (and quality with which) the original US model of supported employment has been followed and adhered to across the UK has been questioned by many, and particularly by advocates of the model (including in the telephone conversations carried out as part of this review).

OBSERVATIONS FROM A CROSS-CLIENT GROUP PERSPECTIVE

There is much common ground among employment support models that have developed within different client group fields. For example, in both fields there exists a range of approaches, including those focusing on work preparation (e.g. vocational rehabilitation, sheltered work placements) and those prioritising support within a paid role (IPS in mental health, and supported employment in the learning disability field). The distinction between these two kinds of approaches has also been increasingly highlighted – at least by some – within both fields. However, there are also some varying emphases that may be required in the delivery and use of these models with individuals who have different issues and needs, which this section of the review aims to highlight.

These similarities and differences are important to understand when considering employment support from a cross-client group perspective, and can help to explain some of the variances in the models described above, although it should also be remembered that the two client groups covered in this review are not mutually exclusive, and a truly person-centred support will address a particular person's needs rather than those of a general client group. Particular issues raised by the people with whom we spoke as part of this review include the following:

- As described above, job retention is an important issue within both client groups, but helping people to retain a job that they gained under 'normal' or mainstream circumstances tends currently to be more of an issue – or entry point for support – within the mental health field;
- Motivation of the employee – to want to work – has been identified as an important factor in successful employment support. Understanding the amount of time and support clients need to get to that stage (feeling confident and able to consider a job) is important, hence the need for flexibility around timing of job placement, and the potential role of 'engagement' schemes and job clubs as confidence boosting approaches;

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

- Mental health issues can be less obvious to workplace colleagues, giving rise to issues around disclosure and the need for more subtle support. For example, supported employment for those with a learning disability will often involve the physical presence of a job coach in the workplace, to provide instruction and help overcome obstacles around knowledge transfer. In contrast, mental health support may need to be either provided outside the workplace (e.g. meeting in the local café during lunch hour) or of a more subtle nature within the workplace (e.g. texts from a mentor colleague, letting them know if they have said something inappropriate, etc.);
- Mental health conditions have been described as more likely to fluctuate than a learning disability; hence, it can be easier to predict the level of support required by someone with a learning disability. A fluctuating condition can also impact upon productivity. In Europe this is commonly addressed via compensation payments to the employer, while in the UK the job club/transitional employment programmes help people with mental health issues by providing the employer with a group contract and therefore a guaranteed person to fill the role;
- One person with whom we spoke pointed out the need to be aware of sensitivities and prejudices that can exist within each client group – to describe this in the extreme, people with mental health issues saying that they do not want to be treated as though they are ‘mad’, and those with learning disabilities saying that they do not want to be thought of as ‘stupid’. This serves as a common reminder of the need to increase awareness and reduce stigma around both mental health and learning disability, within service environments as well as wider communities.

In terms of cross-cutting issues, one variable covered in detail by Beyer and Robinson (2009) in their review of evidence around supported employment is the severity of learning disability within the costed research. They report that severity of disability has been inversely correlated with success in achieving employment and associated outcomes, and likelihood of being referred to a scheme in the first place. Indeed, across and beyond the client groups covered in our review, concern has been raised as to whether those with more complex/severe needs are receiving as much attention, both in terms of employment support provision and in terms of research relating to that support. A notable exception, within the learning disability field, is the Sustainable Hub of Innovative Employment for People with Complex Needs (SHIEC).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS FROM A COMMISSIONING PERSPECTIVE

As mentioned earlier in this paper, an overwhelming feature highlighted by this review is the abundance and complexity of different interrelated pilots, schemes, models and approaches that are currently being used and tried in order to help people get jobs – few of which appear to have been spread or sustained at a national level. In her review of

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

DWP's specialist employment programmes, Sayce (2011) reports that 'we found little logic in the range of programmes that have been developed over the years in terms of what or who they were for'. This statement raises an important challenge around how we make good commissioning decisions.

The majority of those we spoke to during the course of this review appear to be satisfied with the evidence that supported employment (within the learning disability field) and IPS (within mental health) are the accepted, most effective solutions to supporting people into paid jobs. At least one person described the only remaining challenge as funding and promoting the wide scale delivery of these models. However, Lelliott *et al.* (2008) state very clearly that the 'economic benefits of IPS are unproven'. Even following the publication of further costed evidence over the last two years, most sources we reviewed acknowledge that the costed evidence for these two overarching models, in terms of their application in the UK, remains limited (Schneider *et al.* 2009; Beyer and Robinson 2009; Heffernan and Pilkington 2011); a point echoed in our consultations with experts in this field. There are gaps, mismatches and holes in the evidence to be explored, for example:

- The literature identifies that a limitation of IPS (and, anecdotally from those working in the field, of many schemes calling themselves 'Supported Employment') is that it tends to result in mostly part-time jobs (Parsonage 2009; Lelliott *et al.* 2008); meanwhile, other studies of supported employment highlight that savings from a taxpayer point of view rely on people working more than 16 hours per week (e.g. Beyer in various papers and in conversation);
- Linked to this, Perkins (2009), as part of a review of employment support for people with mental health conditions, conducted a CBA case for IPS that makes the assumption that people will move off benefits when they move into a job; while economic analysis of the North Lanarkshire Supported Employment model has shown that, despite shifts from income support to working tax credit, around 50% of peoples' income still comes from benefits and tax credits (Beyer 2008 – one of the few key CBA studies in the UK). People using these supports are described as keen to hang on to the security that benefits provide, especially if they are unsure how long a job will work out for, and/or how their condition may fluctuate or change in the future. Indeed this wish to retain the security of income that benefits provide has been thought to lead to people only wishing to work part-time, hence the link with the bullet point above. This issue may also link to wider supports that people are receiving, e.g. around housing, and an interesting area for future study would be to investigate these links;
- Also, in the case of supported employment, we question the clarity within the field over what this 'model' entails i.e. what is, and what isn't supported employment, as opposed to more generic employment support. Although this may have been clear when the model first came to the UK, there appears to be a significant degree of flexibility and liberalness of interpretation, with various elements, emphases and methods being evolved, combined and delivered under the 'supported employment'

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

umbrella. For example, in the last year there have been a significant number of publications relating to employment approaches that have been tried and tested under the Valuing People Now strategy implementation, (described for example in Campbell 2011; Sayce 2011; DH 2011b) and, although these sources acknowledge the value of supported employment, it is not always clear how the different approaches fit together in terms of an evidenced, effective, overall model of employment support.

We would also question whether the degree to which other options have been as rigorously explored in recent years and in different contexts, and whether there is yet enough, consistent and comparable evidence – about all the different possible approaches, and the way they are actually delivered and combined in the UK context – to be able to draw such clear conclusions. For example, in a review of employment support in the European Union, Delsen (2001) highlights a lack of data about transition from sheltered workshops to jobs in the open market, and a lack of research about new initiatives to improve transition and transition rates. Significantly, some of those with whom we spoke said that, if they put themselves in the shoes of a commissioner of employment support, they would still not really know the best method – or methods – of support in which they should invest.

This review has also highlighted that, even if overarching models such as IPS and supported employment are proven to be the most effective (and cost-effective) of all models currently in existence, there is still much room for improvement in our knowledge and practice. For example:

- Employment rates quoted for IPS and supported employment are often around 50%, but little is usually known or reported about the remaining half of those entering job support who apparently do not go on to gain employment;
- Possibly linked to the third bullet point above concerning a lack of clarity about the supported employment model, most sources reviewed in this review have highlighted the variability with which supported employment is delivered across the UK. The lack of a fidelity framework and test such as that used in IPS has been identified as an area for potential future development within supported employment (Department of Health 2011b; telephone conversations)

Another dimension that this review has highlighted is the way in which people blend and use different models. Though a lack of model fidelity has been highlighted above as a negative, it should also be recognised that some organisations (such as Progress in Blackpool) appear to be successfully using a combination of different models and approaches to aid the tailoring of their approach to the individuals with whom they are working. Are models that are delivered in their 'purest' form necessarily the best? One way of looking at this is to draw a distinction between key values and principles (such as delivering 'truly personalised support', and the mechanisms by which those principles are delivered (e.g. the particular tools, resources or language used). Is fidelity around values and principles more important than fidelity around mechanisms? It is important to better understand the active ingredients in models of employment support.

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to the type of economic analysis that has predominated in those studies reviewed – namely what appears to be various levels and depths of comparative cost-benefit analysis. Relatively little in the way of cost-effectiveness analysis and absolute numbers seems to have been published, such as the total amounts that have been invested in a scheme, and how many people have successfully gained jobs as a result. Although the recent Sayce (2011) review notably starts to provide this kind of helpful overview, costs quoted still vary as to whether they are ‘per person supported’ (as quoted for Access to Work and Remploy workshops), or ‘per job gained as a result’ (as quoted for vocational courses) – a vital distinction. The question of ‘how many people in paid work could you reasonably expect to see, as a result of a given amount of investment in a proven model of employment support?’ is likely to be a key concern for commissioners, and numbers that are embedded more clearly in total population contexts are likely to aid predictions and assessments of scope and scale of future service investment, both in terms of block contracts and individual budgets.

The final section of this report picks up on these observations and highlights numerous topics for further study, including both key gaps in the costed evidence, and wider issues that might merit exploration.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

In the course of carrying out this review, we have identified a number of gaps in the research and key areas for further study. Those relating particularly to economic evidence are as follows:

- Economic analysis relating to models highlighted in this review, where current costed evidence is slim or non-existent, e.g. how models such as social firms, volunteering or apprenticeships can help people towards open paid employment, and the ways in which people are – or could be – using personal budgets to purchase employment support (this is potentially a major issue for future commissioning, yet has received little detailed attention to date);
- More work looking at this from a cross-client group perspective (MH and LD but also within and beyond client group labels) including, taking into account the needs of different people and groups, is there one model of employment support (existing or potential) that could be cost-effective across two or more client groups? Does employment support agencies being ‘pan-disability’ or ‘single-disability’ make a difference in realising outcomes for people? What is needed by and what helps those with more complex needs or severe conditions? (This should build on work currently underway, e.g. by Tizard, linked to the Sustainable Hub of Innovative Employment for People with Complex Needs (SHIEC)).

Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

- Taking into account fidelity of models, how are people delivering supported employment differently across the UK (e.g. intensity of support, training/qualification of job coaches, development/use of 'natural' support from existing colleagues) and how this affects the cost outcomes. This might build on work carried out by Beyer (e.g. Beyer 2001) in which these themes begin to be explored;
- Building on from above, how could all models (but especially those that have become accepted as the preferred ones) be made even more effective? For example, moving towards 100% employment rates rather than around 50%. What happens to 'the other half' – people who have been through a model of employment support but do not get a job as a result;
- In addition to the above it may be worth considering research that focuses on active ingredients of models and key stages rather than only pure, complete models, so that the relative contributions played by these parts may be tested (while also bearing in mind the likely need for a holistic approach). This might build on work in the US carried out by Bond (2004), which begins to unpick these themes and recommends further research based on principles of supported employment and IPS;
- Further research focusing on the different types of costs that have, and have not, been included in the CBA evidence produced to date – and closer scrutiny of the quality of the costing data used;
- Consistent analysis across more different models/untested combinations, e.g. comparing IPS and supported employment, and other models that have developed within separate client groups but may be similar and/or have something to offer other people needing support;
- Research looking at the scalability of models – what enables models to be scaled and what are the barriers to changes in scale, and what are the implications for costs;
- Research which looks at costs and benefits over a longer term, e.g. a longitudinal study that follows groups of people e.g. through school, into careers and including into later life;
- Research around equality of access to employment support, for example the degree to which stereotyping and low expectations are affecting the careers advice people get, and the economic impacts of reported trends such as 'cherry picking' clients to meet targets;
- Research exploring how much (and in what ways) do the other services people receive impact on the outcomes (and therefore cost-effectiveness) of employment support programmes;
- More research around the economics of job retention, including supporting people to continue working into older age.

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Economic Evidence Around Employment Support

Telephone conversations

As part of this review, telephone conversations were carried out with the following people, in order to help identify key evidence sources and models of employment support, as well as to explore key issues and gaps within the current research evidence. We would like to thank these people for their valued input, and stress that this review represents the views and observations of the authors, and not necessarily those of the people or organisations named.

Huw Davies, British Association for Supported Employment (BASE)

Keith Bates, Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

Carol Robinson, Independent Consultant

Deborah Parker, Progress (Supported Employment agency in Blackpool)

Liz Sayce, RADAR (Disability Rights UK)

Ellen Atkinson, Independent Consultant

Justine Schneider, Nottingham University

Rachel Perkins, Independent Consultant

Krystyna Szplit, Remploy

Steve Beyer, Cardiff University