The Role of Jobcentre Plus Work Psychologists in Helping People with Health Conditions Retain or Move into Employment

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Session Aims: To provide information on…

Context

Access to Work Service

Work Choice Programme

Role & responsibilities: working with those with disabilities & health-related conditions

Role of the Disability Employment Advisor

Work Psychologist
Context

- Jobcentre Plus (JCP) as part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- JCP aim is to get more people into work, help employers fill their vacancies and provide people of working age with the help and support to which they are entitled

- JCP aims to achieve this by:
  - Helping unemployed and economically inactive people of working age move closer to the labour market
  - Provide appropriate help and support for those without work
  - Promote work as the best form of welfare
  - Encourage employers to open up more opportunities to jobless people, while helping them quickly fill their vacancies and address key skill needs
What is Work Psychology?

- Amalgamation of occupational/business psychology and health psychology
- Concerned with the performance of people at work and in training, with developing an understanding of how organisations functions, and how individuals and groups behave at work
- Gain a better understanding of knowledge skills, abilities and interests to assist disabled, disadvantaged and those with health conditions, find and sustain work or training opportunities
- Identify and help manage barriers to progression
- Achieve good job satisfaction and motivation
Work Psychologists in Scotland

- Team of 9 Work Psychologists in Scotland
- Directly support disabled people, those who are disadvantaged and those with health conditions progress towards work
- Indirect customer support e.g. adviser coaching & mentoring
- Employers
Customer Work

- Referrals – majority via the DEA
- One-to-one employment assessment interview
  - Client-centred counselling
  - Solution focused approach e.g. “What’s been going well?”
  - Private and confidential
- Psychometric testing (if required): administer, score and interpret results
  - Identify areas of strengths
  - Help establish what might be a good job-person fit
  - Explore reasons for difficulties e.g. dyslexia, literacy problems, cognitive issues
Psychometric Testing

- Example of when testing may be appropriate:
  - If the desired job role requires a certain level of basic skill e.g. literacy or numeracy and there is no pre-existing evidence of the customer's ability in these areas
  - If a customer, who is actively seeking work, is referred for a dyslexia assessment as their difficulties are creating a barrier to the job searching activity or their chosen work goal
  - If the customer wants to work but has no idea of the type of role they would like to do or be best suited to
  - If a customer's work or job seeking abilities appear to be affected by a change in their cognitive abilities e.g. memory functioning
Employment Assessment Outcomes

- Written report produced detailing outcome of employment assessment process
- Suggestions of how to progress customer forward including adjustments, strategies and approaches that would allow customer to perform effectively and efficiently at work include:
  - implementation of specialist equipment via Access to Work
  - signposting to further provision
- Report to customer, referrer and with customers written consent, to third parties e.g. GP, Social Services, Clinical Psychology or other partners involved in the customers care
Customers’ Primary Presenting Issues

- Specific Learning Difficulties: 22%
- Mental Health Issues: 22%
- No issue identified: 2%
- Other: 10%
- General Learning Disability: 20%
- Neurological: 15%
- Musculoskeletal: 4%
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders: 5%
Indirect Customer Support

- Support advisers in their work with customers by:
  - Case conferencing
  - Consultancy
  - Upskilling and developmental training e.g. increase knowledge of Specific Learning Difficulties e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia etc
  - Adviser coaching and mentoring
  - Bespoke project and research activities e.g. community outreach adviser teams workshop
Role of Disability Employment Advisor (DEA)

- Provide support & advice to customers with a health condition or disability, irrespective of benefit including those who:
  - Have a new health condition or one that has significantly worsened
  - Have had to leave a job due to a health condition and are unclear on the effects of their health on their ability to work
  - Are currently unemployed or are at risk of losing their job due to a health condition or disability
  - Liaise with employers
- Various signposting pathways including Work Choice Programme, other appropriate provision or services or referral to Work Psychologist
Work Choice - Background

- New pan-disability programme for customers who face disability-related barriers for work
- Replaced Workstep, Work Preparation and Job Introduction Scheme
- Starts 25th October 2010
- Provided by Prime contractors who are expected to sub contract to specialist organisations
Work Choice – Three Modules

- Module 1 – work entry support
- Module 2 – short/medium term in-work support
- Module 3 – longer term in-work support
Access to Work

- Work closely with employer to identify & source equipment or other solutions that will support the customer in their work environment e.g.
  - Provide BSL interpreter for a deaf person attending an interview
  - Financial support with travel arrangements to and from work if they have mobility problems and are unable to drive or use public transport
  - Identify and contribute toward special aids to assist customer do their job e.g. voice-to-text computer software
  - Contribute towards cost of adapting premises to make it accessible for a disabled person
  - Provide a job coach or support worker to provide practical support for the customer

- Close working links with WP e.g. WP advice of customer at risk of losing their job, assistance in interpreting specialist reports e.g. from Clinical Psychology
Employment Retention Cases

- Support for individuals currently experiencing difficulties in the workplace
- Referral from either employee or employer; collaborative agreement essential
- Work with employer, employee and partners e.g. HR, Occupational Health, line manager etc
- Intervention may involve task/role analysis, workplace observation etc to identify current methodologies and practices
- Solutions may include specialist equipment, adjustments to roles and responsibilities, job redesign or redeployment
Case Study

- Dyslexia assessment request from DEA
- Review appropriateness of referral
- Customer interview scheduled
- One-to-one employment assessment interview to consider work-related difficulties
- Psychometric tests administration, scoring and interpretation
- Verbal feedback to customer of testing outcomes
- Written report of suggested support strategies, approaches and equipment
Question Time
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