

Introduction

The Concept of One-Stop Shopping: From Categorical to Integrated Service Delivery

In both the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK), there are large numbers of people of working-age with disabilities not working and claiming benefits—10.6 million in the US in December 2007 (SSA, 2008) and 2.64 million in Great Britain in August 2007 (DWP, 2009a). In the US in October 2008, only 34.9 percent of men with a disability aged 16-64 were employed compared to 79.4 percent of men without a disability (DOL, 2009a).¹ This difference was even more pronounced for women: 28.4 percent of those with a disability were employed, compared to 68.6 percent for those without a disability. In the UK in the three months prior to September 2008 the employment rate of people of working-age (ages 16-60 for women; ages 16-65 for men) with a long-term disability was 50.7 percent compared with 80.2 percent for those without disabilities (Kent, 2009).

Governments in both the US and the UK have been taking policy measures over the last decade to improve Public Employment Services (PES), so that they are more effective in assisting people, including those with disabilities, to move off benefits and into work. Studies have shown that an important reason for the limited effectiveness of the PES was the system's fragmented nature, leading to uncoordinated and often duplicative service delivery.

In the mid-1990s, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a series of reports (c.f. GAO, 1994a – d) that raised concerns about PES efficiency. It found that “programs shared common goals, often served the same categories of clients,

offered overlapping services, and used parallel delivery approaches despite having separate administrative structures and funding mechanisms” (GAO, 1994a, p.4). In the UK, the separation of the benefits and employment services was seen as an important issue, because people on disability or health-related benefits did not have to be available for work and thus were largely ignored by the employment service (DWP, 2002). Governments in both countries started to address these issues by employing a “One-Stop Shopping” approach to service delivery.

One-Stop Government, according to Kubicek and Hagen (2000), is “a [new] organizational model to deliver [integrated government] services from the point of view of the ‘customer’” (p.1). It is about providing customers with a *single* access point (physically or virtually) to public services that may be provided by multiple government agencies and those contracted by the government to deliver public services. The goal is to provide more integrated service delivery while reducing costs and increasing efficiency. The 1997 (Office of the Vice President of the United States) Federal Benchmarking Consortium Report, *Serving the American Public: Best Practices in One-Stop Customer Service* states that, “One-stop service offers a powerful antidote. Under the one-stop paradigm, all of a customer's business can be completed in a single contact be it face to face or via phone, fax, Internet, or other means. One-stop customers do not have to hunt around, call back, or repeatedly explain their situation. One-stop customer service is convenient, accessible, and personalized.”

Kubicek and Hagen (2000) trace the origins of the One-Stop concept back to the emergence of the modern state and the proliferation of state responsibilities requiring government to create specialized

branches, departments and agencies that not only functioned differently but often also operated separately. Differences in levels of government as well as the increasing use of non-profit and private providers to deliver public services added to the complexity of the system. The result was a fragmented and uncoordinated service delivery system that did not meet or only insufficiently met the needs of its citizens. The One-Stop approach has been used by the US and UK governments in the field of PES to address these issues. It has helped to reduce fragmentation and separation and produced a more integrated—and probably more effective service—but issues remain.

Public Employment Services in the United States and the United Kingdom

In the United States

Public employment services are delivered through a national network of One-Stop Career Centers (One-Stops) that function as local “gateways” to a range of employment and related services aimed at helping job seekers, including those with disabilities, to gain and retain employment. The One-Stop shopping approach to PES delivery was initiated through a series of pilot demonstration projects in the mid-1990s, and then became a permanent part of the PES system on a national basis in 1998 under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), a federal law, effective on July 1, 2000. The purpose of this effort was to integrate existing federal employment and job training programs into one comprehensive service system. Underlying the One-Stop approach is the assumption that no single agency is entirely equipped to serve all types of customers, which in turn makes service integration and coordination a necessity (Timmons et al., 2004a). As of February 2009, there were 2,914 One-Stops, including 1,788 comprehensive (full-service) career centers throughout the country.²

Prior to the introduction of the One-Stop shopping approach, job seekers with disabilities had typically been served by disability-specific systems (state vocational rehabilitation [VR] agencies, state Commissions for the Blind and Visually Impaired, state Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities

[MR/DD] agencies, and state Mental Health [MH] agencies), or would have automatically been referred by employment offices to those systems, especially VR (Skiba, 2001). This changed with WIA, which mandates 17 government agencies and programs to be part of the One-Stop system (Nilsen, 2003), with the public VR program being the only one that specifically focuses on disability (Hoff et al., 2001). The federal government has sent a clear message regarding the obligation that among their various customer groups, One-Stops are to serve people with disabilities. External to the One-Stop, job seekers with disabilities continue to have access to other disability-specific agencies that provide disability employment services and supports.

One-Stops are intended to be universally accessible and available to anyone who wants or needs assistance with their employment needs with no eligibility criteria for basic or “core” services. One-Stops provide a full range of assistance to job seekers, services being organized into core, intensive and training services. In addition, One-Stops also provide services to employers and businesses.

In terms of governance, the One-Stop system is part of a wider network of local workforce investment areas that are overseen and monitored by Workforce Investment Boards at the state and local levels (SWIBs and LWIBs, respectively). WIA mandates that the majority (51 percent) of board members (including the board chair) be employers and also encourages representation of people with disabilities on these boards (Hoff et al., 2001). The US Department of Labor’s (US DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) coordinates WIA activities at the national level.

Parallel to WIA, the federal government launched several other initiatives to help reduce the numbers of individuals on disability benefits and their cost. Through a joint Social Security Administration (SSA)-US DOL initiative, funding for more than 500 Disability Program Navigators (DPNs) has been provided to One-Stop systems throughout the country. The purpose was to raise awareness among SSA beneficiaries of the return to work options and incentives available and to assist them and other people with disabilities in using One-Stop resources. Recent reforms have also focused upon improving health

care insurance provision, which was previously a barrier to seeking employment for people with disabilities. Additionally, comprehensive assistance is available to SSA beneficiaries through Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Programs, which assist them in making more informed decisions about benefits and work and are sometimes provided through the One-Stops. Another initiative is the Ticket to Work Program, an employment initiative of the SSA, which allows beneficiaries to choose from multiple employment options and service providers including One-Stops.

In the United Kingdom

In the UK, both public employment services and benefits are delivered through Jobcentre Plus (there are some differences in Northern Ireland, see page 10). Jobcentre Plus resulted from the merging of two agencies of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP): the Employment Service and the Benefits Agency. The purpose was to provide more work-focused assistance to people claiming benefits. Combining delivery of benefits with employment services was piloted in the “ONE” program introduced in 1999. From April 2000, all new benefit claimants in ONE areas were required to attend a work-focused meeting with a personal adviser as a condition of receiving benefit. Following the piloting, Jobcentre Plus, which employs the ONE approach, started to be implemented in October 2001 in 56 sites across the country, and now there are local offices covering the whole country.

All working-age people who are claiming out of work benefits, including incapacity benefits because of ill-health or disability, do so through Jobcentre Plus. In addition, Jobcentre Plus provides job search facilities through a telephone line, its website, and Jobpoints (touch sensitive screens for accessing job vacancies) available at local Jobcentres and other locations. It contracts providers to deliver various employment service programs, including some specialist programs for people with more severe disabilities. It employs Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) who provide various services to people with disabilities wanting help with finding a job. An Access to Work program provides assistance to people with disabilities and employers by helping to pay for adaptations, equipment, support workers and travel. Other services to employers include a

free vacancy advertising service and financial help to train recruits.

In the UK, people with disabilities can claim Jobseekers Allowance (the main unemployment benefit). However, those with a disability or health condition that makes them unable to fulfill the conditions for this benefit³ could, over the period with which this review is concerned (January 2000 to June 2008), claim incapacity benefits (Incapacity Benefit or Income Support on the grounds of incapacity) if they passed an incapacity test. There have been, since 1989, a series of measures designed to encourage people to move off incapacity benefits back into employment. The government's view was that this group had previously been “written off,” given little assistance to return to work, but that many are capable of working and that early intervention would facilitate this.

After piloting a number of initiatives, a nationwide New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) was launched in the UK in July 2001 as the main program providing employment assistance for people on disability-related benefits who wanted to work. It is a voluntary program, delivered by a network of agencies termed Job Brokers. These brokers are a mixture of public, private and not-for-profit employment service providers contracted by the DWP and based in the community (DWP, 2002).

However, the limited success of the NDDP led to the present Pathways to Work program, which was piloted in seven areas of the country in 2003 and rolled out nationwide in April 2008. This is a much more intensive program than NDDP, involving a series of six mandatory Work-focused Interviews (WFIs) for most new and repeat claimants of incapacity benefits with a specially trained Incapacity Benefit Personal Adviser (IBPA). It is led by Jobcentre Plus in the 40 percent of areas first covered, and by external providers in the other 60 percent. It offers a Choices Menu of voluntary programs, including a new Condition Management program run in conjunction with the National Health Service to help people better understand and manage their disabilities or health conditions, and other programs that were pre-existing, including NDDP. There is evidence that Pathways to Work has been successful in that it increased the percentage in employment a

year and a half after the initial benefit enquiry by seven percent (Bewley et al., 2007).

As indicated above, the claimant system has been changing throughout the period covered by our review. A major change to the benefit system was implemented soon afterwards (October 27, 2008). Incapacity Benefit and Income Support on the grounds of incapacity were replaced for new and repeat claimants by the Employment and Support Allowance. Almost all receiving this benefit will be expected to take active steps towards work (DWP, 2008a).

It should be noted that the UK consists of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (NI). While employment services for people with disabilities are largely the same in Northern Ireland as in the other countries, there are some differences. NI has a Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) which provides employment services and a Social Security Agency (SSA), which is within the Department of Social Development (DSD), which delivers benefits. Although DEL and SSA (DSD) are separate departments they are mainly housed together in Jobs and Benefits Offices (JBOs). The Personal Adviser element in Pathways is delivered solely by the Department's staff, while programs in the Choices package are delivered by providers and the Condition Management program is delivered by the Health Service. IBPAs are called Pathways Personal Advisers (PPAs) in NI, and DEAs have been transferred to be Pathways Team Leader Advisers.

A Brief Comparison of US and UK Public Employment Services

US One-Stops and UK Jobcentre Plus are similar in that they attempt to offer universal service, job search, and assistance to obtain training and employment to anyone, with or without a disability, as well as employer services. But underlying the similarities are fundamental differences. In the US, One-Stops are separate from the social security system through which people with disabilities obtain benefits, while the UK Jobcentre Plus combines the benefits and the employment systems.

US Local Workforce Investment Boards select the One Stop operators and oversee and monitor them, a practice that contributes to the wide variation among

One-Stops at state and local levels. In contrast, local Jobcentres in the UK are part of a national system, coordinated by one central government department, the Department for Work and Pensions.

US One-Stops are partnerships between a large number of government agencies and training programs, with services being mainly provided through these partners. UK Jobcentre Plus is part of one central government department which provides services itself or contracts external agencies to provide them. In both countries, employment-related services for people with disabilities are also available through agencies other than One-Stops and Jobcentre Plus.

Increasing the Effectiveness of Programs for People with Disabilities

This paper identifies 12 strategies being used by the Public Employment Services (PES) in the US and the UK to assist people with disabilities to obtain work. Some evidence for their effectiveness exists though this needs further testing. However, the overall effectiveness of these public employment services for people with disabilities is uncertain.

The One-Stop system in the US is meant to serve people with disabilities, but we have found limited evidence of how effective it is in doing so. This is partly because of the difficulty in collecting accurate data and measuring performance.

In the UK, it was the limited success of the New Deal for Disabled People that has led to the present Pathways to Work program. So far research evidence suggests a modest increase in effectiveness of services due to the Pathways program (Bewley et al., 2007).