

Pôle emploi: Coordinating public employment services and social support for vulnerable jobseekers



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France

Pôle emploi, the French Public Employment Service, is dedicated to support every jobseeker efficiently according to their personal needs. It has developed services aimed at those who need it the most to support them in finding a job.

At *Pôle emploi*, jobseekers undergo a comprehensive assessment of their social situation and employability. Based on this, a joint action plan is developed to facilitate their sustainable return to work. This action plan takes into consideration the social challenges of jobseekers regarding mobility, personal finances, family structure, health care needs, housing, etc. It then provides integrated support for reintegration in the labour market and social inclusion, through strong coordination with various agencies.

The integrated support scheme has been implemented in 97 per cent of the total districts in France and currently enrolls more than 50,000 of the most vulnerable jobseekers or 2 per cent of total jobseekers.



Main lessons learned

- Coordination among Public Employment Services (PES) and social services as well as colocation of all necessary services in one place, i.e. a one-stop shop, improves the support provided to vulnerable job seekers.
- The personalized action plan is a sort of contract between *Pôle emploi*, district social services and the jobseeker, clarifying rights and responsibilities of all parties and creating a sense of responsibility in the jobseeker to find a new occupation. This plan provides concrete measures to find a new job as well as specific advice and linkages to appropriate social services.
- *Pôle emploi* advisors and social workers are working in one-stop shops at the district level, which gives them a better understanding of the local labour market and the needs and opportunities for jobseekers.
- The integrated support scheme is still marginal as it only covers 2 per cent of the most vulnerable jobseekers. However, by integrating employment and social services, it has achieved impressive results in terms of reintegration and social inclusion of vulnerable jobseekers.

The Recommendation on Social Protection Floors, 2012 (No. 202) stipulates establishing basic social security guarantees to ensure access to essential healthcare and income security for all, including children, people of working age and older persons.

The Sustainable Development Goal 1.3, part of the UN 2030 agenda, aims to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, supported by the Universal Social Protection partnership (USP2030).

This brief presents a successful experience of a country in extending social protection.

Social Protection Floors in Action: 100 success stories to achieve Universal Social Protection and SDG 1.3

1. The need to coordinate social care services with employment promotion

Pôle emploi was created in 2008 by merging two institutions; the national employment agency (ANPE) and the national unemployment benefits agency (ASSEDIC). It would provide a comprehensive response including unemployment benefits and employment services to vulnerable jobseekers such as single parents, homeless people, illiterate people and people in debt who would otherwise face difficulties to find a new job. *Pôle emploi* also developed partnerships with social services provided by district public authorities to offer complementary support to the jobseekers.

This collaboration started in 2008-09 with integrated services to beneficiaries of the non-contributory unemployment scheme called the Revenu de Solidarité Active (RSA). It was progressively expanded to more district public authorities. In April 2014, a national agreement was signed between *Pôle emploi*, the Assembly of district public authorities and representatives of the General Directorate for Employment and Vocational Training (DGEFP). This agreement had the following objectives:

- promote access or return to employment through a comprehensive approach meant to tackle factors for social exclusion;
- improve the support to jobseekers by mobilizing the expertise of both social workers and employment counsellors;
- simplify access to services for jobseekers by creating a single point of contact (one case manager coordinates support services from *Pôle emploi* and the district public authorities) and
- enable social workers from the district public authorities to better serve their users by mobilizing resources from *Pôle emploi*.

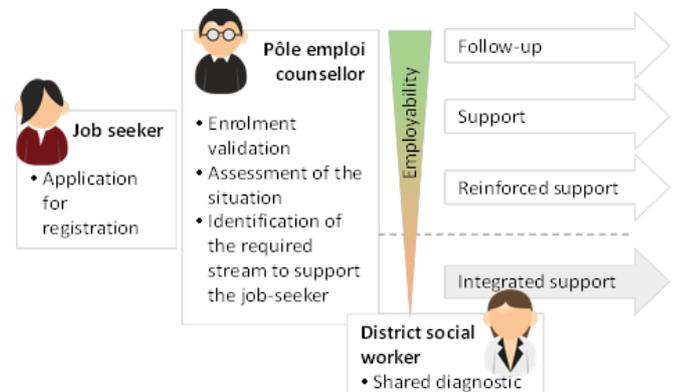
This integrated support scheme targets vulnerable jobseekers including RSA beneficiaries. It has been implemented in 97 per cent of the total districts in the country so far.

2. An integrated support scheme adjusted locally with financial support from ESF

The integrated support scheme includes 983 *Pôle emploi* counsellors that each manage a portfolio of

between 70 and 100 jobseekers. These counsellors are in permanent contact with the district social workers to make best use of existing social services and reduce social exclusion among vulnerable jobseekers.

Figure 1: Job-seekers journey



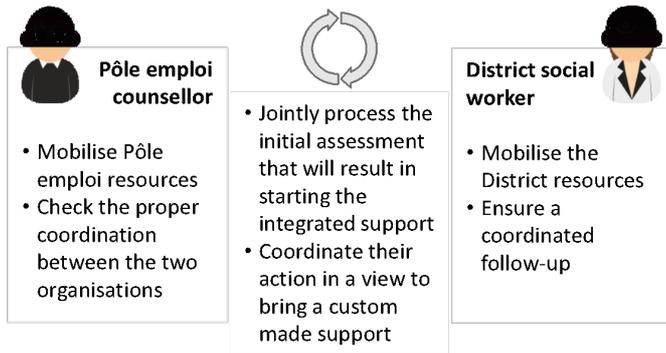
Three-year agreements are signed by the district public authority and the local branch of *Pôle emploi*. They establish quantitative targets and describe operational processes and tools such as frequency of contact between *Pôle emploi* and the district, budget dedicated to the scheme, human resources, etc.

Jobseekers enter the integrated support scheme for 12 months that can be extended once, for a maximum of six months. A comprehensive assessment of the jobseeker's situation is carried out. It includes:

- an in-depth analysis of the jobseeker's professional situation conducted by the *Pôle emploi* counsellor;
- an in-depth analysis of the jobseeker's social situation conducted by the district social worker and
- preparation of a personalized action plan establishing concrete measures to find a new job as well as advice and linkages to appropriate social services such as health care, housing, education, mobility.

The personalized action plan or contract has to be accepted and signed by the jobseeker. It can be terminated at any time by the jobseeker, *Pôle emploi* or the district social services. *Pôle emploi's* counsellor and the district social worker are jointly responsible for the implementation of the personalized action plan and for checking the jobseeker's compliance. They also measure the impact of the integrated support scheme on the jobseeker's situation.

Figure 2: collaboration between Pôle emploi counsellor and district social worker



A survey carried out in 2016 revealed that more than two-thirds of the jobseekers benefiting from the integrated support scheme face several social challenges related to finances, lack of self-confidence, sense of isolation, mobility and health problems. The profiles of the beneficiaries can vary from single parents (representing 28 per cent of the beneficiaries) to homeless jobseekers (16 per cent). More than two-thirds of the jobseekers enrolled in the integrated support scheme are also beneficiaries of RSA.

At the beginning of 2018, more than 50,000 jobseekers or 2 per cent of the total jobseekers in France were enrolled in the integrated support scheme. Since its launch in 2015, 151,300 jobseekers have benefited from the scheme, of which 92,000 have exited the scheme. Of this 92,000, 35 per cent were employed, 7 per cent moved to a training programme, 37 per cent graduated to another social support scheme and only 21 per cent terminated their contracts without any solution.

These results show that the integrated support scheme achieved better outcomes than previously existing support programmes. The satisfaction rate of jobseekers is also particularly high at over 80 per cent.

3. A more effective and efficient public service

The implementation of this integrated support scheme is in line with the *Pôle emploi* strategy to serve jobseekers customized to their situation and needs. This strategy is embodied in the motto “doing more for those who need it the most”. This approach stems

from the idea that social issues and reintegration in the labour market have to be handled simultaneously.

Through the integrated support scheme, *Pôle emploi* has customized its services to better meet the needs and expectations of vulnerable jobseekers, both in terms of content and organisation e.g. frequency of the meetings. *Pôle emploi* also matched the scope of the support with the needs, for instance by providing more intensive support to those farthest from the labour market. *Pôle emploi* also increased the scope and level of expertise of its employment counsellors by ensuring that they better understand the needs of jobseekers and propose solutions appropriate for the local job market.

The integrated support scheme and the better coordination between social and employment services allows for more efficient use of resources. In the past, social workers would provide a large amount of assistance in alleviating social issues without compelling the jobseekers to take action towards employment. On the other hand, employment service counsellors would not sufficiently consider the social barriers that prevent vulnerable jobseekers from returning to work.

4. Way forward

After a few years of implementation, the integrated support scheme has entered a new phase. Now that the cooperation framework between *Pôle emploi* and the districts is well established, the two organizations are working together to create common tools that aim to reinforce operational cooperation and to facilitate integration of data. Alongside the implementation of digital solutions, a Partnership Resource Database was created to inform counsellors about all partners located in their area that can help to overcome social barriers to employment (NGOs, social services, etc.).

An important assessment is currently being carried out to monitor the impact of the integrated support scheme on the social inclusion of the most vulnerable populations.

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