

7 Recommendations & 34 Actions

Pathways for inclusive labour markets in Europe

Employment for all Persons with Chronic Diseases

The 7 Recommendations and corresponding 34 Actions for reaching an inclusive labor market in all European Countries were developed in the scope of the EU-funded 3-year international project “Participation to Healthy Workplaces and Inclusive Strategies in the Work Sector”, **PATHWAYS**, taking into account: the availability of policies, systems and services’ strategies and their effectiveness, the perspective of national and European stakeholders, and the met and unmet employment needs of persons with chronic diseases, PwCds.

PATHWAYS focused on the situation of **PERSONS WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS** and **EMPLOYMENT** and had four research streams:



In all research streams, **PATHWAYS** focused on chronic diseases selected on their contribution to years lost to disability: mental health conditions, neurological diseases, metabolic disorders, musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

1. MAPPING

Strategies for inclusion, integration and reintegration of PwCDs at both European and national levels, implemented at policies, systems, and services levels were mapped. (*WORKPACKAGE 4*)

2. EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness of policies, systems and services strategies targeting professional integration and reintegration of persons with chronic diseases was evaluated in a systematic review. (*WORKPACKAGE 5*)

3. ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF PWCDs

Persons with six different chronic conditions living in nine European countries participated in an e-survey reporting the factors they perceived as favorable or unfavorable to obtain and retain employment. (*WORKPACKAGE 6*)

4. EVALUATION OF NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES

The perspectives of European and National-level stakeholders – policy makers, professionals and employers – on existing strategies for work re-integration of persons with chronic diseases were explored using an online survey. (*WORKPACKAGE 7*)

1# Raise Awareness of the role of employment for persons with chronic diseases

PATHWAYS FINDINGS

MAPPING

- ✓ In many European countries awareness of the role of employment for persons with chronic diseases is still lacking

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

- ✓ Stigma and discrimination were identified as factors affecting negatively the effectiveness of strategies aiming to improve work reintegration of PwCDs.
- ✓ Effective strategies are highly affected by the way disclosure of illness and the need for social support is handled in the work environment.

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

- ✓ PwCDs, regardless of the type of health condition, diagnosis or symptoms, highlighted as part of their most important needs: awareness raising for co-workers, human resources and employers on health conditions and their specific management,

EVALUATION OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF STAKEHOLDERS

- ✓ Stigma, discrimination and the lack of awareness were considered barriers for the effective implementation of inclusive working strategies by National and EU level stakeholders
- ✓ Awareness raising and training for staff and management were considered of crucial importance by both National and EU level stakeholders for promoting labour market participation of PwCDs

	PATHWAYS RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	Level
1	DESIGN DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES to raise awareness and inform society about chronic diseases and their impact on employment. Information should cover all levels of society to create a competent and aware environment.	Policy
2	DEVELOP SERVICES PROMOTING AWARENESS raising and training for service providers and human resources managers to ensure a better understanding of PwCD's needs.	Policy, Services
3	INFORM EMPLOYERS about the benefits of employing and retaining PwCDs at work.	Systems, Services
4	INFORM EMPLOYEES with chronic diseases about their work-related rights and the availability of support and/or services.	Systems, Services

2# Strengthen EU-level policies that promote inclusive labour markets for all

PATHWAYS FINDINGS

MAPPING

- ✓ Employment of PwCDs is regulated to a large extent through:
 - a. policy frameworks for the employment of persons with disabilities;
 - b. policy frameworks for employment activation and inclusion in the labour market;
 - c. a number of individual reports and actions that target specific chronic conditions

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

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ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

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EVALUATION OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF STAKEHOLDERS

- ✓ EU stakeholders indicated: a) modest availability of policy directions and legislation regulating employment reintegration; b) lack of specific and adequate policy directions on unemployment reduction and on promotion of employment reintegration of PwCDs
- ✓ EU stakeholders considered policy implementation as being significantly limited due to: a) inadequate and ineffective coordination among agencies involved; and b) lack of monitoring and evaluation of existing strategies

	PATHWAYS RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	Level
1	PUT IN PLACE POLICY PROVISIONS that target employment activation and participation of all, including PwCDs, in accordance with EU policies for equal access to employment.	Policy
2	DEVELOP COUNTRY-TAILORED POLICIES adapted to the various employment needs across EU countries and across different EU social welfare models.	Policy
3	PROMOTE HEALTH AT WORK taking into account challenges faced by labour markets due to an aging workforce, later retirement and increasing prevalence of chronic diseases.	Policy, Systems
4	ENACT POLICY PROVISIONS that focus on the <i>capacity</i> to work of PwCDs.	Policy
5	PROMOTE THE “BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL APPROACH” to health in all sectors, regarding the development of healthcare interventions for PwCDs and the evaluation of their results.	Policy
6	CONSIDER “EMPLOYMENT” AS A POSITIVE OUTCOME of all health-investment decision making.	Policy, Systems

3# Ensure adequate National legislation that promotes inclusive labour markets for all

PATHWAYS FINDINGS

MAPPING

- ✓ Effective national policies involve the development of adequate flexible, country-tailored national legislation focusing on the right of every person to work and have full participation in employment.

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

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ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

- ✓ Legislations that allow to be legally protected against being dismissed due to discrimination were reported as very favorable by at least 80% of people. In contrast, legislations that allow legally terminate contracts in case productivity decrease because of health conditions were perceived very unfavorably by participants suffering from chronic health conditions
- ✓ Differences emerged between PwCDs belonging to countries with different welfare models indicating the need for country-tailored actions.

EVALUATION OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF STAKEHOLDERS

- ✓ «Inadequate legislation» was one of the most frequently mentioned barrier hindering the promotion implementation of more inclusive work related strategies.

	PATHWAYS RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	Level
1	DEVELOP A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH in national employment policies for the re-integration or inclusion of PwCDs in the open labour market.	Policy
2	ENACT LEGAL FRAMEWORKS that promote the combination of active labour market policies to promote employment and passive measures to support PwCDs.	Policy
3	DEVELOP FLEXIBLE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS for employment support of PwCDs, not linked to the presence of a disability certification.	Policy
4	INTEGRATE FLEXIBLE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES able to promote greater involvement of employers in recruiting and retaining PwCDs at work.	Policy
5	PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL , including PwCDs in the open labour market.	Policy, Systems

4# Develop and monitor strategic approaches and directions that promote inclusive labour markets for all

PATHWAYS FINDINGS

MAPPING

- ✓ Integrated employment support systems that encompass various areas of support (i.e. job-search support, access to training, individualized and specialized support by professionals)

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

- ✓ Balance between compensation and activation measures

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

- ✓ At least a 70% of participants considered very important to have professional and psychological support during transition phases such as while getting a new job or going back after a longer period of sick leave or after being temporary considered unable to work

EVALUATION OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF STAKEHOLDERS

- ✓ Greater involvement of employers in the process of developing and promoting work reintegration strategies

	PATHWAYS RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	Level
1	DEVELOP EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS that maintain a balance between systems of incentives and systems of obligations.	Systems
2	PROMOTE REGULATORY COHERENCE through coordination mechanisms and effective communication among agencies and services dealing with employment re-integration/inclusion of PwCDs.	Systems
3	DEVELOP INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS encompassing various areas of support for employment re-integration of PwCDs, such as social, healthcare, rehabilitation, training...	Systems
4	PROMOTE STRATEGIES that focus on a greater involvement of employers' organizations, networks and trade unions.	Systems
5	INTEGRATE SPECIALIZED SUPPORT by professionals to mainstream employment services.	Systems, Services

5# Develop and monitor measures that promote inclusive labour markets for all

PATHWAYS FINDINGS

MAPPING

- ✓ Existing measures targeting work reintegration of PwCDs take different forms and orientations while their effectiveness and degree of implementation vary according to the welfare model adopted by different EU-countries.

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

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ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

- ✓ Physical adaptations of workplace and receiving appropriate education and training to promote professional development were among the most favorable domains reported by PwCDs participating in the Pathways needs assessment survey.

EVALUATION OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF STAKEHOLDERS

- ✓ EU level stakeholders emphasized the need to maintain a balance between protection and activation of PwCDs, and the importance of providing financial supports during participation in employment activation measures.

	PATHWAYS RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	Level
1	ESTABLISH MEASURES TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE between employers' commercial interests and job protection for PwCDs.	Systems
2	DEVELOP MEASURES TO FACILITATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT for workplace adjustments, adaptations and reasonable accommodations.	Systems
3	UNDERTAKE MEASURES ENCOURAGING PwCDs TO PARTICIPATE in employment activation programs, instead of providing only passive disability benefits.	Systems
4	UNDERTAKE MEASURES THAT SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY , competitiveness and commercial activity of social enterprises involving PwCDs.	Systems
5	RAISE AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS that report positive employment outcomes.	Systems
6	PROMOTE MEASURES that ensure time-off for medical appointments, flexible work routine and job security.	Systems

6# Develop and monitor services that promote participation and an inclusive labour markets for all

PATHWAYS FINDINGS

MAPPING

- ✓ Research evidence demonstrate the existing gap of adequate and effective services for PwCDs.

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

- ✓ The service-level strategies that were identified as effective by PATHWAYS research were:
 - Individual Placement and Support
 - A work-focused, early ergonomic and personalized intervention
 - Psychological or behavioral strategies
 - Multidisciplinary interventions
 - Educational training/ re-training

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

Regarding the area of employment services two factors were rated as relevant, helpful and favorable by more than 70 % of participants: a) the possibility of establishing positive relationships with health care professionals, social security or employment officers and b) that health services are provided outside typical working hours.

EVALUATION OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF STAKEHOLDERS

- ✓ EU-level stakeholders highlighted the development of services for employers and the promotion of a person-centered approach to services for PwCDs.

	PATHWAYS RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	Level
1	PROVIDE ACCESS OF PWCDS to adequate and customized employment support services both at local and regional levels.	Services, Systems
2	DEVELOP FLEXIBLE EMPLOYMENT RE-INTEGRATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES (job coaching, mentoring, counselling, and peer-counselling) at all stages of employment based on a person-centred approach to meet the changing needs of PwCDs over time.	Services, Systems
3	DEVELOP SERVICES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION , help and support to employers, concerning the employment inclusion or re-integration of PwCDs.	Services
4	OFFER SERVICES FOR EMPLOYERS to manage illness-related long-term absences and return-to work challenges.	Services
5	PROVIDE APPROPRIATE TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS to facilitate return to work of PwCDs.	Policy, Services

7# Promote research on effective and innovative inclusion and reintegration strategies and use the available evidence for developing solutions for employment for all

PATHWAYS FINDINGS

MAPPING

- ✓ EU Pathways demonstrated that there is no adequate monitoring nor evaluation data for most of the existing strategies targeting inclusion, integration or reintegration to work for PwCDs.

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

- ✓ Data from national reports could not be exploited to the full extend; they were heterogeneous, with complex language and mostly structured according to the information required by the contracting authority.
- ✓ Similar obstacles were identified in scientific publications; poor research methodology, large variability of outcomes and unclear definition of investigated concepts were identified as main obstacles.

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

- ✓ Current evidence on employment needs of PwCDs was found to be mainly focused on the negative impact of chronic health conditions on “work-functioning” or ability to work of the person and – for some diseases – evidence was extremely limited.

EVALUATION OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF STAKEHOLDERS

- ✓ There are not or many of the stakeholders don't know any specific outcome measure to evaluate effectiveness of existing strategies

	PATHWAYS RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	Level
1	PROMOTE AGREED STUDY PROTOCOLS and sound evaluation methods and parameters related to inclusive labour markets.	Policy
2	DEVELOP/SET SPECIFIC OUTCOME MEASURES for evaluating existing policies, systems and services related to work inclusion, integration and reintegration of PwCDs.	Policy, Systems
3	CONDUCT RESEARCH ON IDENTIFYING STRATEGIES that promote more inclusive working environments for all (i.e. identify the various employment needs of PwCDs; identify effective work reintegration strategies, identify strategies of involvement of all sectors for more inclusive policy development).	Policy, Systems

EMPLOYMENT & CHRONIC CONDITIONS



PATHWAYS PROJECT

Participation to healthy workplaces and inclusive strategies
in the work sector

www.path-ways.eu



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