

Youth – Actor of Social Change

“New Deal for Lone Parents”

This document is part of a larger collection of examples of current policies for young people in Europe. The collection is an outcome of a European research project called “UP2YOUTH – Youth: actor of social change?”

The basic idea of the “current practice” collection is to see how current practices and policies relate to young people as active agents in shaping their lives. Therefore, our intention is not a collection of “good” or “best” practices. Rather, it includes also practices, which are interesting because of their relation to young people’s agency but which involve problematic aspects, such as restricted financial resources, a very thin spread, or no clear evaluation criteria. We have applied a searching pattern which asked for “strengths” and “weaknesses”. This explicitly opens space for your own evaluation, because also policies are included, which definitely do have weaknesses, but are highly interesting for specific reasons. Therefore we have to stress that the researchers did not evaluate these practices themselves.

The whole collection can be found at <http://www.up2youth.org/content/view/192/60/>

Section	Indications of contents
Title of programme/ practice	New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) Programme
Location	UK
Main theme	Civic participation
Practice/Programme-related keywords	Lone Parents, Employment, Responsibilities
Summary of programme/ practice	The New Deal for Lone Parents, launched nationally in October 1998, is a voluntary programme that helps lone parents achieve job readiness through a range of provision. The New Deal is very effective: one in two lone parents moves into work with the support of their personal adviser (Department of Work and Pensions, 2008a). This programme was introduced amongst a number of ‘New Deals’ to help a variety of groups including young people (<i>New Deal for Young People</i> , introduced 1998), partners of people claiming benefits (<i>New Deal for Partners</i> , introduced in 1999) and disabled people (<i>New Deal for Disabled People</i> , introduced in 2001).
Target	The Labour Government launched the New Deals as part of a welfare strategy to reverse the rising numbers of people unemployed and claiming benefits of previous decades – between 1979 and 1997 the number of people on Incapacity Benefit more than doubled, while the number of lone parents on Income Support rose by nearly 700,000 (Department of Work and Pensions, 2008b).

Objectives of programme/ practice	This programme was introduced amongst a number of 'New Deals' to help a variety of groups including young people (<i>New Deal for Young People</i> , introduced 1998), partners of people claiming benefits (<i>New Deal for Partners</i> , introduced in 1999) and disabled people (<i>New Deal for Disabled People</i> , introduced in 2001).
Content of programme/ practice	After an initial Lone Parent Work Focused Interview (LPWFI), lone parents who participate in NDLP work with their PA to develop an individual action plan. Interviews with a PA are the key delivery mechanism for NDLP. The PA develops an individually tailored package of advice and support designed to facilitate a move into employment. Advisers provide an integrated service covering job search, help finding childcare, advice on benefits and help with claiming benefits. Participating lone parents are eligible from the outset for the full range of programmes for the unemployed administered by Jobcentre Plus. PAs can also help participating lone parents to be fast tracked for help with in-work benefits and tax credits. PAs on NDLP perform a wide range of functions, including: • supporting the job search of customers who are job ready; • helping lone parents to identify their skills and develop confidence; • identifying and providing access to education and training opportunities; • improving awareness of benefits; • providing practical support and information on finding childcare; • providing 'better off' calculations and assisting with benefit claims; • liaising with employers and other agencies offering in-work support.
Time scale	Launched 1998
Evaluation	Results / impact of programme: The British Government reports that the New Deals, including the New Deal for Lone Parents, have been the most successful innovation in the history of the UK labour market (Department of Work and Pensions, 2008b). In the last decade, the New Deals have helped more than 1.85 million people into work, and overall, the total number of people on key out-of-work benefits has fallen by a million since 1997. Statistics by region show that every group and region of the UK has benefited, with decreased unemployment and increased employment rates between 1997-2007 (regions that experienced bigger changes include Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the North East): The lone parent employment rate has gone up by 12.5 percentage points since 1997, while the number of lone parents on Income Support has fallen by nearly a quarter of a million. New Deal for Lone Parents has helped more than half a million lone parents into work. This in turn has contributed to a reduction of more than half a

	million in the numbers of children in poverty. Independent research studies and evaluations have found that the New Deals led to substantial increases in the probability of getting a job for those who participated in the programmes, with those increases sustained for months and years after participating. For instance the International Monetary Fund has praised the UK for its “innovative efforts to use active labour market policies to help benefit recipients move into work” (International Monetary Fund, 2004). Difficulties encountered: Main findings of the latest evaluation of the New Deal Plus for Lone Parents (e.g. Department of Work and Pensions, 2007) highlight that some new elements such as In-Work Credit are working better than others. The childcare barrier is considered critical, yet the childcare elements of the pilot had limited take up. Low take up was attributed to the design, lack of relevance and location of the offer.
Lessons to be drawn from programme or practice implemented	In their evaluation of NDLP Hasluck and Green (2007) highlight the key elements of this programme’s success, in terms of ‘what works for lone parents’: • Provision for lone parents relies heavily upon interventions that provide support in the form of advice and guidance. A key to assisting lone parents into work is engagement. Participation in NDLP is voluntary and if lone parents are to benefit from its support and provision it is essential that they come to recognise the potential benefits from working and the support provided by NDLP. The introduction of the LPWFI appears to be a critical element in the pattern of intervention. Provided that it is conducted in a sympathetic manner, the compulsory nature of LPWFI can help raise awareness of the possibilities of employment in customers who may have previously discounted such a possibility and set in train a process which, with support of NDLP, will lead to an entry to paid work. LPWFI appears from the evidence to have raised the take up of NDLP. • Increasing the take up of NDLP is important since the evidence relating to the employment impact of NDLP is impressive. Once participating in NDLP, the probability of a lone parent entering work is roughly doubled. This impact has been associated in much of the evaluation of NDLP with the flexibility and customised nature of the programme. Advisers believe that it is the overall package received by participants rather than the individual elements of provision that is most important in achieving this success.
Contact information	Department of Work and Pensions (2007) <i>New Deal Plus for Lone Parents Qualitative Evaluation</i>. DWP Research Report 426. Available at www.dwp.gov.uk [retrieved 18 January 2008]
Other doc related to the programme/ practice	Blundell, R., Costa Dias, M. and Meghir, C. (2001) <i>Evaluating the employment impact of a mandatory job search</i>

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