

GOOD PRACTICE DENMARK

The Large Return-To-Work project

Contact person (NCO)

Name and organisation

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General information about the MOGP

Name of organisation and short description

The National Research Centre for the Working Environment, NRCWE (Det Nationale Forskningscenter for Arbejdsmiljø, NFA).

The National Research Centre for the Working Environment is a Danish government research institute under the Ministry of Employment. The mission of the NRCWE is to monitor, analyze and explore conditions in the working environment of importance to health, safety and work role functioning.

Contact person

Project manager Glen Winzor, gwi@arbejdsmiljoforskning.dk

Website

www.arbejdsmiljoforskning.dk (Danish); <http://www.arbejdsmiljoforskning.dk/en> (English);
www.arbejdsmiljoforskning.dk/da/projekter/det-store-tta-projekt

Information on the good practice 'The Large Return-To-Work project'

Aims

The aim of the project is to decrease the long-term sick leave and enable a quick and sustainable return to work for citizens receiving sickness benefits.



The objectives are:

- to gather experience about the RTW-initiatives for long-term sick people with physical and mental health problems;
- to gain knowledge about whether the RTW-model can be accommodated in the municipal structures.

The RTW-model consists in the training of and the intervention of RTW-coordinators and – teams (i.e. a psychologist and a person experienced in occupational physiology and rehabilitation) in collaboration with clinical units (i.e. a psychiatrist and a doctor in occupational health, social medicine or general medicine) and other key stakeholders with the purpose of returning to work of recipients of sickness benefits with complex or diffuse health problems and in many cases in risk of partial or total exclusion from the labour market.

Target group

The target group are working-age adults on long-term sick leave and at risk of losing their attachment to the labour market. They belong to the so-called match category 2 (citizens with a complex or diffuse health condition who cannot have an ordinary job to get out of the system of sickness benefits).

Description

Cases are referred from social workers in the jobcentres in the municipalities after eight weeks of sick leave at the latest. The RTW-coordinator coordinates between relevant stakeholders, including employers, health authorities, the rest of the RTW-team and the clinical unit. Another part is to coordinate in relation to the workplace, general practitioner, Unemployment Insurance Fund, professional organizations and other social and health actors.

The interventions are both on an organisational and individual level.

On the organisational level, the focus is collaboration between the jobcentre, the RTW-coordinators, the RTW-teams and the clinical units.

The intervention consists of the following elements:

- Establishment of multidisciplinary RTW-organizations in sickness benefit offices
- Preparatory RTW-courses for all RTW-actors
- Case flow descriptions, tools and guides
- Process facilitation and follow-up sessions

At an individual level, the intervention consists of the following elements:

- Case management / RTW-coordination
- Multidisciplinary assessment
- Individualized, coordinated and graded intervention
- Education and counseling (self-care, coping strategies)
- Ergonomic and psychological workplace assessments and modifications

An early intervention is managed by the RTW-coordinator after eight weeks of sick leave at the latest. The RTW-coordinators have received special supplementary training through the RTW-project to heighten their skills in managing the meeting with the citizens and coordination of the effort. A part of the coordination is to involve the cross-disciplinary team.



The RTW-team offers counseling and assistance for the persons on sick-leave both individually and in groups. The counseling can focus on handling pain and stress, physical exercises, psychological education etc.

The “programme theory” is that interdisciplinary case work, better coordination between specialists and other stakeholders and early intervention in the cases will enable sustainable RTW.

Why is it a good practice?

The RTW-project is a good practice because it is a large-scale research driven implementation project conducted in 22 municipalities covering all regions in Denmark. The aim is to decrease the long-term sick leave and provide a quick and sustainable return to work for citizens receiving sickness benefits.

Early AND tailored intervention is tested to meet the needs of each participant.

The project is being evaluated and a status report suggests that participants were very satisfied with the project.

Results

Evaluation

The evaluation will focus on:

- Effect evaluation of long-term sickness absence. The main outcomes of the project are measures for duration of sickness absence, RTW-status, work ability, health related quality of life, and psychological well-being. Earlier studies have primarily focused on physical disorders, but this RTW-project will focus both on physical and mental health.
- Cost-benefit analyses will be conducted to assess the economic burdens and benefits of the RTW-intervention.
- Process evaluation in order to establish whether the model is workable in practice, and if it can be integrated and implemented in all municipalities.

Both the control and the intervention group receive a baseline questionnaire at inclusion, a six months follow-up questionnaire and are followed-up in a national register of social transfers including sickness benefits.

See also: the status report (April 2011) describing the design of the evaluation. The report contained also interviews with the participants and the conclusion is that they were very satisfied with the project. (www.arbejdsmiljoforskning.dk/da/projekter/det-store-tta-projekt/~/_media/Boeger-og-rapporter/FinalTTA-290411.pdf)

Incentives for success

Project is ongoing.

Barriers for success

Project is ongoing.

