

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment

Exposure Draft for the New Employment Services Model 2022
Purchasing Arrangements

Response submitted by email

To Whom It May Concern,

As someone who has had to use Jobseeker off and on due to various circumstances including Covid, I am relating my experiences in the hope of compassionate and fair change for people like myself who don't want to rely on benefits but have had to.

There is definite bias against Jobseekers within the wider community and within job agencies and Centrelink, (backed by government attitudes and policies). I have experienced this in many ways, usually subtle but definitely there, which erodes self-esteem and confidence. I have a BA plus other accreditations but have the audaciousness to be closer to 60 than 50 and not as technically skilled as younger people. When I have tried to gain skills in the areas I know I am lacking so that I can compete on a level playing field with other applicants, I have either not been able to access the course from where I am, I have not got the money to do it, or I am working in a low paid, labour intensive crap casual job that does not allow for great time management around courses etc.

Plus there is no guarantee that if I do the course/s that I will gain better employment.

Not one job agency has ever helped me get work or upskill, but expected me to find my own. Of course I still had to attend appointments, do the irrelevant courses to meet mutual obligations and apply for a set amount of jobs even if they were once again, low paid, casual labour jobs leading nowhere and certainly not lifting me out of poverty.

I have been cut off payments a couple of times because of computer or human error and have been treated poorly by job agency staff and Centrelink staff. I'm not sure if this is a tactic to put people off accessing benefits but if I was able to get decent work with a decent pay, I would have nothing to do with any of them. It is demeaning, frustrating and there is nothing like it for making people feel as if they are total losers who will never contribute meaningfully to society again. Yes, it's depressing.

Even if work in physically demanding roles that is not well paid is what some people have to do, employers are often not effective managers or bosses, adding to the stress of those types of jobs. This is a whole other investigation: management and small business bosses who treat employees as dispensable and units to be used for a purpose. I feel society should have moved on from those draconian, early industrial-age mindsets.

Punitive measures against unemployed or underemployed people (and people who are employed in crap jobs who are supposed to be so grateful just to have a job) DO NOT WORK!

Encouragement, support and better governance rather than politicking is the only way to ensure a fair and sustainable economy for all.

If you are interested in further information from the Jobseeker and underemployed point of view and how it might be improved, I am happy to discuss it.

Again, it is a compassionate, supportive change that will allow positive job and economic growth, not demeaning punitive measures based on unachievable KPIs, money and political leverage off the backs of unemployed or underemployed people.

Regards,

[Redacted]