

## Should active labour market programmes aimed at unemployed young people take into account the negative effect of unemployment on the mental wellbeing of young people?

### FACTSHEET

Produced by Birgit Sittermann-Brandsen (Institute for Social Work and Social Education), on behalf of the German Federal Centre for Health Education, for the Equity Action project [pdf complete review](#)

This factsheet summarises the main findings of a literature review “ Do active labour market programmes aimed at unemployed young people take mental health problems of young people into account, and how effectively do the programmes address this issue? “. The review looked at whether active labour market programmes (ALMPs) aimed at unemployed young people in the European Union take into account that unemployment usually has a negative effect on the mental wellbeing of young people. It also looked at whether ALMPs have a positive influence on the mental wellbeing of unemployed young people.

#### Current knowledge and research gaps

The literature review came to the conclusion that little is known about the effects of ALMPs. This is especially true for the situation of young unemployed people, and even more so for the situation of young people with mental health issues.

Existing recommendations for successful programmes (for example, in terms of participation in the labour market) are based on experiences with adult unemployed people or with young people with a broader range of disabilities. None of these existing recommendations take into account the specific requirements of young people with mental health issues. This is partly due to the lack of available data regarding the number of young unemployed people with mental health problems and their participation in ALMPs.

There are major research gaps in the area of integration of young people with mental health problems into the labour market, and there are not enough data available to reach valid conclusions. Further research is necessary to close these research gaps.

#### Policy recommendations

The review made eight policy recommendations, including the following. (For the complete list, see section 5 *Policy recommendations* in the literature review.)

- Prevention is the key to avoiding young people with mental health problems becoming unemployed in the first place. These young people need to be empowered to use their existing skills: the focus should not be their deficits but their abilities. Key players for such a resource-oriented approach are school teachers, job centre employees and employers.





- Unemployed young people with mental health problems should be supported and identified without being stigmatised.
- They should have access to high quality services in order to make sure that their problems are adequately diagnosed and treated.
- Teachers, job centre employees and also employers need to be made aware of mental illnesses. If psychological problems are recognised at an early stage, successful treatment is more likely.
- Employment services should choose an integrated approach for their work with unemployed youth with mental health problems. A multidisciplinary team should work with their clients, both on their vocational skills and their psychological problems.
- Employment services should collect data on their clients regarding special issues such as mental health problems. This should be done without violating clients' data protection rights.

#### **For more information**

*Do active labour market programmes aimed at unemployed young people take mental health problems of young people into account, and how effectively do the programmes address this issue?: Literature review.*

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