

PAUL Partnership Limerick CLG

Submission to Indecon's Review of Job Clubs Service

March 2017

Introduction

This paper is being submitted in response to an invitation from Indecon to contribute our views on the Job Club service, with specific reference to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Job Club operated by PAUL Partnership as well as the governance arrangements that we have in place.

The overall aim of the Job Club is to support job-ready unemployed individuals in their search for employment opportunities. The support provided ranges from participants engaging in job-seeking skills training to availing of one to one support or availing of job seeking support in the form of access to computers/phone/newspapers etc. The Job Club offers an environment whereby jobseekers can build up their confidence, increase their motivation, and get practical assistance and support.

The paper provides an overview of:

1. The model of operation of the PAUL Partnership Local Employment Service (LES) Job Club
2. Progression rates from the PAUL Partnership LES Job Club
3. Governance arrangements in place for the PAUL Partnership LES Job Club
4. Key strengths of the model of operation
5. Recommendations for the future of Job Clubs

PAUL Partnership LES Job Club Model of Operation

The PAUL Partnership LES Job Club model of operation has evolved to meet client and service needs at a local level in Limerick. Working in close collaboration with the Local Employment Service (LES)¹ in particular, as well as with the Department of Social Protection (DSP), a good working relationship has developed between all the stakeholders, enabling the service to be effective in responding to the needs of both clients and service providers. The PAUL Partnership LES Job Club currently provides the following services to clients:

1. Training Programmes
2. One to One Appointments
3. DSP CVs
4. ICT, internet and other facilities

1. Training Programmes

Through the DSP ACM (Activation Caseload Management) system, client referrals are received from the Intreo Case Officers and LES Mediators. The referral to the Job Club is noted in their Personal Progression Plan. Notification is given to the Job Club and the client via an ACM generated letter.

¹ The LES in Limerick City is also managed by PAUL Partnership

ACM generated letters are sent in bulk twice per week, received on Tuesdays and Fridays – as agreed locally with the DSP. Clients are given one week advance notice of the date for their training session. Training is offered in Job Preparation, CV Preparation, Interview Preparation and Aptitude Tests. Mock Interviews are arranged as required to prepare clients for specific interviews. Training takes place over either a one day or two day period. Most clients are referred to our 2 day training programme which replaced the previous week long programme in order to meet increased demand and to streamline the service for clients. Referrals to the training programmes average between 25 and 35 clients per month. The following table outlines the various training sessions on offer to clients:

<p><u>2 Day Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today’s Job Market • Local Information; Job/Training Opportunities • Understanding the Job Seeking Process • CV Preparation- Types, Content, Format, Layout. • Skills/Using Profiles • Writing Cover Letters • Application Forms • Preparing for Interviews – Types, Stages, Format • STAR – Scoring Marks • Interview Questions and Answers • Mock Interviews 	<p><u>1 Day Programme: CV Preparation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today’s Job Market • Local Information; Job/Training Opportunities • Understanding the Job Seeking Process • Curriculum Vitae • Types of CVs • Curriculum Vitae Content • CV Layout/Presentation • Using Profiles/Transferable Skills • Writing Cover Letters
<p><u>1 Day Programme: Interview Preparation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today’s Job Market • Local Information; Job/Training Opportunities • Understanding the Job Seeking Process • Purpose of Interviews • Interview Preparation • Types of Interviews • Interview Stages • Types of Interview Format • Talking about Skills/STAR Method • Interview Questions/Answers • Interview Practice 	<p><u>1 Day Programme: Aptitude Tests</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why use Aptitude Tests? • Types of Tests • Practical Tips on Preparing • Practicing Tests • SHL Personal Test Battery

Methodology

The training is delivered using adult centred methods of learning, whereby participants take responsibility for their own learning, whilst also relating to their work history and reflecting on their life experiences to date. Training is carried out in the Job Club in a very friendly, relaxed atmosphere. Both group training and one to one work take place in the Job Club Training Room.

2. One to One Appointments

DSP Case Officers and LES Mediators refer clients to the Job Club to access one to one support where clients may not be comfortable to work in a group setting, or if there are some issues that may need to be addressed on a one to one basis. Support varies from addressing barriers, guidance, presentation skills, to revamping CVs, targeting specific jobs or intensive interview preparation work. The same ACM referral letter system operates here also. Clients also self-refer for this type of support. On average the monthly number of referrals for this type of work is 10-20 clients.

3. DSP CVs

DSP Case Officers also refer clients to the Job Club to work specifically on their CVs. This is usually because the client has not presented a CV to their case officer, or they need the CV updated or changed. Every client must have an up-to-date CV as part of their contract with DSP and therefore are offered support with this via the Job Club. Intreo Case Officers do not work with clients to produce CVs for clients. LES Mediators refer clients for specialist support on their CV. Again the ACM referral letter system operates here. On average the monthly number of referrals for this type of work is 30-40 clients.

4. ICT, Internet and Other Facilities

The Job Club has a variety of facilities on offer, for free, to all clients, including:

- Access to computer facilities – 5 dedicated client PCs available
- Telephone / FAX facilities
- Internet / E-mail facility
- Miscellaneous job application forms
- Newspapers
- Jobs notice board

Walk-in Clients

Clients can access our services and facilities, without a referral, to get information, search for jobs, get CVs typed or engage in one to one support. We have an open door policy and provided the client is of working age and has permission to work they can access our services. On average, 70 people a month engage in our services in this way.

Progression

The following table presents an overview of the various types of progression rates from the Job Club.

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Progressed into Full-Time Employment	92	104	101	112
Progress into Part-time Employment	87	61	22	32
Progressed into Education and Training	72	60	91	84

Reporting Procedures

The Job Club adheres to the monthly reporting structure of the DSP, completing 3 reports: a Job Club Activity Report – DSP Generated (returned to Dublin office) and 2 reports which record attendance for Training Programmes, DSP CVs and One to One Appointments. The information in these 2 reports is fed into the ACM locally. All reports are completed within the specific time frame – usually 7-10 days from the start of the month.

The Job Club is also subject to financial and operational Audit and Monitoring visits from the DSP approximately twice a year.

Staffing, Management and Governance

The work of the Job Club is co-ordinated on a day-to-day basis by the Jobs Club Facilitator who is trained in a range of skills relevant to the role including HR, Re-Deployment Counselling, Community Work, Education and Training, Psychometric Testing Level A & B, and holds a Masters Level 9 qualification in Social Studies/Regeneration. The Job Club Facilitator is supported by administration staff trained in administration and office skills (Fetac Levels 5 and 6).

Management of the Job Club staff rests with the PAUL Partnership Employment Services Co-ordinator who is also responsible for managing the Local Employment Service, thereby ensuring close collaboration and complementarity between the two services.

The Job Club is overseen by the Employment Services Sub-Committee – a sub-committee of the PAUL Partnership Board. The Employment Services Sub-Committee meets approximately 4 times a year.

Overall governance and oversight of the Job Club rests with the PAUL Partnership Board of Directors. PAUL Partnership is committed to excellence in our governance and management processes with a focus on strong leadership from our Board of Directors and Management Team. This commitment to excellence in governance is evidenced by:

- Clear roles and responsibilities for the Board of Directors, Sub Committees, CEO and staff and established processes for the induction of new members and the review and renewal of Board and Sub Committee membership.
- Appropriate internal and external control procedures to comply with relevant legal and regulatory frameworks including internal auditing, external auditors, financial control procedures, HR policies and procedures, performance management systems etc.
- Best-practice accounting procedures are documented in a Finance Manual – approved by the Board - covering the key areas, namely: Finance Reporting, Documentation, Internal Control, Budgetary Control and Compliance. The Finance Manual also reflects any specific control and reporting requirements of individual Funder Organisations, including the Department of Social Protection. Qualified finance staff are employed and the operations of the Finance function are monitored by an Audit and Finance Sub-Committee of the Board.
- Staff Training and Development policies and procedures in place with opportunities for professional development and up-skilling opportunities for board members and staff of PAUL and our partner's organisations.

- A commitment to achieving a recognised Quality Standard, Excellence Through People (ETP)
- A commitment to continuous learning and improvement through the planning and review processes. Since its establishment in 1989, PAUL Partnership has always striven to be a learning organisation, with a strong commitment to organisational and staff development, as supported by the following policies and practices:
 - Child Protection Policy
 - Communications Policy
 - Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
 - Customer Charter (including complaints procedure)
 - Equality Statement
 - Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy
 - Health and Safety Statement
 - Induction Policy for New Staff
 - Induction Process for Transferred/Promoted Staff
 - Internet Usage Policy
 - Protocol for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour
 - Recruitment Procedures Policy
 - Stress Management Policy
 - Training Policy
 - Whistleblower Policy
 - Work Experience Policy

Strengths of the PAUL Partnership LES Job Club Model of Operation

- The PAUL Partnership LES Job Club provides very tailored and specific training for job ready clients which is complementary to the services provided by the LES and through SICAP.
- With the availability of computer and internet facilities, it also supports self directed job searching, complemented by the onsite availability of the expertise of the Job Club Facilitator.
- The PAUL Partnership LES Job Club has a very good working relationship with the DSP. DSP referral levels have been continuously high.

Recommendations on Future of Job Club

Based on our experience of managing a Job Club, we are making the following recommendations:

1. Review the budget allocation for the Job Club. It has remained fixed for several years and is now insufficient to enable staff to have the same employment terms and conditions as other staff in the organisation.
2. Consideration should be given to bringing Job Clubs in as part of the Local Employment Service in places where there is a significantly-sized LES managed by the same organisation as the Job Club.