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► [Pathways to employment in London: A guide for drug and alcohol services.](#)

Simonson P.

London: DrugScope/LDAN, 2010.

Recommendations for British drug and alcohol services on how to help their clients gain employment based on field research and review of the literature in substance misuse and related sectors.

Original abstract Many drug and alcohol services in London are working with training and employment support services to create positive pathways to employment for their service users. However, to date this work has not been significantly highlighted or promoted within London. LDAN has been funded by the Trust for London over two years to identify and collate good practice, to start building an evidence base on what works in employment support for people with drug and alcohol problems. This report brings together our research work so far with a focus on supporting people who are effectively engaged with drug and alcohol services.

The report is structured into a review of current issues and evidence, followed by a range of resources including a directory of employment support providers for drug and alcohol service users in London. Also included is a list of all Job Centre Plus District Partnership Managers.

From the literature we can safely assume that there is no 'one size fits all' policy that will help all problem drug users, in and out of treatment, in getting work. We also face the problem of the paucity of projects in the UK that have been evaluated. However, the [UK Drug Policy Commission's report](#) on getting problem drug users into jobs provides a framework, borrowed from the mental health field, of an 'employment continuum' which starts at long-term unemployment, through treatment of health problems, working on motivation, stabilising a person's drug use, ensuring they are in appropriate accommodation, developing soft skills often through volunteering, formal training/skills development, help with budgeting, work trials, ending at in-work support.

The [Individual Placement Support](#) (IPS) model also provides significant learning for the

drug and alcohol sector. Research studies suggest that this approach is more successful in placing participants into competitive employment than the traditional 'train and place' approach, where an individual has a long period of vocational training and voluntary work experience before attempting to access paid work. In contrast the Individual Placement Support model involves rapid job search and minimal pre-vocational training. Its key principles are:

- It aims to get people into competitive employment.
- It is open to all who want a job.
- It tries to find jobs consistent with people's preferences.
- Job search is rapid.
- Employment specialists are located in clinical teams.
- It provides time-unlimited, individualised support for both employer and employee.
- Welfare benefits counselling is included.

This model has the potential for further development, shaped by the evidence emerging from the mental health field and the experience of the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust scheme that is currently working with substance misuse clients.

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