

Mental Health and Work seminar

17 April 2013, Paris, OECD

Session 1:

Addressing the falling average age of new disability beneficiaries: Replacing disability benefit for young people in Denmark by an integrated rehabilitation model

OECD countries are increasingly recognising that high disability benefit recipiency rates are undesirable because they reflect a high level of permanent labour market exclusion. This is especially the case for young people, who would be excluded from the labour market for several decades; and for people with a mental disorder more generally, because of the large potential for improvement in health and workability of this group. Age and health condition are strongly correlated: in all countries, the large majority of younger adults claim disability benefit with a mental disorder. Some countries have started to question the granting of a permanent and rather passive benefit to relatively young people. Denmark has gone a step further and is currently in the process of closing the option for people under age 40 to access disability benefit (with minor exceptions). More precisely, Denmark is about to replace disability benefit for people of this age by a new rehabilitation model with better integration of health and employment services. What are the chances for this new model to deliver better employment outcomes? What are the key factors of change and success? Is age an adequate criterion for this type of reform? Are other countries planning or at least discussing a similar shift?