

Press release

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**Launch of Flexible New Deal to tackle long-term unemployment
Serco to help over 130,000 people into sustainable work**

Serco will today start delivering the Government's Flexible New Deal initiative in three major areas of the country helping over 130,000 long-term unemployed people back into work.

The Flexible New Deal, the Department for Work and Pension's initiative to enable long term unemployed people to secure sustainable jobs, launches on 5 October 2009.

Serco, one of the main contractors, has developed a programme, which will provide real employment opportunities to people and communities despite the recession.

To support jobseekers, Serco has developed local networks of private, public, community and voluntary organisations, which will provide bespoke, individual support to people. This includes career planning and job search assistance and specialist services such as budgeting for work, debt advice, interview preparation, and top up vocational skills.

The Flexible New Deal is set to replace all previous New Deal and Employment Zone programmes. People who have been out of work for 12 months or longer, will be referred to a one-year mandatory programme of flexible, supported job preparation and job search. Individuals achieving employment will receive ongoing in-work support.

This first phase of the Flexible New Deal will cover approximately half the UK. The Department for Work and Pensions will launch the second phase of the Flexible New Deal to cover the rest of the country in October 2010.

Serco Welfare to Work is delivering the Flexible New Deal in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, across three major areas: Greater Manchester; Coventry, Warwickshire, Staffordshire and the Marches; and the majority of Wales. Serco has established regional offices in Cardiff, Birmingham and Manchester to manage delivery of the programme and has already started accepting referrals.

Through the Flexible New Deal, Serco Welfare to Work's network of providers will directly help over 130,000 people, who have been out of work for months if not years, into sustainable employment. Serco's network will provide tailored, job-focused support to people, including those with transferable skills from industries hit hardest by the recession.

Serco's Flexible New Deal programme will ensure those people who are most ready for employment get the right support to help them into sustainable work quickly and cost effectively, while those furthest away from the employment market will receive greater investment and intensive support to meet their needs. In this way it will achieve its goals of helping people into sustainable work, who have been excluded by previous programmes.

Jobseekers will be interviewed in detail and then referred from Jobcentre Plus to a local, expert Serco subcontractor, who will work to address the individual constraints on employment, while helping to develop their skills, confidence and employability.

The strengths of the programme lie in Serco's overarching infrastructure, technology and case management support, which combine with local providers to create individual employment solutions for people who have become excluded from the labour market.

The Flexible New Deal contract is a departure from previous New Deal programmes, in that it is funded through a service fee and performance based payments. This approach will help to drive up efficiency while ensuring value for money.

Richard Johnson, Managing Director for Serco Welfare to Work, said: "As the recession makes life increasingly tough, we need to give people who've been out of work for a long time every chance to find and retain a job. Flexible New Deal will make an enormous difference to the lives of individuals, their families and their communities. Rebuilding confidence, from the bottom up, starting with someone who has lost their job but wants to work, will help whole communities weather the recession and prosper in the future.

"We have spent the last year meeting people in North Wales, the West Midlands and Greater Manchester. The experience and insights of local unemployed people, employers and agencies offering existing help have shaped our response. As a result of what we have heard, we've designed an approach that will reach more local people with the help they need to get back into work. By working closely with local partners to coordinate services, we will be best-placed to meet the specific demands of each area."

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Notes to editors:

- Serco is a FTSE 100 international service company, which combines commercial know-how with a deep public service ethos. We improve services by managing people, processes, technology and assets more effectively. We advise policy makers, design innovative solutions, integrate systems and - most of all - deliver to the public.
- Serco supports governments, agencies and companies who seek a trusted partner with a solid track record of providing assured service excellence. Our people offer operational, management and consulting expertise in the aviation, BPO, defence, education, health, home affairs, local government, science, technology, transport and the commercial sectors.

- More information can be found at www.serco.com
- The Flexible New Deal is a Department for Work and Pensions initiative. It will replace the current New Deal 18 – 24 and 25+ and Employment Zones programmes. It will provide bring together for Prime Contractor organisations from the private, public and third sectors to work together in partnership to deliver phase 1 of the programme from 5 October 2009.
- For more information go to: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplying-dwp/what-we-buy/welfare-to-work-services/flexible-new-deal/>

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