

## **Mental Health and Work seminar**

**17 April 2013, Paris, OECD**

### ***Session 4:***

#### ***Clients with mental ill-health on unemployment benefits: The recent mental health focus by the Belgian Public Employment Service in cooperation with other agencies***

Disability benefits are only one of several working-age benefits for people with a mental disorder. Not everyone will fulfil the strict eligibility criteria of the disability system, and many people are not even applying for disability benefits because of stigma considerations. Survey-based evidence shows that one in three unemployed people suffer from a severe or moderate mental disorder and the prevalence is even higher among long-term unemployed. In Belgium, the Public Employment Services are aware of such problems among their beneficiaries and have developed promising programmes in cooperation with the mental health and welfare sector for job seekers with severe mental health problems. Programmes were recently opened to beneficiaries of the disability and social welfare systems as well. How effective is the Belgian Public Employment Service in helping people with a mental disorder in sustainable employment? What are the key successes and failures of co-operation with the different sectors (including employers)? To what extent do people with more moderate mental disorders receive appropriate support? Can the programmes be opened to people who are still employed, but at risk of losing their job?