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A long term view is needed on mental illness and workforce participation. Mental illness is often episodic and this should be taken into consideration. It is not beneficial to label people with a mental illness (eg a schizophrenic) as this then becomes their identity.

Most people have their first episode of mental illness when they are young. This interrupts their lives at a most important stage when they are studying, starting a career, or in an apprenticeship. To insist that these young people get a job- any job – usually means low skilled, casual work. The premise that any work participation helps a person with a mental illness is a false premise. A person with a psychotic illness who has to mow lawns or serve in a shop is not helped by this work; it often exacerbates the illness.

Once a person becomes ill, the job network roundabout begins. The job network organisations have guidelines and procedures they must follow and they aim for success for their organisations. The outcomes are for the organisation, not for the participants. People who work in job networks know little about mental illness and its effects.

Government departments spend their time in meetings and writing policies that are not implemented. Please –no more consultations, no more policies. Let's just put the mentally ill and their families at the centre of this debate. "Work sets you free" is not appropriate. Let there be a long term approach –people with a mental illness need support when they are ill, and help in returning to study, or work, or an apprenticeship. When they are well, they can contribute to society. Let us draw on their strengths, not their weakness.