

Department for Work and Pensions

Research Report No 821

Work Programme evaluation: Findings from the first phase of qualitative research on programme delivery

Research tools

A report of research carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies, the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

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Views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the Department for Work and Pensions or any other Government Department.

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1 Observation research tools

Research brief



Research brief: Work Programme Evaluation

The Government has introduced the Work Programme to help people find and stay in work. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has asked a group of research organisations led by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to evaluate the Work Programme to see whether it works or not.

The evaluation will look at the delivery and success of the Work Programme by asking participants about their experiences and finding out what happens to them during and after participation. The research also includes watching how Work Programme providers help people prepare for and find work. The research will look at participants' journeys through the programme, from beginning to end. It will try to find out what people think about the help they have received – the relevance and helpfulness of the support, and outcomes from the programme as a whole, for example, jobs and qualifications.

The main questions of interest are:

- What services do providers deliver to Work Programme participants and how do they deliver them?
- What happens to participants and where do they go after they have been on the Work Programme?
- How quickly do people find a job and how long do they stay in work?

We would like to invite you to take part in this evaluation to help us answer some of these questions. IES and the Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU) are going to watch some of the meetings between participants and Work Programme providers to see first hand how participants are helped. Researchers will then talk to participants in a short follow-up interview lasting approximately 15-20 minutes to get their views on the support they have received. Researchers will take notes during the observations and may also ask your permission to record the meeting to ensure that we describe what has happened as accurately as possible. If you are worried or have any questions about this please ask the researcher.

All information collected will be kept by the research team and will remain confidential until it is destroyed. No research papers or reports will name you or identify you in any way. Even though IES and SPRU are doing this work for the DWP, no information that could identify you will be shared with the Department.

Before taking part we need you to sign the attached consent form. This states that you:

- have received and understood the research information sheet and have had time to decide whether or not you want to participate;
- understand that taking part is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without there being a penalty of any kind;

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- understand that IES and SPRU are doing this work for DWP, and that findings from the interviews will be shared with researchers at DWP and other research organisations involved in the evaluation, but that no information that could identify you will be shared with DWP;
- are aware that any research publications, reports and other documents will not name or in any other way identify you;
- understand that any information generated by the research will be held securely and disposed of in accordance with DWP guidelines.

Opting out of the research:

Your contribution will provide us with valuable information that will help us to evaluate the Work Programme and we do hope that you decide to take part, however, you are under no obligation to do so and you can withdraw at any stage.

For further information about this research project, please contact:

Sara Dewson (Project Manager – IES)

✉ Institute for Employment Studies, Sovereign House, Church Street, Brighton BN1 1UJ

☎ 01273 763400

💻 sara.dewson@employment-studies.co.uk

Research participant consent

This form should be completed by the researcher and participants before any observations take place.

Project Name: Evaluation of the Work Programme

Commissioned by: Department for Work and Pensions

Researcher name: _____

Research organisation: IES/SPRU

Observation ref no: _____

I confirm that I have been supplied with and have read and understood a Research Brief for the project and have had time to decide whether or not I want to participate. I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I am free to stop the observation at any time, without giving a reason and without there being a penalty of any sort.

The researcher has explained to me that the Institute for Employment Studies (IES)/Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU) are doing the research for the Department for Work and Pensions but that no information that could identify me will be shared between these organisations. I have been made aware that any recordings and notes from the discussion will remain confidential with only the research team at IES/SPRU having access to them and will be destroyed at the end of the project.

I agree with the Institute for Employment Studies/Social Policy Research Unit using any personal information only for this research and realise that this may involve the research team recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will only be used for this research. I understand that should I wish to I can withdraw my consent for my information to be used for this research after the observation/interview is completed by contacting the telephone number provided on the research briefing.

I understand that when a research report is produced from this research that my words may be quoted in papers, reports, web pages and other published documents, but my name will not be used.

Signature of participant: _____

I can confirm that I have explained the nature of the research to the above named participant and have given adequate time to answer any questions concerning it.

Signature of researcher: _____

Date:

Provider observation tool briefing

Aims

The aim of the observation is to better understand what happens to a claimant when they are referred to a Work Programme provider and how subsequent activities are decided.

IES/SPRU researchers are there to be neutral observers of the interview, we are not there to judge the adviser/provider or the claimant.

Consent and confidentiality

Observations are only to be undertaken where the explicit agreement of the adviser and the claimant has been given.

The adviser should have already been briefed by their manager on the purpose of the research but seek permission to sit with them and observe their interviews. Give them a copy of the research briefing and ask them to sign to say they are happy to be observed. Arrange to have a short 15-minute interview with the adviser after you have spoken to the claimant.

As appropriate for the setting, ask the adviser to tell the claimant when they are being collected from their waiting area that you'd like to observe, or ask the adviser to call you over once they have sought permission from the claimant. It's important that claimants aren't presented with a fait accompli or just agree because they think they have to or to be polite. Then double check with the claimant when you are introduced. Give the claimant a copy of the research briefing and ask them to sign to say they are happy to be observed. Ask the claimant if you can have a brief chat with them after the interview to discuss the issues that were raised (but don't put them off). We will only need another ten minutes (max) of their time.

Make sure that the adviser and the claimant both know that you are observing to help understand the process better – you're not assessing or making judgements on either of them.

Assure the adviser and claimant of confidentiality and say that you are not taking a note of their names or any personal details that could identify them. There's no need to record the interview but check with the claimant if they're happy for you to take notes. Everything that is recorded on this tool is completely confidential.

What you're looking for

The following questions are intended to be a guide to focus the observation and to help in drawing up notes – it's not intended to be prescriptive or limiting.

- What subjects/issues were covered during the interview?

If you have the chance to discuss the interviews with the adviser check you understand what the adviser was trying to do and if they would have done anything differently on reflection. Things to look out for:

- **Skills screening** – how is this done – in-depth or light-touch, explicitly or discreetly?
- **Barriers** – are any raised, e.g. health? How were they addressed by the adviser?
- **Other topics** covered by the interview, e.g. finances/debts, job search activity, caring responsibilities, etc.

- **Interaction between the adviser and the claimant** – what approach does the adviser take? What approach do they use more – carrot or stick? How are claimants encouraged to take up activities/ look for work/find work opportunities? How does the claimant react, are they forthcoming with information, active in the interview or are they withdrawn?
- **Non-verbal cues** – body language, eye-contact, etc.
- Is the interview **tailored to participants' needs**? Is the interview open from the start? Does the adviser react to information given by the claimant? Is the outcome of the interview predetermined in any way?
- **The use of tools** – does the adviser use any tools to assess the needs of the claimant – what software programme, how long does it take, what happens to the results?
- **Referrals** – is the claimant referred to any activities/courses/provision/employer engagement or jobs teams – what is the process of the referral? How was the decision to refer made, and by whom? How much information is given about the activities/provision/jobs they are being referred to?
- **Next steps** – are there any actions for the adviser or claimant to undertake after the interview? How were these agreed and were they recorded? Is any information relayed to Jobcentre Plus/ other organisations? How? Why?
- **How long is the interview?** – make a note of timings of sections on the note sheet. Did interview start on time?
- Note office/interview location e.g. WP branding, privacy, open plan, etc.

Summary sheet for observations (to be completed as soon as possible after the observation) and checked during follow-up interview:

Adviser style: *e.g. challenging, claimant-focused, encouraging discussion, engaging, process-driven, disengaged.*

Claimant response: *e.g. engaged, non-communicative, obstructive, confused.*

Claimant characteristics: *e.g. repeat claimant, poor work history, lengthy benefit history/churner, career-driven, new claimant, poor skills, highly skilled, etc.*

Use of IT: *e.g. used to support interview, dominated interview, used to complete assessment tools.*

Approach to skills screening: *e.g. well explained, appropriate, tool-driven, poor flow.*

Approach to identifying barriers to work: *e.g. well explained, appropriate, tool-driven, poor flow.*

Use/intro of tools: *e.g. what purpose, well explained, appropriate, tool-driven, poor flow.*

Use of other materials, leaflets etc: *e.g. well explained, appropriate, poor flow.*

Topics covered

Length of interview

Next steps for claimant/adviser *e.g. any follow-up sessions booked*

Follow-up interview with claimants

- How did you think that interview went?
- What were you hoping to achieve/get from the interview? What did you think the outcome would be?
- Are you satisfied with the way the interview went? Why do you say that? *Probe for reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction.*
- Drawing on specific examples/subjects from the interview, ask whether researcher observations/judgements were perceived similarly by claimant e.g. ‘What did you think about the advisers approach/tone/style when they asked you about...or The adviser seemed quite friendly/helpful/challenging etc. when they asked about...your childcare requirements/health/job search...what did you think?’
- Do you understand why the adviser asked all the questions they asked? Why do you think they took this approach?
- Do you feel as though the adviser understands your situation? Do you think the adviser listened to you?
- Do you think the discussion today and any actions identified will help you get back to work/move towards work?
- Is there anything else you’d like to say about the interview and the support you are getting from [name of provider]?
- What will you do now? Do you ever stay at the provider premises and do other things? Probe on claimants use of WP provider premises, drop-ins, IT, etc.? Any sense in which claimants stay on the premises to do job search etc.
- What is going to happen in the next few weeks? Are you clear about the next steps?

Follow-up interviews with advisers

- How do you think the interview went?
- What were the main aims of this interview? What was the anticipated outcome?
- Thinking of the approach taken with the claimant [researchers to check their perceptions], you seemed to be quite directive/encouraging, etc. when you were discussing x, y, z...Why did you take this approach with [claimant]? What were you hoping to achieve?
- [Check perceptions of claimant responses e.g.] *'The claimant seemed quite apprehensive/confrontational/unresponsive/positive when you were discussing x, y, z. Would you agree? Why do you think they were like this'.*
- You discussed the claimant's barriers to work during the interview. How will you address these barriers in the future/are you satisfied that the actions identified will help to overcome these barriers?
- Why didn't you discuss the claimant's barriers to work?
- What are the main reasons for taking this course of action [observed]/not taking any action with this claimant?
- Do you think the participant understands what will happen next/in the next few weeks?
- On reflection, would you have done anything differently during this interview if you were to do it again?

Work Programme Observations (write-up)

Date:

Researcher:

Ref/code:

Background/participant characteristics (if any info gleaned)

e.g. demographics, labour market experience, human capital, length of time on WP, etc.

Subjects/issues covered during the interview

Skills screening

How was this done? In-depth or light-touch, explicitly or discreetly, how was it explained, etc.

Barriers – raised

e.g. health, caring responsibilities etc? How were they raised/addressed by the adviser?

Other topics covered by the interview

e.g. finances/debts, job search activity, caring responsibilities, etc.

Interaction between the adviser and the claimant

e.g. adviser approach/style e.g. challenging, claimant-focused, encouraging discussion, engaging, process-driven, disengaged, etc. How were participants encouraged to take up activities/look for work/find work opportunities? How did the claimant react, were they forthcoming with information, active in the interview or were they withdrawn? Participant response e.g. engaged, non-communicative, obstructive, confused, etc.

Non-verbal cues

e.g. body language, eye-contact etc.

Tailoring

Was the interview tailored to participants' needs? Was the interview open from the start? Did the adviser react to information given by the claimant? Was the outcome of the interview predetermined in anyway?

Use of tools

e.g. did the adviser use any tools to assess the participant's needs – what software programme, how long did it take, what happened to the results? Use of IT/computers during the programme.

Referrals

e.g. was the claimant referred to any activities/courses/provision/employer engagement or jobs teams – what was the process of the referral? How was the decision to refer made, and by whom? How much information was given about the activities/provision/jobs they are being referred to? How was info given e.g. leaflets, referred to websites etc.

Next steps

e.g. were there any actions for the adviser or claimant to undertake after the interview? How were these agreed and were they recorded? Is any information relayed to Jobcentre Plus/other organisations? How? Why?

How long was the interview? Did interview start on time?

Note office/interview location e.g. WP branding, privacy, open plan etc.

Other issues/observations:

2 Participant qualitative research tools

Client opt-out letter



«Name»

Heslington, York, YO10 5DD

«Address»

Telephone: (01904) 321950

Fax: (01904) 321953

«Postcode»

Website: www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru

Dear «Name»

Email: roy.sainsbury@york.ac.uk

Research to find out about your experiences of the Work Programme

I am writing to you to ask for your help in a research study that has been requested by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The aim of this research is to find out about people's experiences of the Work Programme and how it is helping people find work. Your name has been selected from records of people who have recently started the Work Programme. We would like to speak to you to hear more about your experiences of support from the organisation that delivers the programme in your area.

The research is being conducted on DWP's behalf by a team of independent researchers at the Social Policy Research Unit and the Institute for Employment Studies. The purpose of the research is to find out what you think of the help offered by the Work Programme and whether it has made any difference to you. We are interested in everything you have to say, whatever your circumstances and thoughts are about working.

Please find enclosed an information leaflet about the research study. I hope you find it useful.

In a few weeks, a member of the research team may get in touch with you to ask if you are willing to participate in a face-to-face interview. Please be assured that taking part is voluntary and is for research purposes only; it will not affect any benefit you receive or any dealings you have with any government department or agency, now or in the future.

If you choose to take part, the researcher will discuss a convenient time and place to meet, and any special requirements you may have which will make it easier for you to take part. The interview is expected to last around 60 minutes. Any information you provide will be held in the strictest confidence and will be handled securely throughout the study. The research findings will not identify you and no personal information will be shared with any third parties.

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Ideally, we want to understand people's changing experiences over the course of a year or so. This means we would like to talk to you now, six months from now and finally, in one year's time.

Everyone who is interviewed will be given £20 as a token of thanks for their help at the first interview, and a further £15 after each of the second and third interviews, which we will carry out by telephone. Any travel costs you incur can be claimed at each interview.

I hope that if contacted by a researcher you do decide to take part in the study. If you **do not** wish to take part please let us know. You can either:

- fill in the attached form and return it in the pre-paid envelope;
- telephone Roy Sainsbury on 01904 321951; or
- send an email to roy.sainsbury@york.ac.uk.

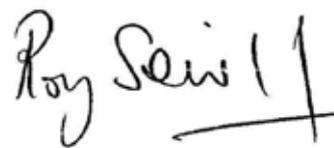
If you would like to talk to someone to find out more about this research, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Roy.

Your participation will provide us with valuable information that will help us to improve the support provided to help people find work so we hope you decide to take part.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Garlick
Department for Work and Pensions



Roy Sainsbury
Social Policy Research Unit

Encs.

Work Programme information sheet

The Government has introduced the Work Programme to help people find and stay in work. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has asked a group of research organisations led by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to evaluate the Work Programme to see whether it works or not. Other organisations involved in the research are: the Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU), and the National Institute for Social and Economic Research (NIESR).

The evaluation will look at the delivery and success of the Work Programme by asking participants about their experiences and finding out what happens to them during and after participation. The research will look at people's journeys through the programme, from beginning to end. It will try to find out what people think about the help they have received – the relevance and helpfulness of the support, and outcomes from the programme as a whole, for example, jobs and qualifications.

The main questions of interest are:

- What services do providers deliver to Work Programme participants and how do they deliver them?
- What happens to people and where do they go after they have been on the Work Programme?
- How quickly do people find a job and how long do they stay in work?

Staff from the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) are leading the research in your area and have approached you to take part. If you are worried or have any questions about this please ask the researcher or contact us by phone (see contact details overleaf).

All information collected will be kept by the research team and will remain confidential until it is destroyed. No research papers or reports will name you or identify you in any way. Even though we are doing this work for the DWP, no information that could identify you will be shared with the Department.

Before starting your interview we need you to confirm your voluntary agreement to take part. This will be a form to sign when our researchers meets you. Your consent confirms that you:

- Have received and understood the research information sheet and have had time to decide whether or not you want to participate.
- Understand that taking part is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without there being a penalty of any kind.
- Understand that SPRU, IES and NIESR are doing this work for DWP, and that findings from the interviews will be shared with researchers at DWP and other research organisations involved in the evaluation, but that no information that could identify you will be shared with DWP.
- Are aware that any research publications, reports and other documents will not name or in any other way identify you.
- Understand that any information generated by the research will be held securely and disposed of in accordance with DWP guidelines.

labelling the interview

Your contribution will provide us with valuable information that will help us to evaluate the Work Programme and we do hope that you take part. If you want to withdraw from the interview we have booked with you, we would be grateful if you would telephone to advise us of this in advance if at all possible. Please telephone:

Karen Patient (Project Administrator – IES)

 020 7104 2071

 karen.patient@employment-studies.co.uk

For further information about this research project, please contact:

Becci Newton (Project Manager – IES)

 Institute for Employment Studies, Sovereign House, Church Street, Brighton BN1 1UJ

 01273 763400

 becci.newton@employment-studies.co.uk

Research participant consent

This form should be completed by the researcher and participants before any interviews take place.

Project Name: Evaluation of the Work Programme

Commissioned by: Department for Work and Pensions

Researcher name: _____

Research organisation: IES/SPRU

Interview ref no: _____

I confirm that I have been supplied with and have read and understood a Research Brief for the project and have had time to decide whether or not I want to participate. I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I am free to stop the interview at any time, without giving a reason and without there being a penalty of any sort.

The researcher has explained to me that the Institute for Employment Studies (IES)/Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU) are doing the research for the Department for Work and Pensions but that no information that could identify me will be shared between these organisations. I have been made aware that any recordings and notes from the discussion will remain confidential with only the research team at IES/SPRU having access to them and will be destroyed at the end of the project.

I agree with the Institute for Employment Studies/Social Policy Research Unit using any personal information only for this research and realise that this may involve the research team recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will only be used for this research. I understand that should I wish to I can withdraw my consent for my information to be used for this research after the interview is completed by contacting the telephone number provided on the research briefing.

I understand that when a research report is produced from this research that my words may be quoted in papers, reports, web pages and other published documents, but my name will not be used.

Signature of participant: _____

I can confirm that I have explained the nature of the research to the above named participant and have given adequate time to answer any questions concerning it.

Signature of researcher: _____

Date:

Stage 1 Topic Guide

Work Programme Evaluation Claimant Study

(Longitudinal Panel)

Initial Interview Topic Guide

Stage One – Early engagement

The aims of the first interview in the longitudinal study are to:

- provide information about the claimant's personal background and circumstances;
- explore their work history and current attitudes towards work;
- explore transition from Jobcentre Plus to Work Programme;
- explore early experiences of Work Programme provider;
- understand their expectations and aspirations regarding work and their participation in the Work Programme.

- Introduce self, the evaluation and organisations involved (SPRU, IES, NIESR).
- Remind respondent that he/she was selected because they are recent new participants in the Work Programme. This is the government's new programme to help people back to work. [PROVIDER] is one of the organisations with a contract to provide back to work services.
- Explain that [PROVIDER] was asked to let us have the names of people who were new clients in the week commencing [INSERT DATES]. The aim is to follow a group of people from starting the new programme over the course of a year.
- In order to track their involvement and any changes we would also like to speak to them **on the telephone** in six months time and in a further six months time.
- Explain a payment of £20 is given for this interview and £10 for the follow up telephone interviews.
- **CHECK WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN FURTHER INTERVIEWS.**
- This interview will focus on their:
 - employment experience and current employment situation;
 - thoughts about work;
 - recent experiences with Jobcentre Plus;
 - future involvement with the Work Programme;
 - overall impressions so far and expectations for the future.
- This will help judge if the new programme is working or not and identify what is really helping and what is not, and how improvements could be made.
- Stress independence of evaluation from DWP.
- Explain about confidentiality. If respondent happy, ask them to sign consent form. Explain about recording and length of discussion – seek permission.

A Background and personal circumstances

A.1 I would like to begin by asking for some basic information about yourself and your family

- Can you tell me your age?
- Who lives with you? Any children? How old are they?
- Do you have any other caring responsibilities?
- Is this your house/flat/etc or is it rented?
- What are your main sources of income (including benefits)?
- And finally, can you tell me what educational qualifications you have?

Briefing note

We are looking for basic information here – no need to probe (except for benefits).

The answers will contribute to understanding attitudes to working and decisions taken.

The question about education has been added – we are looking for people’s HIGHEST qualification only.

The part of DWP with responsibility for policy on drug and alcohol users is keen that we identify these people in the analysis. Be on the lookout therefore for people who mention things like hostel accommodation or health and related issues later in the interview (for example in discussions about barriers to work).

B Before the Work Programme

Employment history; experiences of Jobcentre Plus

B.1 Can I just check your employment situation at the moment? Are you working at all?

Briefing note

Do not probe. This is a check. Some people may be in work by the time of this interview. If so, continue anyway. We still want their story. Some subsequent question wording will need amending.

B.2 And can I just check that you are now with [NAME OF PROVIDER]?

Briefing note

Name of provider may not be familiar, especially if respondent is in touch with a sub contractor. The answer here will alert us to what stage they are at in the journey. DWP in-house work so far has found examples (e.g. no-one knows about NCG – they all know Pertemps though). Please consult website <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wp-supply-chains.pdf>. It is lengthy but every subcontractor is there.

NB People in work should still be in contact with provider.

B.3 I have some questions about your experiences of [NAME OF PROVIDER/SUB CONTRACTOR AS APPROPRIATE] but can I first ask you about the time before then. When did you last do any paid work? What was your last job?

B.4 [REFER TO LAST JOB IF APPROPRIATE] And is that the sort of work you normally do?

- If not, ask what respondent would consider their normal employment.

Briefing note

We are looking here for a brief employment history. How long have they been out of work? Are they professional, skilled, manual? They might not have a 'normal' occupation at all. We will begin to get an idea of the type of claimants referred by Jobcentre Plus.

B.5 And before you started with [PROVIDER] were you in contact the jobcentre at all? How long was that?

Briefing note

We have used 'the jobcentre' throughout because our experience is that this is most commonly used by claimants. But use whatever reference is appropriate to the respondents whether it is Jobcentre Plus, the social, or the name of a building.

Some people will refer to signing on regularly; others will have had less contact. Some might respond that they are still in touch with Jobcentre Plus. It's the period before starting with the provider that we are interested in here though. We do not want precise dates/times but we do want to know to differentiate really new claimants from long term claimants (over a year) and very long term claimants (say five years or more).

B.6 Can you tell me a bit about the time you spent with the jobcentre? What did you do during this time? What was happening?

- Was there anything else important happening in relation to getting back to work?

Briefing note

We are interested in whether people have had experience of previous employment programmes, such as Flexible New Deal or Pathways to Work, but we are not intending to make comparisons in the analysis (partly because numbers will be very small but mainly because that is not the focus of the evaluation). It is not necessary to probe experiences of other programmes therefore.

B.7 What did you think of the service you received from the jobcentre? Was it satisfactory?

- Probe for what they were pleased with and what they were disappointed with.

Briefing note

Answers to questions B.6 and B.7 will provide a benchmark against which we can analyse the experiences of the Work Programme. We are looking for sufficient detail therefore to enable us to make such comparisons. For example: what, if any, help did they get? Training? Work experience? Skills assessment? Anything else? Was it any good? Was personal adviser in Jobcentre Plus helpful?

Asking about ‘anything else important’ in B.6 is aimed at understanding whether people’s health, financial situation (for example debt), housing or something else was affecting their attempts to get into work.

C Transition between Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme

Briefing note

There is interest in referral and handover procedures and practices between Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme providers. Are they working well? Do claimants have a good experience? How is motivation affected by starting afresh with a new organisation?

C.1 How did you first learn about [NAME OF PROVIDER]? Did someone in the jobcentre explain who they were and what would happen while you were with them?

- Probe for what information they were given – how much was verbal or written?
- Were they happy with this? Did they understand everything?
- Did they know what information would be passed to the provider? What did they think about this?

Briefing note

Claimants should have a ‘Referral Interview’ in Jobcentre Plus, although they might not recognise or remember the term. We want to know how Jobcentre Plus staff prepare claimants for being passed on to a Work Programme provider. It is also possible that participants will already know the provider/ have had an earlier experience of undertaking training with the provider.

C.2 What happened next – were you given an appointment, or did you have to make contact, or did [PROVIDER] contact you?

- If there was a ‘warm handover’ probe for views about this.

Briefing note

Jobcentre Plus can ease the transition to a provider in different ways. We are particularly interested in the ‘warm handover’. What did this entail? Telephone conversation arranged by provider; visit with PA to provider?

Was this welcome? Helpful? What difference did it make?

It may become apparent in answer to this question that the provider does not offer a face-to-face meeting but carries out telephone conversations (at least initially). The later question about the ‘first meeting’ will therefore need to be modified to reflect this.

C.3 Let’s talk about your first meeting (telephone consultation) with [PROVIDER]. How long was it between [REFERRAL INTERVIEW] and that meeting?

C.4 And where did it take place?

- Did you have any problems getting there? Probe for details.

Briefing note

We are interested in location; availability of public transport; clarity of directions – not whether they missed the bus.

C.5 I'm interested in how you were feeling about work at this point when you were moving between the jobcentre and [PROVIDER].

- Probe: did you want to work?
- Probe: did you feel able to work?

Briefing note

This question is intended to start a discussion about motivation and distance from the labour market. Asking about whether the respondent **wants** to work and feels **able** to work is important. We will track changes in motivation at various stages in this longitudinal study.

We are interested in what barriers people perceive in getting paid work. These may arise naturally in the discussion but if not the next question can be asked.

C.6 Again thinking about when you moved from the jobcentre to [PROVIDER] was there anything stopping you from working at that time?

- Probe for details.
- Was there a **main** barrier to working?
- What help did you want/need to get into work?

Briefing note

We know about many of the barriers that people say prevent or hinder them looking for work. Expect to hear about (a) personal factors such as health, lack of skills and experience, childcare and caring responsibilities, debt, housing situation, criminal record, travel, and (b) external labour market factors such as few/no opportunities in the area. Some people will talk about potential earnings being too low - 'it's not worth me working'.

In asking about a **main** barrier we might be able to identify something that if it changed then working becomes a much greater possibility. For example, dealing with a health problem or clearing debts.

C.7 Did you have any job goals, or hopes, at this stage?

C.8 And how would you sum up how close you were to getting into work at this stage?

Briefing note

The responses here will help us assess the progress made by the time of the research interview and whether the things they have done match their aspirations.

D Early experiences of the Work Programme

D.1 Let's talk now about your experiences of [PROVIDER]. Can I just return to that first meeting – can you tell me what you talked about?

- Prompt: Did they ask you about your personal circumstances?
- Probe for discussion about job goals and things that may be preventing them from finding or starting jobs of this type.
- Probe for discussion about skills.
- Probe for any assessments carried out? How were these done?

Briefing note

DWP are particularly interested in skills assessments and responding to skills deficits.

Other topics will be undoubtedly mentioned, but if **conditionality and sanctions** arise use the probes to the next question to explore further. If not, ask the question D.2.

NB Try to ascertain what the respondent calls the provider staff member (adviser?). It will be useful in asking later questions.

D.2 In your discussion with [staff member] was it mentioned what your responsibilities were from then onwards – what you are required to do, or might be required to do? Was it explained what would happen if you didn't do something?

- Probe for understanding of conditionality and sanctions – including actual levels of sanctions
- What are their views about conditionality and sanctions?
- Probe for effects on behaviour.

Briefing note

Answers here will add to our understanding of the effects of conditionality and sanctions. Do they promote intended behaviour change? Or are they counterproductive, by damaging the relationship between provider and claimant? Do people undertake activities only to prevent sanctions (i.e. activities not relevant to their search for work)?

D.3 At that first meeting did you make any decisions about next steps?

- Probe for whether an Action Plan was agreed. What was in it?
- Probe for views about Action Plan.

Briefing note

NB There is no DWP definition of an Action Plan or what it has to contain. Providers may use a different term.

D.5 How do you think this meeting went?

- Probe for positive and negative views?
- Probe: did you feel able to discuss everything openly with [staff member]?

Briefing note

The second probe is of particular interest to the drug and alcohol policy branch in DWP, but it is also of wider relevance where there might be sensitivities about health or caring responsibilities for example or previous offending.

- D.6 I asked earlier about how you were feeling about work at the point you moved between the jobcentre and [PROVIDER]. Can I ask you how you were feeling after meeting [PROVIDER]? Were you more, or less [POSITIVE/OPTIMISTIC/ NEGATIVE/PESSIMISTIC]?

Briefing note

DWP are interested in whether claimants are reinvigorated (or not) about looking for work by starting with a new organisation.

- D.7 Since that first meeting how many times have you been in contact? Has that been face-to-face or telephone or in some other way?

Briefing note

We want to get a sense of how business is being conducted between provider and claimant. What is the frequency and balance between face-to-face meetings and other forms of contact?

- D.8 We've concentrated so far on your early contact with [PROVIDER] – can I ask now about anything else that has happened? For example, some people are referred to other people in the same organisation for specific help or to an outside organisation for some specialist input or something is arranged with an employer? What about your experience?

Briefing note

We are looking to benchmark where the claimant is on their journey back to work so that we can pick up the story in the follow up interviews. We are not looking at this stage for an in depth account of each intervention.

E Views so far of the Work Programme

- E.1 Can I ask a final few questions about your overall views about [PROVIDER] so far? What has been particularly good or not so good so far?
- E.2 How does your experience so far compare with the help you got from the jobcentre in looking for work?
- E.3 Has the help from [PROVIDER] built on what you did with the jobcentre? Or did you feel like it was starting again from scratch?

Briefing note

Refer as appropriate to previous responses about, for example, taking part in training/work experience/confidence building/etc.

- E.4 What hopes or expectations do you have about work at this point? How do you want [PROVIDER] to help you next?

E.5 And finally, I asked earlier about how you were feeling about work at the time you moved between the jobcentre and [PROVIDER]. How are you feeling now?

Briefing note

We have asked this question twice already - at the point of moving to the provider (C.5) and after their first encounter with the Work Programme (D.6). Asking again here (covering the period up to the time of this interview) will show if there is any change in thoughts about work in the early weeks of contact with provider.

END OF INTERVIEW

Thank you very much.

Remind about confidentiality and use of the data.

Confirm availability to participate in further interviews at six months and 12 months.

Explain we will write nearer the time and then telephone. **The follow up interview will be by telephone.**

CHECK TELEPHONE NUMBER(S).

Participants to sign for £20 (if not dealt with earlier)

Explain that further gift of £10 will be sent after each subsequent interview.

Stage 2 Topic Guide

Work Programme Evaluation – Claimant Study

Stage Two – Ongoing engagement

Topic Guide

The aims of the interview are to:

- provide information about the claimant’s personal background and circumstances;
 - explore their work history and current attitudes towards work;
 - explore transition from Jobcentre Plus to Work Programme;
 - explore experiences of Work Programme provider;
 - understand their expectations and aspirations regarding work and their participation in the Work Programme.
- Introduce self, the evaluation and organisations involved (SPRU, IES, NIESR).
 - Remind respondent that he/she was selected because they are with [PROVIDER] one of the organisations with a contract to provide back to work services as part of the Work Programme, the government’s new programme to help people back to work.
 - Explain that [PROVIDER] was asked to let us have the names of people who were new clients in the week commencing [INSERT DATES]. This was four or five months ago so our understanding is that respondent will have been involved in some sort of activity to help them get back to work. The aim is to interview a group of people about:
 - their thoughts about work;
 - their experiences of [PROVIDER] and about moving towards work;
 - future involvement with the Work Programme;
 - and their overall impression of their involvement so far and expectations for the future.
 - This will contribute to understanding if the new programme is working well or not and identify what is really helping and what is not, and how improvements could be made.
 - Stress independence of evaluation from DWP.
 - Explain the payment of £20 will be sent by recorded delivery.
 - Explain about confidentiality. If respondent happy, explain about recording and length of discussion. TURN ON RECORDER NOW – seek permission to continue. CONSENT NEEDS TO BE ON RECORDING.

Background and personal circumstances

- A.1 I would like to begin by asking for some basic information about yourself and your family
- Can you tell me your age?
 - Who lives with you? Any children? How old are they?

- Do you have any other caring responsibilities?
- Is this your house/flat/etc, or is it rented?
- Which benefits are you getting?
- What are your main sources of income (including benefits)?
- And finally, can you tell me what educational qualifications you have?

Briefing note

We are looking for basic information here – no need to probe (except for benefits).

The answers will contribute to understanding attitudes to working and decisions taken.

The question about education has been added – we are looking for people’s HIGHEST qualification only.

The part of DWP with responsibility for drug and alcohol users is keen that we identify these people in the analysis. Be on the lookout therefore for people who mention things like hostel accommodation or health and related issues later in the interview (for example in discussions about barriers to work).

B Before the Work Programme: Employment history; transition from Jobcentre Plus

- B.1 I have questions about your experiences of [NAME OF PROVIDER/SUB CONTRACTOR AS APPROPRIATE] but can I first ask you about the time before then. As I mentioned our information is that you have been with [PROVIDER] since [DATE]. But before that when did you last have a paid job? What was your last job?
- B.2 [REFER TO LAST JOB IF APPROPRIATE] And is that the sort of work you normally do?
- If not, ask what respondent would consider their normal employment.

Briefing note

We are looking here for a brief employment history. Are they professional, skilled, manual? They might not have a ‘normal’ occupation at all. We will begin to get an idea of the type of people providers will be faced with.

- B.3 I’m interested in how you were feeling about work at the point when you were moving between the jobcentre and [PROVIDER].
- Probe: did you **want** to work?
 - Probe: did you **feel able** to work?

Briefing note

This question is intended to start a discussion about motivation and distance from the labour market. Asking about whether the respondent wants to work and feels able to work is important.

We are interested in what barriers people perceive in getting paid work. These may arise naturally in the discussion but if not the next question can be asked.

We have used ‘the jobcentre’ throughout because our experience is that this is most commonly used by claimants. But use whatever reference is appropriate to the respondents whether it is Jobcentre Plus, the social, or the name of a building.

B.4 Again thinking about when you started with the jobcentre to [PROVIDER] was there anything stopping you from working at that time?

- Probe for details.
- Was there a **main** barrier to working?

Briefing note

We know about many of the barriers that people say prevent or hinder them looking for work. Expect to hear about (a) personal factors such as health, lack of skills and experience, childcare and caring responsibilities, debt, housing situation, criminal record, travel, and (b) external labour market factors such as few/no opportunities in the area. Some people will talk about potential earnings being too low - ‘it’s not worth me working’.

In asking about a **main** barrier we might be able to identify something that if it changed then working becomes a much greater possibility. For example, dealing with a health problem or clearing debt.

B.5 Did you have any job goals, or hopes, at this stage?

B.6 And how would you sum up how close you were to getting a job of this kind or work of any kind at this stage?

Briefing note

‘Job goals’ may be a bit of jargon, but they may have heard it from Jobcentre Plus or providers. Be ready to paraphrase.

The responses here will help us assess the progress made by the time of the research interview and whether the things they have done match their aspirations.

C Overview of journey so far

Briefing note

We expect enormous variation in people’s journeys. Initially therefore it is sensible to get an overview of what has happened to the respondent over the past four to five months. Based on this it may be necessary to concentrate on some parts of the story only. The ‘engagement map’ can be used to capture the story and serve as useful reference during the interview.

C.1 Can you give me a summary of what has happened since [DATE OF REFERRAL]? Shall we start with your first meeting with [PROVIDER] – who did you meet?

- Probe: How often have you seen [NAME]? So in total that would be about... [SUGGEST ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF TIMES]

C.2 And who else have you seen?

- And why did you see them?

C.3 And have you been doing other things relevant to getting back to work?

- Prompt: have you been looking for work; applying for jobs?
- Prompt: have you done any training?
- Prompt: have you had any job interviews?
- Prompt: anything connected to your health?
- Prompt: anything else?

Briefing note

Use the questions above flexibly to complete the 'engagement map'. We want to collect data on anything that has been relevant to people's attempts to move closer and into work. Other factors, not just the Work Programme, may be important.

D Experiences and views of Work Programme

Briefing note

Within the constraints of a 45 minute research interview it will not be possible to ask depth questions about every aspect of the client's experience. The questions below are intended to identify what worked and in what circumstances, who was influential in helping people and explore some key questions of interest to DWP, such as the use of conditionality/sanctions, and creaming and parking.

The first question is aimed at generating data on the input and impact of the principal provider, meaning the one that has the main contact. This might be, but might not be, the prime provider. We would expect them to be orchestrating the help in some way, have regular/occasional meetings, and manage the Action Plan.

D.1 Thank you for giving me a broad picture of what has been happening in the past few months. Can I ask a few more detailed questions now? [REFER TO PRINCIPAL PROVIDER] – You mentioned that you have been seeing [NAME]. How did you find working with them?

- Probe for ways in which they have been helpful.
- How did you keep in contact? Did that suit you?
- Did they meet your requirements/respond to your aspirations?
- Was there anything you didn't like about your contact with them?
- Probe: did you feel able to discuss everything openly with [staff member]?

Briefing note

The last probe is of particular interest to the drug and alcohol policy branch in DWP, but it is also of wider relevance where there might be sensitivities about health or caring responsibilities for example or previous offending.

D.2 You also mentioned you saw [NAME OF CONTACT/ORGANISATION]. How did you find working with them?

- Probe for ways in which they have been helpful.
- Did they meet your requirements/respond to your aspirations?
- Was there anything you didn't like about your contact with them?

Briefing note

If the client had had several contacts with different people we should repeat D.2 accordingly. If contact has come to an end probe for the outcome – for example, any qualifications? If people have been moved between staff – ask how respondent felt about this.

D.3 Have you thought about the financial implications of working? Has anyone discussed these with you?

Briefing note

We know that one barrier to working is the perception that people will not be better off. These questions explore whether the financial impact of working was an issue for them and whether they received any advice about benefits and tax credits, including a 'Better off Calculation'.

D.4 Did you have any problems getting to [locations of contacts], with travel or access for example?

- Probe for reasons.

Briefing note

DWP are interested in this question.

D.5 Throughout the whole process was an 'Action Plan' used at all?

- Probe for whether an Action Plan was agreed. What was in it? How was it used?
- Probe for views about Action Plan.

Briefing note

Be prepared to explain what an 'Action Plan' is. Suggest a written document with agreed next steps, goals, etc. It may not exist or it might be referred to by another name. Also we do not know who draws up Action Plans in practice – the Prime or subcontractor for example or someone else. It is possible that a claimant may have experience of more than one Action Plan from different organisations.

D.6 Again, thinking back across the past 4-5 months, have you felt under any pressure from anyone to do anything?

- Probe for experience of pressure? Who exerted pressure? How much pressure? Was it appropriate?
- Have you done anything you didn't want to do?
 - Explore reasons, including role of sanctions.

Briefing note

We are interested in the extent to which people have felt pressured to do (possibly inappropriate) activities, and how this pressure is exerted including the threat/use of sanctions.

D.7 And have you decided not to take up any suggestions of help or any services offered?

- Probe for reasons.
- Explore consequences, including role of sanctions.

Briefing note

We are interested in the extent to which claimants are turning down or refusing offers or opportunities of help, and whether providers are using their powers to oblige people to undertake activities (including the threat or use of sanctions).

E Views so far of the Work Programme

E.1 Can I ask a final few questions about your overall views so far? I asked earlier about how you were feeling about work at the time you moved between the jobcentre and [PROVIDER]. How are you feeling now?

- Do you feel closer to work than four or five months ago?
- What has been particularly good or not so good so far?
- Has anything really helped? Or been a problem?
- Probe for any feeling of NOT getting the help wanted.

Briefing note

We are interested in how people talk about the input from provider. If they do not mention them, check with them, for example by asking 'you haven't mentioned [PROVIDER]'.

E.2 You've told me about [summarise activities recorded in engagement map]. Did this all fit together?

Briefing note

This question explores the extent to which people felt the various things they had done were coherent/joined up with a clear purpose in mind. Or rather were they a series of unconnected activities that felt like activity for its own sake (which may have been their choice – i.e. to demonstrate compliance – or at the insistence of the provider)?

Answers here and to questions in D.1 and D.2 about how the input from provider suited them will help us explore the issue of **personalisation** (which we expect to be one of the themes we write about in the meta report).

E.3 How does your experience so far compare with the help you got from the jobcentre in looking for work?

E.4 What hopes or expectations do you have this point? How do you want [PROVIDER] to help you next?

Briefing note

It is suggested these questions could be run together because the answer to the first might include reference to the provider. For example 'I hope that [PROVIDER] will....' However they could equally be asked separately.

END OF INTERVIEW

Thank you very much.

Remind about confidentiality and use of the data.

Remind that payment of £20 will be sent by recorded delivery. This will include a receipt and an SAE. Ask that they sign and return it.

Engagement map

Organisations involved/ other activity	Relationship to prime	Role/Names of people	Chronology
PRIME			One meeting October 2011
Pertemps	Referral by prime		Regular 2 weekly meetings, started in November 2011
CVs R Us			December 2011 – one session
OH 4 Work			February 2012, 2 times
Tesco	Arranged by Pertemps	Work experience – 2 weeks – cheese counter	March 2012
OTHER ACTIVITY			
Job searching			Only started in March 2012
Treatment for depression		GP – Dr Harris	Ongoing
PRIME			
OTHER ACTIVITY			

Stage 3 Topic Guide

Work Programme Evaluation Claimant Study

Stage Three – Job entry

Topic Guide

The aims of the interview are to:

- provide information about the claimant's personal background and circumstances;
- explore their work history and early experiences of Work Programme;
- explore their entry into work;
- understand their expectations and aspirations regarding their future and engagement with the Work Programme.

- Introduce self, the evaluation and organisations involved (SPRU, IES, NIESR).
- Remind respondent that he/she was selected because they are with [PROVIDER] one of the organisations with a contract to provide back to work services to social security recipients as part of the Work Programme, the government's new programme to help people back to work.
- Explain that [PROVIDER] was asked to let us have the names of people who had recently started work. The aim is to interview a group of people about:
 - their thoughts about work;
 - their experiences of [PROVIDER] and about moving into work;
 - future involvement with the Work Programme; and
 - their overall impression of their involvement so far and expectations for the future
- This will contribute to understanding if the new programme is working well or not and identify what is really helping and what is not, and how improvements could be made.
- Stress independence of evaluation from DWP
- Explain the payment of £20 will be sent by recorded delivery.
- Explain about confidentiality. If respondent happy, explain about recording and length of discussion. TURN ON RECORDER NOW – seek permission to continue. CONSENT NEEDS TO BE ON RECORDING.

A Background and personal circumstances

A.1 I would like to begin by asking for some basic information about yourself and your family

- Can you tell me your age?
- Who lives with you? Any children? How old are they?
- Do you have any other caring responsibilities?
- Is this your house/flat/etc, or is it rented?

- What are your main sources of income? (Probe for benefits and tax credits.)
- And finally, can you tell me what educational qualifications you have?

Briefing note

We are looking for basic information here – no need to probe.

The answers will contribute to understanding attitudes to working and decisions taken.

The question about education has been added – we are looking for people’s HIGHEST qualification only.

The part of DWP with responsibility for drug and alcohol users is keen that we identify these people in the analysis. Be on the lookout therefore for people who mention things like hostel accommodation or health and related issues later in the interview (for example in discussions about barriers to work).

B Job entry

Briefing note

Our view is that it is better to ask questions immediately about the new job rather than explore their journey chronologically (as in the Stage 1 and 2 interviews). Respondents will probably be happier to talk about something positive in their lives and their thoughts about the job will not be coloured by prior questions about the Work Programme provider. Also, if time becomes an issue as the interview progresses we will at least have asked about the main focus of the interview.

B.1 Explain that we are interested in their new job and have some detailed questions in a moment, but first we just want to know what the job is. So, who are you working for? What is the job? When did you start?

- Prompt for type of work, hours.
- Is this temporary/permanent/fixed term?

Briefing note

We are not seeking details at this point because we don’t want to interrupt the flow of their story.

It is possible that the job has ended – amend wording accordingly but proceed with questions about the job and how they got it. Say that we will ask about leaving the job later.

B.2 How did you hear about this job?

Briefing note

We are interested in the extent to which providers are helping people find employment opportunities or whether they are finding work by themselves.

B.3 And what attracted you to the job?

- Probe: was it what you were looking for?
- Did you have any concerns about it?
- What did you think about the level of pay?

- Was childcare an issue? What did you do about it?
- Did you feel pressured in any way to apply? Probe.

Briefing note

We want to understand whether respondents are getting jobs that suit them or are for some reason taking less suitable jobs.

B.4 Once you knew about/had seen the vacancy, what happened next? Did you get any help in preparing your application or going for an interview?

Briefing note

If relevant we would like details on who provided help (was it the provider or some other key player?) Probe for what sort of help was provided (for example, CV preparation, interview practice, travel, and contact with employer).

B.5 Was the possibility or availability of in-work support discussed at any stage?

- Probe for details.

Briefing note

'In work support' may not be a familiar phrase to people. Be prepared to explain if necessary – mention that some providers phone up to check if things are OK, or have a number to call if problems arise.

B.6 Let's talk more about your job. You said you are... [SUMMARISE THE JOB]. Can you explain more about what that involves?

Briefing note

We just want enough information to know what type of work this is – professional, managerial, supervisory, skilled/unskilled, manual.

B.7 And how is the job going so far?

- Would you say you felt better off now in work? What do you think of your level of earnings?
- Does the job fit with any health issues you have?
- Are you getting in-work support?
- Any effect on other members of your family?
- Is travelling to work an issue?
- And is this the sort of work you normally do?
- Are there opportunities to progress in the job?

Briefing note

The aim of this series of questions in B.7 is to gather data on the aspects of a person's employment that are likely to influence sustainability. We want to be able to write about whether people are getting 'good work' (to use the language of Waddell and Burton). Members of the family might be affected, for example by being able to give up their job.

If respondent has left job amend the wording accordingly AND ask the reasons why they left.

- B.8 I am going to ask next about what you did before you started work, but can I just ask now if you are continuing with any training or anything else that you were doing that was organised by [PROVIDER]

Briefing note

DWP are interested in whether any form of service provision continues after someone starts work. Apparently colleges and training providers are being expected to deliver more flexible training including provision alongside work.

C Before job entry: Employment history; experience of the Work Programme

Briefing note

At this point we need to change the focus back to their employment/unemployment history.

- C.1 Can we now go back to before you got this job? Thinking back to your time with [PROVIDER}, when did you first start with them?
- C.2 And before that when were you last in paid employment?

Briefing note

Answers to C.2 will help us understand the extent to which the Work Programme is helping people who have been out of the labour market for long periods. A brief benefit history should be collected.

- C.3 I'm interested in how you were feeling about work at the point when you were just starting with [PROVIDER]. Were you positive about working?

Briefing note

This question is intended to start a discussion about motivation and distance from the labour market. We would want to generate data on (a) whether the claimant **wanted** to work, and (b) whether they felt **able** to work.

We are interested in what barriers people perceive in getting paid work. These may arise naturally in the discussion but if not the next question can be asked.

- C.4 Again thinking about when you started with [PROVIDER] was there anything stopping you from working at that time?
- Probe for details.
 - Was there a **main** barrier to working?

Briefing note

We know about many of the barriers that people say prevent or hinder them looking for work. Expect to hear about (a) personal factors such as health, lack of skills and experience, childcare and caring responsibilities, debt, housing situation, criminal record, travel, and (b) external labour market factors such as few/no opportunities in the area. Some people will talk about potential earnings being too low - 'it's not worth me working'.

In asking about a **main** barrier we might be able to identify something that if it changed then working becomes a much greater possibility. For example, dealing with a health problem or clearing debt.

C.5 Did you have any job goals, or hopes, at this stage? How did that change while you were with [PROVIDER]?

Briefing note

This question fits naturally here but it might prompt people to start discussing aspects of their journey (which is the subject of Section D next). If necessary therefore have the 'engagement map' ready to start filling in and adjust questioning about the journey as appropriate.

'Job goals' may be a bit of jargon, but they may have heard it from Jobcentre Plus or providers. Be ready to paraphrase.

C.6 And how would you sum up how close you were to getting into work at this stage? How did that change while you were with [PROVIDER]?

Briefing note

The responses to C.5 and C.6 will help us assess the changes that took place while the respondent was with the provider. Please probe for why the changes occurred. We are looking for evidence of the provider having an impact on motivation and job readiness.

D Overview of time with provider (the 'journey')

Briefing note

We expect enormous variation in people's journeys. Initially therefore it is sensible to get an overview of what has happened to the respondent over their time with provider. The 'engagement map' can be used to capture the story and serve as useful reference during the rest of the interview.

D.1 Can you give a summary of what has happened since [DATE OF REFERRAL]? Shall we start with your first meeting with [PROVIDER] – who did you meet?

- Probe: How often have you seen [NAME]? So in total that would be about... [SUGGEST ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF TIMES]

D.2 And who else have you seen?

- And why did you see them?

D.3 And have you been doing other things relevant to getting back to work?

- Prompt: have you been looking for work; applying for jobs?
- Prompt: anything connected to your health?

Briefing note

Use the questions above flexibly to complete the 'engagement map'.

E Views so far of the Work Programme

E.1 Finally, looking back over your experience of being out of work and now in work, can I ask you whether there was anything that stands out as particularly important in helping you get into work? Was there anything or anybody that made a real difference?

- Probe: Would you be in work if it wasn't for [PROVIDER]?

Briefing note

This is an attempt to address the counterfactual question. Please use the probe question. We want to be able to write about what difference the Work Programme has made and whether the respondent would have found work anyway?

E.2 You got a job when you were with [PROVIDER] but not when you were with the jobcentre. Why do you think that was?

Briefing note

We are looking here for any indication that the Work Programme is doing something Jobcentre Plus didn't. Or whether the reason for getting into work has nothing to do with either organisation but more the result of external (e.g. labour market) factors.

We have used 'the jobcentre' throughout because our experience is that this is most commonly used by claimants. But use whatever reference is appropriate to the respondents whether it is Jobcentre Plus, the social, or the name of a building.

E.3 How do you feel about the job so far? How do you see the future? How do you want [PROVIDER] to help you next?

END OF INTERVIEW

Thank you very much.

Remind about confidentiality and use of the data.

Remind that payment of £20 will be sent by recorded delivery. This will include a receipt and an SAE. Ask that they sign and return it.

3 Provider research tools

Wave 1 Topic Guide - Manager

Work Programme Evaluation Provider research

Wave 1 Topic Guide

WP providers

Manager

The aims of interviews with providers are to understand:

- referral of participants to providers and onwards, to specialist support;
- assessment and design of support packages;
- the participant journey and movement into work;
- sanctioning;
- payment structures.

- Introduce self and the evaluation.
- This interview will focus on (see box above).
- This will help judge if the new programme is working or not and identify what is really helping and what is not, and how improvements could be made.
- Stress independence of evaluation from DWP.
- Explain about confidentiality. Explain about recording and length of discussion – seek permission to record.

General background

This section is not to be recorded. A separate note should be made with a code assigned to the provider and interviewee and all data kept on encrypted file.

- Organisation.
- Address.
- Interviewee name.
- Position.
- Date.
- Interviewer.

START RECORDING

If not clear from job title: Could you briefly tell me what your role is (who you manage, their roles, including types of participants dealt with, advising, sanctioning, etc.)

Provision

For Q1, for prime and Tier 1 providers, much will be known from contracts.

1 What is your office's role in delivery of the Work Programme?

What services do you provide? Ensure identify if end-to-end.

Whether cater for all participants (what geographical area?) or specialise by type of participant (e.g. claimant group, personal/employment characteristics).

2 Is there a basic or minimum service offer for participants?

Does this vary by claimant group; or special needs? Why?

3 Are there standard packages of provision?

Does the standard package vary by claimant group; skills and qualifications; other characteristics? Why?/Why not?

To what extent can provision be tailored to individual needs?

4 Is there a maximum spend per participant?

Why?/Why not?

Does this vary by claimant group; or special needs? Why?

5 Is the cost of provision balanced across groups of participants (so if some have less costly provision others can have more costly provision)?

If yes, when would you give more support and when less? Why?

Get examples if this makes it clearer.

6 Is support focused on some claimant groups?

Which? Why?

Do you deliver anything specific for people with disabilities?

7 Does your organisation have formal strategies for engaging specific customer groups, for example, disabled people, people from ethnic minorities or other disadvantaged groups?

Information sessions

8 Does this office run information sessions to introduce potential and new participants to the WP?
IF NO GO TO REFERRAL.

9 Are these individual or group sessions?

10 Are there different sessions for different types of participants?

Which groups? Why?

11 How do participants respond to the sessions?

Are they keen to participate, do they have concerns?

Variation by claimant group, mandatory/voluntary, other characteristics.

Referral

These questions are aimed at establishing the quality of the hand-over to providers (from Jobcentre Plus/primes/tier 1s) and whether it can be described as ‘warm’.

12 Who refers participants to this office within the Work Programme?

Jobcentre Plus/Prime/other?

13 What information is received on referral?

Claimant group.

Mandatory or voluntary.

Other information on participant and their perceived needs; what information?

14 How useful is the referral information?

What are the problems?

The participant journey - initial

PROMPT FOR HOW AND WHY TREATMENT VARIES BY CLAIMANT GROUP, MANDATORY/VOLUNTARY, OTHER CHARACTERISTICS.

15 What happens on the first visit?

16 How is the support for each participant decided?

Identify the extent to which this is tailored to assessed needs or determined by certain characteristics (e.g. do all ex-offenders get a set package, do they deliver anything specific for people with disabilities?).

PROMPT FOR ROLE OF FOLLOWING:

- Participant’s choice.
- Participant’s aspirations.
- Costs of provision.
- Participant’s likely compliance.
- Judgment of likely outcomes.

17 IF ASSESSMENTS: What assessments are carried out?

By whom: specialist, PA, other.

How assessment is conducted, including tools (e.g. IT) used.

18 Does this result in an action plan?

Participant involvement in devising the action plan.

How the action plan is used, including sharing with other organisations.

19 Are action plans revised periodically?

When? Why?

20 Thinking about this initial process [first visit, decision over provision and assessments], how well do you feel this meets the needs of all your participants?

Which groups does it best and worst serve?

What are the problems?

Why don't you make changes so that you meet all groups' needs equally?

The participant journey – continuing

21 Do participants have a PA in your organisation?

IF NOT TIER 1: do they (also) have a PA in the referring organisation?

22 Do you aim for a participant to have the same PA throughout?

Why/why not?

23 How well do you feel this PA approach meets the needs of all your participants?

Which groups does it best and worst serve?

What are the problems?

Why don't you make changes so that you meet all groups' needs equally?

24 Do you use subcontractors for some provision?

When, what for, why?

What is the handover process (out and on return)?

How well does sub-contracting work? Any problems?

Does it work better for some groups (claimant type, other characteristics) than others? Why?

Why don't you make changes so that you meet all groups needs equally?

25 Other than these subcontractors, are participants referred on to other organisations?

When, what for, why?

What the process for this, including handover process?

How well does the handover process work?

26 What support is provided for Work Programme participants once they are in work?

Is there variation by claimant group and other characteristics, why?

Do you deliver anything specific for people with disabilities?

27 How well does in-work support work?

Variation by claimant group and other characteristics.

Problems, including participants' concerns.

Sanctioning

28 What is the internal process around referring for sanctioning?

Who makes the decision to refer for sanctioning?

29 What are the circumstances under which participants are referred to Jobcentre Plus for a sanction decision?

30 What affects whether you decide to refer someone for a sanction decision?

31 How well does the overall process work?

Internal processes.

Process involving Jobcentre Plus.

32 Since January 2012, roughly how many of your participants have you referred for sanctioning (INTERVIEWER: we just need an idea: number or proportion or percentage)

33 What are the issues for you when someone you refer for a possible sanction is not sanctioned by Jobcentre Plus (i.e. the participants gets a favourable decision)?

34 What happens to participants who are sanctioned for 26 weeks and who do not have to continue on the WP?

Are they encouraged to re-engage? Why?/Why not? How successfully?

Variation by claimant group and other characteristics.

35 Do you believe that sanctioning and the threat of sanctioning within the Work Programme is effective?

Why?/Why not?

Variation by claimant group and other characteristics.

36 What are the consequences of sanctioning for the organisation?

For costs.

For outcomes.

For dealing with participants (makes more difficult/easier).

Any variation by claimant group and other characteristics?

Does this affect the decision to refer for sanctioning?

Pay and incentives

37 I'd like now to turn to management and incentives. Is the performance of employees monitored?

38 What are the key measures?

Distinguish between:

- intermediate outcomes (e.g. contact, customer satisfaction, attendance);
- final outcomes: (e.g. job entry, job retention);
- other.

Any variation with claimant group and other characteristics?

39 Does performance on these measures affect pay?

Directly (e.g. payment by result, bonuses, increments).

Indirectly through promotion.

General views on provision within Work Programme

40 What do you think are the main barriers to employment faced by claimants referred to the WP?

Variation by claimant group and other characteristics.

41 What do you think have been the key factors determining successful movement into work?

Differences by claimant group and other characteristics.

42 What do you think have been the key factors in retaining participants in work?

Variation by claimant group and other characteristics

43 In terms of delivery of services to your WP participants, what aspects of the WP are working well?

And not so well?

44 Do you think that the Work Programme's financing model, paying for outputs, affects how you operate?

In what ways?

Does it focus support on some groups, which? why?

Does it create uncertainty over staffing and provision?

How much of your WP income is dependent on outcomes?

Do you think it affects which individuals are helped by your provision? Which and in what way?

45 Do you have any suggestions for changes in the way that performance targets are used within the WP?

46 Are there any other changes you think could be made to improve the programme?

47 Is there anything else you would like to say about the Work Programme, your involvement as an organisation and you personally?

Close interview: turn off recorder and thank them for taking part in the research.

Wave 1 Topic Guide – Providers

Wave 1 Topic Guide

WP providers

Personal Adviser/other deliverers

The aims of interviews with providers are to understand:

- referral of participants to providers and onwards, to specialist support;
- assessment and design of support packages;
- the participant journey and movement into work;
- sanctioning;
- payment structures.

- Introduce self and the evaluation.
- This interview will focus on (see box above).
- This will help judge if the new programme is working or not and identify what is really helping and what is not, and how improvements could be made.
- Stress independence of evaluation from DWP.
- Explain about confidentiality. Explain about recording and length of discussion – seek permission to record.

General background

This section is not to be recorded. A separate note should be made with a code assigned to the provider and interviewee and all data kept on encrypted file.

- Organisation.
- Address.
- Interviewee name.
- Position.
- Date.
- Interviewer.

START RECORDING

Respondent's role

- 1 Could you give me an overview of your role in support for WP participants?
- 2 Do you provide support for all types of participants or do you specialise in some groups – and which (e.g. claimant group, personal/employment characteristics)?

Decision on provision for new participants

Prompt for how and why treatment varies by claimant group, mandatory/voluntary, other characteristics.

- 3 Are you involved in deciding what support new participants receive? IF NO GO TO Q7
- 4 How do you decide what support a participant should receive?

Identify the extent to which this is tailored to assessed needs or determined by certain characteristics (e.g. do all ex-offenders get a set package, do they deliver anything specific for people with disabilities?).

PROMPT FOR ROLE OF FOLLOWING:

- participant's choice;
- participant's aspirations;
- costs of provision;
- participant's likely compliance;
- judgment of likely outcomes.

- 5 IF ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS: What assessments are carried out?

By whom: respondent, specialist assessor, other.

How assessment is conducted, including tools (e.g. IT) used.

- 6 Is referral information used in the decision?

What information do you use?/Why don't you use referral information?

Any problems?

- 7 ALL: How well do you feel the process of deciding provision meets the needs of your participants?

Which groups does it best and worst serve?

What are the problems?

What constraints are there on improvement?

Note: ensure disabled people are covered.

- 8 Are you involved in drawing up action plans for participants? IF NO GO TO Q10.

9 How do you draw these up?

Participant involvement in devising the action plan.

To what extent can you tailor provision to individual needs?

10 ALL: How do you use action plans?

Including sharing with other organisations.

11 Are action plans revised periodically?

When? Why?

Support

12 Once provision has been decided, what is your role?

For each stage of support/customer journey (including when with sub-contractors, pre-employment, in-work) identify:

- purpose of contact;
- typical amount and frequency of contact.

How these vary for different groups of participants (claimant type, other characteristics) and why?

13 How much freedom do you have to decide what to deliver to whom?

Does this vary by claimant group; skills and qualifications; other characteristics? Why?/Why not?

14 Do you prioritise particular participants?

Which types – why?

15 Once assigned to you, are participants expected to stay with you throughout their time on the WP?

IF YES, has this happened in practice? Why not?

IF NOT, when and why would they change?

Any variation for different groups of participants (claimant type, other characteristics)? Why?

How well has this worked?

Benefits/problems?

16 For your participants, is some provision sub-contracted?

When? What for? Why?

What is the handover process (out and on return)?

How well does sub-contracting work? Any problems?

17 Other than these sub-contractors, do you refer your participants on to other organisations?

When? What for? Why?

What the process for this, including handover process?

How well does the handover process work?

18 How well do you feel your role meets the needs of your WP participants?

Which types of your participant does it best and worst serve? Why?

What changes would help you meet all types of participants' needs equally?

Sanctioning

19 If a participant is not meeting participation requirements, what do you do?

Processes.

Factors affecting how you handle it.

Are there discussions with Jobcentre Plus? Does this affect whether individual is referred?

How well does this work? Can you get them to meet requirements?

20 IF NOT COVERED Do you initiate the process which might result in referral to sanctions?

What affects whether you decide to do this?

21 Do you believe that sanctioning and the threat of sanctioning within the Work Programme is effective?

Why?/Why not?

Effect on participants' behaviour/attitude and differences between certain groups and other characteristics.

22 Since January 2012, roughly how many of your participants have you reported so they may be referred for sanctioning (INTERVIEWER: we just need an idea: number or proportion or percentage).

23 And roughly how many have been sanctioned?

24 What are the issues for you when someone you refer for a possible sanction is not sanctioned by Jobcentre Plus (i.e. the participants gets a favourable decision)?

Performance and incentives

25 I'd like now to turn to management and incentives. How is your performance monitored?

26 What are the key measures?

Distinguish between:

- intermediate outcomes (e.g. contact, customer satisfaction, attendance);
- final outcomes: (e.g. job entry, job retention);
- other.

Any variation with claimant group and other characteristics?

27 Does performance on these measures affect your pay?

Directly (e.g. payment by result, bonuses, increments).

Indirectly through promotion.

28 Does the number of your participants being sanctioned have any effect on the achievement on your targets, on your assessed performance or your pay?

IF YES: does this affect whether you start the referral to sanctions process?

General views on provision within Work Programme

29 What do you think are the main barriers to employment faced by your WP participants?

Variation by claimant group and other characteristics.

30 What do you think have been the key factors determining successful movement into work for your participants?

Differences by claimant group and other characteristics.

31 What do you think have been the key factors in retaining participants in work?

Variation by type of participant.

32 In terms of the support provided to your WP participants, what aspects of the WP are working well? And not so well?

33 Do you have any suggestions for changes in the way that performance targets are used within the WP?

34 Are there any changes you think could be made to improve the programme?

35 Is there anything else you would like to say about the Work Programme, your involvement as an organisation and you personally?

Close interview: turn off recorder and thank them for taking part in the research.

4 Jobcentre Plus research tools

Wave 1 – Jobcentre plus DMA staff Topic

Work Programme Evaluation – Wave 1 Topic Guide

Wave 1 Topic Guide

Jobcentre Plus

DMA (decisions over sanctioning)

The aims of the interview with the DMA is to understand:

- The sanctioning process and its operation.
- Introduce self, the evaluation and organisations involved (SPRU, IES, NIESR, Inclusion).
- This interview will focus on (see box above).
- It will help us to assess how well the Work Programme is working and how improvements could be made.
- Stress independence of evaluation from DWP.
- Explain about confidentiality. Explain about recording and length of discussion – seek permission to record.

General background

The purpose of these questions is to understand the respondent's role in the WP. It is not to be recorded. A separate note should be made with a code assigned to the Jobcentre Plus and all data kept on encrypted file.

- Jobcentre Plus.
- Interviewee name.
- Position.
- Team.
- Date.
- Interviewer.

Sanctioning

This section is aimed at understanding the process of sanctioning, characteristics of sanctioned individuals and consequences of sanctioning.

Interviews with DMs/DMA managers will be by telephone. Ask them to prepare for the interview by bringing with them statistics on sanction decision rates.

I'd like to focus on the sanctions processes with Work Programme providers, rather than those with Jobcentre Plus:

1 Can you just talk me through the sanctioning process for claimants on the Work Programme, from who starts the process to the point when a sanction is imposed?

Check the role of:

- Work Programme providers;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- Decision Makers.

And in relation to cases you have dealt with:

2 What information is usually supplied by providers?

3 When claimants are referred for a sanction by providers, what are the main reasons you decide against applying a sanction?

Distinguish between:

- decisions based on policy;
- decisions based on mistakes made in the supporting processes.

4 Are you receiving the expected number of sanction referrals from the providers?

- Does this vary by provider?

5 How well do you feel providers understand the sanctioning process and rules?

- Why do you say that?

Looking at the sanctions MI for the providers in this area:

6 Are the number of referrals made more or less than you expected?

- Why?

7 IF FIGURES VARY BY PROVIDER – Why in your view do sanctions referral and decision rates vary between the providers?

8 Can you say anything about the characteristics of sanctioned participants?

- Are they more likely to be male/female, younger/older, length of unemployment?

9 Do you know whether voluntary participants have been sanctioned in your area?

- What are your views on the sanctioning of voluntary participants?

10 What are the most common reasons for sanctioning?

- Poor attendance.
- Non-attendance.
- Leaving the programme.
- Behaviour on the programme.
- Not undertaking work-related activity as required by the Work Programme provider.

- 11 Roughly what proportion of sanctioned participants appeal?
- Why do people appeal?
 - Roughly what proportion of appeals are successful?
 - Why are they successful?
- 12 Does sanctioning within the WP differ in any way compared with sanctioning under other programmes or through failure to comply with a jobseekers' direction?
- How?
 - What are the effects?
 - More sanctioned?
 - Greater compliance?

Knowledge of WP provision and effect on practice

This section is aimed at understanding how well prepared Jobcentre Plus staff were for WP, how prepared they feel now and how WP has affected their wider practice.

- 13 What training or preparation have you had for the WP?
- Training sessions specifically on WP.
 - Training within general sessions or within staff meetings.
 - 'Cascaded' training from another adviser.
 - Written and on-line information.
 - Learning on the job.
 - Learning through informal mentoring.
- 14 How well prepared did you feel for the WP when it first went live?
How well prepared do you feel now?
- 15 IF NOT WELL-INFORMED, what additional information would you like?
- What difference do you feel it would make if you had this information?

Anything else

- 16 Is there anything you'd like to add?

Close interview: turn off recorder and thank them for taking part in the research.

Wave 1 Topic Guide – Advisory Team Manager

Work Programme Evaluation – Wave 1 Topic Guide

Wave 1 Topic Guide

Jobcentre Plus

Advisory Team Manager

The aims of interviews with Jobcentre Plus staff are to understand:

- Jobcentre Plus’s role in the customer journey;
- who is referred to WP and the operation of the referral process;
- the operation of random assignment;
- contact with and continuing support from Jobcentre Plus to WP participants;
- the sanctioning process and its operation;
- Jobcentre Plus staff views on the operation of WP and its effectiveness.

- Introduce self, the evaluation and organisations involved (SPRU, IES, NIESR, Inclusion).
- This interview will focus on (see box above).
- It will help us to assess how well the Work Programme is working and how improvements could be made.
- Stress independence of evaluation from DWP.
- Explain about confidentiality. Explain about recording and length of discussion – seek permission to record.

General background

The purpose of these questions is to understand the respondent’s role in the WP. It is not to be recorded. A separate note should be made with a code assigned to the Jobcentre Plus and all data kept on encrypted file.

- Jobcentre Plus.
- Interviewee name.
- Position.
- Team.
- Date.
- Interviewer.

Referral of claimants

These questions are aimed at gaining Jobcentre Plus staff perceptions of claimant response to WP

- 1 How do mandatory customers, who have to take part in the Work Programme, respond to being referred (to the WP)?

-
- Do responses vary between different types of claimants? How?
 - By claimant group (e.g. lone parent).
 - By age/other personal characteristics.
 - By level of qualification/skill.
 - By whether have previous experiences of Government programmes.
- 2 What sort of concerns do mandatory customers have?
 - 3 How do advisers present and sell the option of voluntary access to different types of claimants?
 - 4 How do these voluntary customers react?
 - 5 Do your PAs try to encourage voluntary participation more amongst some types of claimants than others?
 - Which?
 - Why?
 - 6 Are ESA claimants told that, if they volunteer for the WP they could be sanctioned if they fail to do things their provider asks them to do?
 - 7 How do ESA claimants react to this?
 - 8 Do you think it affects ESA voluntary participation or not?
 - 9 Do you think it affects whether PAs encourage ESA participation?
 - 10 How does the system for information sessions for potential volunteers work in this area?
 - Are sessions held at Jobcentre Plus or elsewhere?
 - 11 How well do you think these sessions work?
 - Conversion to hard referrals (referral for info session known as ‘soft referral’ – referral for start known as ‘hard referral’).
 - Feedback from claimants and staff.
 - 12 What types of claimants are more likely to volunteer for the WP?
 - Age/disability/other personal characteristics.
 - Level of qualification/skill.
 - Previous experiences of Government programmes.
 - 13 Why?
 - 14 What reasons do people give for not wanting to participate voluntarily?
 - 15 If a claimant is disabled or suffers from a long-term health condition, what determines whether you refer them to Work Choice rather than the Work Programme?
 - What do you think Work Choice offers that Work Programme does not?

Random assignment

This section is about the process of random assignment and views on its use in the WP.

- 16 What do you think about advisers and claimants having no choice over which prime provider the claimant is referred to?
- 17 Is this ever an issue for claimants/advisers?
- In what way?
 - For particular types of claimant?
 - How is this dealt with?
- 18 Do you feel there are particular issues in relation to lack of choice over prime provider for voluntary participants?
- 19 Do you think it affects how much some PAs encourage some claimants?
- Why?
 - Any particular groups.
- 20 Do you think it affects whether some claimants volunteer?
- Why?
 - Any particular groups?
- 21 Influence on Jobcentre Plus treatment prior to joining the WP.
- 22 Does the Work Programme differ to previous employment programmes (e.g. Pathways or FND) in terms of the way it influences how claimants are supported by Jobcentre Plus before referral to an external provider?
- If so, how?
 - Why is it any different?
 - For which claimants is it different?
- 23 Does this apply to voluntary as well as mandatory participants?
- Explain.

Contact with participants on the WP

This section is aimed at establishing what on-going contact Jobcentre Plus staff have with participants post-referral to WP and any conflict between Jobcentre Plus and WP expectations on claimants.

- 24 Once on the WP, are WP participants expected to sign fortnightly, face to face?
- 25 IF NOT, How do they sign?
- Why?
- 26 Is this different than for the other claimants you sign?

27 IF DIFFERENT, What benefits or drawbacks are there to signing in this way?

- To Jobcentre Plus, to the participant?

28 Do your WP participants continue to have any other contact with the jobcentre?

- Purpose.
- Face to face/phone/email/text.
- Prompted by Jobcentre Plus or participant.

29 How well does this work?

Conditionality/sanctions

This section aims to find out how well local office staff understand their role in supporting the process of sanctioning and how claimants respond when a DMA referral/sanctions action is taken

30 Under what circumstances do local office staff make DMA referrals for WP participants (potential and current)?

- Fail to Participate in Work Programme Referral.
- Fail to attend Work Programme referral interview.
- Fail to attend Work Programme Information Session.

31 To what extent do sanctioned participants return to the jobcentre to re-engage with the WP or do they sign off benefits altogether?

32 IF SOME SIGN OFF BENEFITS, why do you think this is and what do they do?

33 How do sanctioned WP participants behave when they come back to Jobcentre Plus for re-referral?

34 In your view, are there any differences between Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme provider staff in their approach to enforcing conditionality and taking DMA action.

- How?
- Why?
- Differences in the treatment of certain customers (e.g. voluntary and mandatory).

Knowledge of WP provision and effect on practice

This section is aimed at understanding how well prepared Jobcentre Plus staff were for WP, how prepared they feel now and how WP has affected their wider practice.

35 What training or preparation did you and your advisers have for the WP?

- Training sessions specifically on WP.
- Training within general sessions or within staff meetings.
- ‘Cascaded’ training from another adviser.
- Written and on-line information.
- Learning on the job.
- Learning through informal mentoring.

36 How well prepared did you feel you and your team were for the WP when it first went live?

37 How well informed do you feel you and your team are now?

38 Do you feel your team knows enough about what WP providers offer to be able to provide a realistic picture to claimants?

- IF NO, what are the problems and consequences?

39 How does your team get their knowledge?

- Providers supply leaflets/documentation.
- Providers present to staff meetings.
- What else?

40 What additional information on what providers offer would be helpful?

Effects

These questions are aimed at gaining Jobcentre Plus staff views on WP.

41 Do you think the WP is better or not than the Jobcentre Plus Offer at helping participants move closer to finding work?

Explain

42 Do you feel the WP is more helpful for some claimants than for others?

- If yes, which claimants, why and how?
- How do disabled participants fare?

43 Do you think that the WP changes participants' behaviour before they go on it in any way?

- How?
- For which claimant groups (including mandatory/voluntary difference)
- Why?

44 What do you feel is working well, and why?

45 What do you feel is working less well, and why?

46 Do you have any suggestions for how the overall WP process might be improved?

47 Do you feel that WP providers (prime and sub-contractors) are working to similar objectives to the Jobcentre Plus?

- If no: how do objectives differ?

Anything else

48 Is there anything you'd like to add?

Close interview: turn off recorder and thank them for taking part in the research.

Wave 1 Optic Guide – Assistant Adviser (not Optic Guide)

Work Programme Evaluation – Wave 1 Topic Guide

Wave 1 Topic Guide

Jobcentre Plus

Assistant Adviser/Fortnightly Jobsearch Review Staff

The aims of interviews with Jobcentre Plus staff are to understand:

- Jobcentre Plus’s role in the customer journey;
 - who is referred to WP and the operation of the referral process;
 - contact with and continuing support from Jobcentre Plus to WP participants;
 - the sanctioning process and its operation;
 - Jobcentre Plus staff views on the operation of WP and its effectiveness.
- Introduce self, the evaluation and organisations involved (SPRU, IES, NIESR, Inclusion).
 - This interview will focus on (see box above).
 - It will help us to assess how well the Work Programme is working and how improvements could be made.
 - Stress independence of evaluation from DWP.
 - Explain about confidentiality. Explain about recording and length of discussion – seek permission to record.

General background

The purpose of these questions is to understand the respondent’s role in the WP. It is not to be recorded. A separate note should be made with a code assigned to the Jobcentre Plus and all data kept on encrypted file.

- Jobcentre Plus.
- Interviewee name.
- Position.
- Team.
- Date.
- Interviewer.

Contact with participants on the WP

This section is aimed at establishing what on-going contact Jobcentre Plus staff have with participants post-referral to WP and any conflict between Jobcentre Plus and WP expectations on claimants.

- 1 Can I check, do you sign people who are on the Work Programme? IF NO END INTERVIEW.

- 2 And also other claimants?
- 3 Are your WP participants expected to sign fortnightly, face to face?
 - IF NOT, how do they sign?
- 4 Is this different than for the other claimants you sign?
 - IF DIFFERENT, what benefits or drawbacks are there to signing in this way?
- 5 Do you know anything about what individual WP participants you sign are doing with their provider?
 - IF YES, how does this affect what you do when they sign?
- 6 When people sign, what do you do?
 - Check job search activity.
 - Check other Work Programme activity.
 - Bring jobs to their notice.
- 7 Is this different than for the other claimants you sign?
 - How?
 - Why?
- 8 Do you have any suggestions for how the overall process for checking the job search activities of WP participants might be improved?

These questions are aimed at gaining Jobcentre Plus staff views on WP.

- 9 Do you feel that being on the WP changes participants' behaviour in any way?
 - How?
 - Why?
- 10 In your experience, do you feel that the WP helps participants to move closer to finding work?
 - If yes, how? Why?
 - If not, why?
- 11 Do you feel the WP is more helpful for some claimants than for others?
 - Which claimants, why and how?

Knowledge of WP provision and effect on practice

This section is aimed at understanding how well prepared Jobcentre Plus staff were for WP, how prepared they feel now and how WP has affected their wider practice.

12 What training or preparation have you have for the WP?

- Training sessions specifically on WP.
- Training within general sessions or within staff meetings.
- ‘Cascaded’ training from another adviser.
- Written and on-line information.
- Learning on the job.
- Learning through informal mentoring.

13 How well prepared did you feel for the WP when it first went live?

- How well prepared do you feel now?

14 Do you feel well-informed about the provision available under the WP in your area?

- Do you feel this matters?

15 Does the information you have affect how you help claimants?

- How?
- Why?

16 IF NOT WELL-INFORMED, what additional information would you like?

- What difference do you feel it would make if you had this information?

Anything else

17 Is there anything you’d like to add?

Close interview: turn off recorder and thank them for taking part in the research.

Wave 1 Topic Guide – Personal Adviser

Work Programme Evaluation – Wave 1 Topic Guide

Wave 1 Topic Guide

Jobcentre Plus

Personal Adviser

The aims of interviews with Jobcentre Plus staff are to understand:

- Jobcentre Plus’s role in the customer journey;
- who is referred to WP and the operation of the referral process;
- the operation of random assignment;
- contact with and continuing support from Jobcentre Plus to WP participants;
- the sanctioning process and its operation;
- Jobcentre Plus staff views on the operation of WP and its effectiveness.

- Introduce self, the evaluation and organisations involved (SPRU, IES, NIESR, Inclusion).
- This interview will focus on (see box above).
- It will help us to assess how well the Work Programme is working and how improvements could be made.
- Stress independence of evaluation from DWP.
- Explain about confidentiality. Explain about recording and length of discussion – seek permission to record.

General background

The purpose of these questions is to understand the respondent’s role in the WP. It is not to be recorded. A separate note should be made with a code assigned to the Jobcentre Plus and all data kept on encrypted file.

- Jobcentre Plus.
- Interviewee name.
- Position.
- Team.
- Date.
- Interviewer.

Role in WP and referral of claimants

These questions are aimed at gaining information on the referral process and Jobcentre Plus staff perceptions of claimant response to WP.

1 Which groups of claimants do you deal with?

- JSA claimants.
- DEA/ESA/IB.
- Lone Parents/Income support.
- Young people/25+.

And what part of the claim?

2 Do you work with claimants who may be referred to the WP on a voluntary, on a mandatory basis or both types of claimants?

INTERVIEWER: USE THIS QUESTION TO ROUTE THROUGH THIS SECTION

3 What information do you give claimants about the WP?

- Does this include information produced by providers?
- Do you feel you have enough information about WP provision to adequately inform claimants?
- How does the information you give vary for different claimants?
- Why?

IF ONLY REFER ON A MANDATORY BASIS, GO TO Q2.12

4 And for voluntary participants, how do you present and sell the option of voluntary access to different types of claimants?

5 How do these claimants react?

6 Do you try to encourage voluntary participation more amongst some types of claimants than others?

- Which?
- Why?

7 Do you tell ESA claimants that, if they volunteer for the WP they could be sanctioned if they fail to do things their provider asks them to do?

- How do ESA claimants react to this?
- Do you think it affects ESA voluntary participation or not?
- Does it affect whether you encourage ESA participation?

8 How helpful have the WP information sessions been in encouraging claimants to volunteer for the programme?

- Why?

9 What types of your claimants are more likely to volunteer for the WP?

- Age/disability/other personal characteristics.
- Level of qualification/skill.

- Previous experiences of Government programmes.
- Why?

10 What reasons have your voluntary claimants given for not wanting to participate?

11 If a claimant is disabled or suffers from a long-term health condition, what determines whether you refer them to Work Choice rather than the Work Programme?

- What do you think Work Choice offers that Work Programme does not?

IF ONLY REFER ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS GO TO SECTION 3

12 For claimants who have to take part in the Work Programme, how do they respond to being referred (to the WP)?

- Do responses vary between different types of claimants? How?
 - By claimant group (e.g. lone parent).
 - By age/other personal characteristics.
 - By level of qualification/skill.
 - By whether have previous experiences of Government programmes.

13 What sort of concerns do your claimants have?

Random assignment

This section is about the process of random assignment and views on its use in the WP

14 What do you think about advisers and claimants having no choice over which prime provider the claimant is referred to?

15 Has this ever been issue for any of your claimants?

- In what way?
- For particular types of claimant?
- How is this dealt with?

IF ONLY REFER ON A MANDATORY BASIS GO TO SECTION 4.

16 Do you feel there are particular issues in relation to lack of choice over prime provider for voluntary participants?

- Does it affect how much you encourage some claimants to participate voluntarily?
- Why?
- Any particular groups?
- Do you think it has influenced whether some of your claimants volunteer?
- Why?
- Any particular groups?

Changes in Jobcentre Plus treatment prior to joining the WP

17 Other than informing claimants about the WP, has the WP made any difference to how you treat claimants prior to moving on to the WP?

- How?
- For which claimants
- Why?

18 Is this any different for voluntary participants and those who will be mandatory participants?

- Please explain.

Contact with participants on the WP

This section is aimed at establishing what on-going contact Jobcentre Plus staff have with participants post-referral to WP and any conflict between Jobcentre Plus and WP expectations on claimants.

19 Do you have any further contact with claimants once they are on the WP?

IF YES, what and why?

Knowledge of WP provision and effect on practice

This section is aimed at understanding how well prepared Jobcentre Plus staff were for WP, how prepared they feel now and how WP has affected their wider practice.

20 What training or preparation have you had for the WP?

- Training sessions specifically on WP.
- Training within general sessions or within staff meetings.
- ‘Cascaded’ training from another adviser.
- Written and on-line information.
- Learning on the job.
- Learning through informal mentoring.

21 How well prepared did you feel for the WP when it first went live?

22 How well informed do you feel now?

23 Do you feel you know enough about what WP providers offer to be able to provide a realistic picture to claimants?

- IF NO, what are the problems and consequences?

24 What additional information on what providers offer would be helpful?

Effects

25 Do you think the WP is currently better than the Jobcentre Plus offer at helping participants move closer to finding work?

Explain

26 Do you feel the WP is more helpful for some claimants than for others?

- If yes, which claimants, why and how?
- How do disabled participants fare?

27 Do you think that the WP changes participants' behaviour before they go on it in any way?

- How?
- For which claimant groups (including mandatory/voluntary difference)?
- Why?

28 What do you feel is working well, and why?

29 What do you feel is working less well, and why?

30 Do you have any suggestions for how the overall process might be improved?

Anything else

31 Is there anything you'd like to add?

Close interview: turn off recorder and thank them for taking part in the research.