

Work Choice Referrals, Starts and Job Outcomes by Parliamentary Constituency

July 2012

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Background

Work Choice

Work Choice is delivered by a Prime Provider in each of the 28 Contract Package Areas (CPAs). Prime Providers can sub-contract with a range of other specialist or niche providers to support disabled people who are eligible and suitable for the programme, in overcoming their complex employment needs related to disability. Remploy is also delivering the Work Choice business model, providing a choice for customers/claimants in most CPAs, though Remploy figures are not counted in these figures.

The aim of Work Choice is to provide a voluntary, tailored, coherent range of specialist employment services which can respond more flexibly to the individual needs of disabled people and their employers and make better use of resources.

The key principles underpinning Work Choice focus on:

- those who most need specialist support;
- less prescription and greater flexibility;
- better links between elements of provision;
- better consistency and quality of provision;
- provision for all types of disability;
- opportunities for the customer/claimant to exercise choice and control;
- job outcomes;
- improved support for people in either employment or self employment;
- improved progression to unsupported employment;
- achieving potential within longer-term supported employment.

Work Choice participants should have the same pay and conditions as other, non-supported employees doing similar jobs. Providers agree arrangements with employers and ensure that people have the same access to training and development opportunities as other employees. This helps encourage progression both within Work Choice modules and towards unsupported employment where appropriate.

The Disability Employment Advisor (DEA) has a pivotal role as the gatekeeper for the Work Choice programme in ensuring that only eligible and suitable disabled people are referred. Referrals to the DEA may be made from a number of sources – e.g. Work Choice providers including Remploy, external partners, and customer/claimant self-referrals. Also, JCP advisers may refer JSA and ESA claimants facing complex employment situations arising from their disability to the DEA for assistance and possible consideration for Work Choice.

All new participants enter Module One of Work Choice where they work with their provider on a detailed Development Plan to address their complex barriers and employment support needs. Minimum levels of support must be maintained on a monthly basis. Providers are expected to be flexible to the needs of customers/claimants. Support should be sufficient to enable participants to engage in at least eight hours preparation for work entry per week. The support could include one to one help or less intensive support and advice depending on the participant's needs. As the participant progresses through Module One, their level of activity on the programme should increase up to 16 hours per week as they prepare to make the transition into work.

In Module Two, once a participant has found paid supported employment (or self-employment) supported by Work Choice of 16 hours or more a week (NB this could be more than one job which adds up to 16 hours or more a week) the provider will work with the employer and participant to identify the support required for the participant to start work. The provider must provide a range of support tailored to the needs of the individual participant depending upon their circumstances.

Module Three recognises that some participants will need support in employment for the foreseeable future. All participants should be helped and encouraged to progress to unsupported employment where appropriate. The provider must work with the participant or with others on behalf of the participant (e.g. their employer) to ensure that for at least four hours per month the participant is engaged in activity aimed at developing their full potential at work. This may include up to four hours one-to-one guidance, or a more advisory role, depending on the participant's needs, level of independence and abilities. As in Module Two, this might include, for example, learning new skills, broadening their role or responsibilities, learning new ways of working, etc. The opportunities for working towards progression must remain to the fore in all planning discussions.

Providers of Work Choice are expected to provide certain elements of the normal Access to Work provision as part of their service to their programme participants. Prime Providers have access to a Work Choice-dedicated Access to Work team who will provide advice and support on applications. Anyone moving into **unsupported** work at any point would be able to make an application to Access to Work in the normal way.

Providers receive a service fee for each individual who starts Work Choice. They receive a further payment if that individual obtains a job outcome, and a final payment if that job outcome is sustained – unsupported for at least 6 months.

Data on unsupported employment (for which the provider is not paid), are not reported in these figures. These are the scenarios how a person can enter unsupported employment for which the provider does not receive a payment:

- New and Transitional Work Choice customers can enter unsupported employment via Work Choice supported employment. For these customers, we know the date of entering Work Choice supported employment and if that supported employment was subsequently sustained unsupported. We don't however know the exact date they enter unsupported employment, though for those who go on to sustain that unsupported employment, it is estimated to be 6 months prior to the date that the unsupported employment was sustained.
- Transitional Work Choice customers can also enter unsupported employment via WORKSTEP supported employment. However, we do not know the date these customers entered unsupported employment, but we do know if that unsupported employment was subsequently sustained. For those individuals, the unsupported employment start date is estimated to be 6 months prior to the date that the unsupported employment was sustained. If the unsupported employment does not go on to be sustained, then that outcome is not counted in these figures. We estimate that there are around 2,000 of these outcomes which are not reported in these figures.

Official statistics are routinely published for employment programmes such as Work Choice. Official statistics on the number of Work Choice referrals, starts and job outcomes are published at:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=wchoice>

Results

Table 1 shows the number of Work Choice referrals, starts and job outcomes since 25th October 2010 and up to 31st March 2012, by Parliamentary Constituency.

Gary Gifford (Gary.Gifford@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Department for Work and Pensions

July 2012