

Work Programme – analysis of early entrants

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DWP Department for
Work and Pensions

Introduction

This publication contains statistics describing the benefit circumstances of the first cohort of participants who were attached to the Work Programme in June 2011. It presents figures based on DWP working age benefit data over a 36 week period from date of attachment between June 2011 and March 2012.

The figures in this analysis specifically relate to time off benefit and do not constitute official statistics on the Work Programme job outcomes, which are expected to be published in the autumn. No direct comparisons should be made between these figures and final performance figures when published because job outcomes will be measured on a different basis. The release strategy for statistics on the Work Programme and other employment programmes is available on the DWP website at

<http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=wp>.

The publication strategy provides for the release of additional statistics within the Code of Practice for Official Statistics where this can add to the policy debate and meet the needs of the public.

In deciding whether to release this data, DWP analysts have considered whether this analysis adds to the overall body of evidence about the Work Programme, whilst maintaining the integrity of the planned release of official job outcome statistics and programme evaluation.

The additional value of these statistics is explained in the analysis section of this paper.

Background

The Work Programme is an integrated package of support providing personalised work-focused help for a wide range of customers. Both JSA and ESA customers will be eligible at various stages of their claims depending on their circumstances along with IB/IS/ and PC customers are also eligible to volunteer for this scheme. The support is delivered by public, private and voluntary sector organisations, working under contract to DWP. These organisations will tailor services to what works best for individual customers in helping them back in to sustained work. For more information please see information note at the following link:

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

Methodology

This publication contains statistics describing the benefit circumstances of the first cohort of participants who were attached to the Work Programme in June 2011. We have selected this very early cohort of Work Programme participants to ensure we can track their benefit history over the longest possible period. This means we are able to present figures covering a period of 36 weeks following date of attachment to the Work Programme, using the latest available data. For more information on the composition of this group please see following link:

http://83.244.183.180/WorkProg/wp_snapshot/ccsex/payment_group/a_cnatt_r_ccsex_c_payment_group_jun11.html

The Work Programme statistics in this adhoc are derived by combining data from the Provider Referral and Payment system (PRaP) and the National Benefits Database. A Work Programme attachment is defined as the date the provider first engages with the claimant and conducts a specified 'attachment activity'. The attachment date is the date the provider records on PRaP that this activity took place.

This cohort of participants has been combined with the National Benefits Database to identify how many participants were claiming benefits (Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) / incapacity benefits (IB), and Income Support (IS)) at weekly intervals following their attachment dates.

The analysis is then presented in two parts.

- Table 1 presents statistics showing the total number of people with any break in claim since being attached to the Work Programme in June 2011, and figures reporting the benefit status of the June 2011 cohort 36 weeks after attachment. In addition figures are presented showing the number of participants in the June 2011 cohort with a continuous break in claim of 13 and 26 weeks.
- Table 2 presents a cohort analysis of those people who joined the Work Programme in June and were off benefit at the 10 week point after attachment. The 10 week point is the latest date that allows the full 26 week period to be analysed, using available data and therefore is the maximum time we could allow for some Work Programme activity to take place. It then reports those from that cohort who were off benefit for 13 and 26 weeks continuously after that 10 week point.

This release focuses on National level analysis. The staggered roll out of the Work Programme across providers and geographies, coupled with the size and profile of the early cohort limit any analysis at sub-National level.

Key Findings

Tables 1 and 2 can be found at **annex A** of this release. They show that of the 28,600 people were attached to the Work Programme in June 2011:

- 13,800 (48%) of people had had a break in their benefit claim since joining the programme.
- 7,000 (24%) people had a continuous break in claim of 13 weeks, and 3,900 (14%) had had a continuous break of 26 weeks.
- 7,100 (25%) people were off benefit at the end of the 36 week tracking period.
- The figures in Table 1b will understate the eventual proportion of the cohort achieving a 13/26 week spell off benefit since those claimants leaving towards the end of the tracking period cannot, by definition, achieve spells of 13 and 26 weeks off benefit within the period analysed.
- The cohort analysis in Table 2 allows additional insight into leavers off benefit 13 and 26 weeks later since monitoring from the 10 week point allows the full 26 week period to be analysed. This cohort is however very small in relation to the overall level of attachments so far.
- This analysis (outlined in Table 2 of the release) shows that:
- Of the 3,900 people leaving by the 10 week point, 71% were still off benefit at the 13 week point and 60% were still off benefit at the 26 week point.

Analysis

In deciding whether to release this data, DWP analysts have considered that this analysis adds to the overall body of evidence about the Work Programme, whilst maintaining the integrity of the planned release of official job outcome statistics and programme evaluation. However these are early figures and should therefore be treated with caution. Once we have further data in the autumn we will be able to draw more meaningful conclusions. Some of the key issues are that:

- Whilst these figures represent evidence of movement off benefit, they do not provide direct evidence of movement into sustained employment. The first evidence on sustained outcomes will be the official statistics due later in 2012.
- Early cohorts may not necessarily be representative of long term performance. Seasonal factors could also be important.

- And the data tracking period itself only represents a proportion of the two years that providers might expect to spend working with claimants.
- We cannot estimate at this stage what the *impact* of the Work Programme has been on benefit receipt, or compare these results against previous employment programmes, because:
 - Recent DWP analyses of labour market programmes have relied on matching participants to non-participants within the same time period. This approach would be less effective for a national programme which rolled out nationally within a short period in June 2011.
 - An assessment of the Work Programme will require much more data to be able to construct comparison groups and match these to data on participants.
 - Aggregate time series data on benefit exit rates can be distorted by the effects of previous programmes which provided an artificial break in benefit claims. This is particularly important for young people, many of whom moved onto Training Allowances under the New Deal.
 - There may be wider labour market effects which play a significant role in explaining differences in outcomes for participants and non-participants.

The evaluation of the Work Programme will include a full impact assessment which will consider these methodological issues in depth using much more data than is currently available.

Next Steps

Next release of data will be the publication of the job outcome data in the autumn. We will also release the first evaluation reports looking at the initial implementation of the programme.

At that point we will assess the value of extending this analysis alongside the job outcome data. We will update our publication strategy at that stage.

The Department for Work and Pensions have commissioned a consortium led by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to undertake an independent evaluation of the Work Programme, including an impact assessment. The evaluation will explore commissioning and delivery of the programme, and participants' experiences and outcomes via a combination of qualitative research and surveys. The evaluation will begin reporting in late 2012, with regular reports through to a final synthesis report in 2014/15. All reports will be published on the DWP website at: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrs-index.asp>.

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Annex A

Table 1: Break in benefit analysis

Participants attached to the Work Programme in June 2011: 28,600

a) Benefit status of June cohort during participation in the programme

	Volume	% of June cohort
Never left benefit	14,800	52
Break in benefit	13,800	48

b) June 2011 attachments off benefit at the point of 36 weeks from attachment

	Volume	% of June cohort
Off benefit 36 weeks after attachment	7,100	25

c) June 2011 attachments with a continuous break in claim of 13 and 26 weeks

Time spent off benefit	Volume	% of June cohort
13 weeks	7,000	24
26 weeks	3,900	14

Table 2: June cohort off benefit 10 weeks after attachment with a subsequent adjoining spell of 13 and 26 consecutive weeks off benefit

Participants off benefit exactly 10 weeks after being attached: 3,900

Time spent off benefit immediately after 10 weeks from attachment	Volume	% of 10 week cohort
13 weeks	2,800	71
26 weeks	2,400	60

Notes:

June cohort includes all WP participants with an attachment date between 1st June and 30 June 2011
Analysis is of June cohort over a 36 week period from date of attachment. During this period it is still possible that some claims could be off benefit if the analysis period was extended.

Break in benefit numbers include those that were not JSA, IS, ESA or IB at all during the relevant period
A break in claim is when there is evidence that a WP participant has left benefit for at least one day
Caseloads are rounded to the nearest 100, percentages are based on unrounded figures and rounded to the nearest whole number.

Any benefit claims which are dealt with clerically are not included in this analysis

Data Source: Feb 12 Work Programme Analytical Database, Jan 12 National Benefits Database