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Pensions



Evaluation of day one mandation of prison leavers to the Work Programme

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Summary

This report presents findings from the evaluation of day one mandate of prison leavers to the Work Programme. The evaluation examined policy implementation and programme delivery of day one mandate. The latter investigated delivery in prisons, Work Programme provider delivery and the claimant experience.

The evidence on policy implementation was gathered from qualitative interviews with senior stakeholders from the Department for Work and Pensions, the Ministry of Justice, the National Offender Management Service, the Scottish Prison Service and Work Programme prime providers.

The evidence on delivery in prisons was obtained through qualitative interviews and observations in prisons with Employment and Benefit Advisers, resettlement staff and prisoners.

The evidence on Work Programme provider delivery was obtained through qualitative interviews with strategic managers from prime providers, and qualitative interviews with provider operational managers and employment advisers.

The claimant experience was investigated through a survey of prison-leaver claimants, qualitative interviews with claimants and observations of claimants in Work Programme meetings or training.

The report describes: contract and implementation; pre-release work; Work Programme providers' initial contact with claimants and the decision-making process in relation to the support provided to claimants; Work Programme support given to prison-leaver claimants to aid them find employment; mandate and sanctions within the Work Programme; Work Programme in-work support; Work Programme performance management; and the impact of the financial model. The preceding are detailed in relation to prison-leaver claimants and not the wider Work Programme.

The report, additionally, presents key findings, conclusions and policy recommendations.

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Glossary of terms

Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare teams	Part of resettlement services who work in prisons to ensure continuity of substance misuse treatment/support in the community after release.
Case Assessment Tracking System	A software package that allows key workers and managers to track and monitor prisoner movement and activity through the prison estate and in the community.
Contract Package Area	The geographical areas for which Work Programme prime providers have been contracted by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver support.
Crisis Loans	Loans previously available from DWP to individuals aged over 16 in an emergency or as a consequence of a disaster. They have been replaced by Local Welfare Assistance Schemes run by local authorities.
Construction Skills Certificate Scheme	A scheme providing certification of skills within the construction industry.
Day one mandation	Mandation of all prison leavers claiming Jobseeker's Allowance to the Work Programme from day one of their release from prison. This has been in place since March 2012.
Disclosure and Barring Service	The public service that conducts criminal records checks to prevent unsuitable people working with vulnerable people. It also makes decisions on whether a person should be added or removed from a barred list.
Employment and Benefit Advisers	Jobcentre Plus (the public employment service) staff members based in prisons providing advice to prisoners on employment and benefit issues.
Individual Learning Account	A national scheme in Scotland, providing individuals who meet certain criteria with up to £200 towards training costs.
Labour Market System	An operational IT system used by DWP to support getting people into work. The database contains personal details such as National Insurance number, name, gender, whether currently in receipt of benefits, amongst other information.
National Offender Management Service	An Executive Agency of the Ministry of Justice whose role is to protect the public and reduce re-offending.
Prime provider	An organisation that directly contracts with the Government, and subcontracts to a network of providers, to deliver the Work Programme.

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Prison National Offender Management Information System	The operational database for the management of offenders. The system contains information including offenders' personal details, type of offences, custody, sentence length, movement between prisons, release dates, case notes and details of rehabilitation activities.
Provider Referrals and Payments system	DWP IT system which provides a single repository of Contracted Employment Programmes data including providers, contracts, services and charges.
Spot providers	Providers subcontracted by prime providers to deliver specialist assistance, specific interventions (e.g. training courses) or other support targeted at specific groups or to address specific barriers to work; though called 'spot providers', the duration of support is not relevant.
Short Term Benefit Advance	An advance of benefit made available to help claimants if they experience financial difficulty before receipt of their first benefit payment.
Universal Jobmatch	A government service that enables individuals to search and apply for jobs online through a personal account.

List of abbreviations

CARAT	Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare teams
CATS	Care Assessment Tracking System
CPA	Contract Package Area
CSCS	Construction Skills Certificate Scheme
CV	Curriculum vitae
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EBA	Employment and Benefit Adviser
GB	Great Britain
ILA	Individual Learning Account
KPI	Key performance indicator
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
LMS	Labour Market System
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
PbR	Payment-by-Results
PG9	Payment group 9
PIP	Performance improvement plan
PNOMIS	Prison National Offender Management Information System
PRaP	Provider Referrals and Payments System
SCR	Special Customer Record
SFA	Skills Funding Agency
STBA	Short Term Benefit Advance

Executive summary

This report presents findings from the evaluation of day one mandation of prison leavers to the Work Programme.

The Work Programme is an active labour market programme launched on 10 June 2011. The programme provides employment support for a range of benefit claimants.

Since 1 March 2012, prison leavers who make an advance claim for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) within five weeks of release whilst in custody, and those who claim JSA within 13 weeks of release, are mandated to the Work Programme. They are referred to as Work Programme payment group 9 (PG9).

Research aims

The evaluation examines:

- the implementation of the policy;
- adaptations and innovations to providers' delivery models as a result of day one mandation;
- how offenders are prepared for the Work Programme;
- how support is decided, including barriers, prioritisation of PG9 claimants by distinct characteristics (e.g. sentence length), and differences in support between PG9 claimants and other claimants on the programme;
- the extent of and reasons for the use of specialist subcontractors;
- the influences of finances on provision;
- the approaches perceived to be successful.

The evaluation was structured around the following elements of work:

- interviews with strategic and senior staff to examine the policy rationale, and the development and implementation of day one mandation to the Work Programme; and
- programme delivery, which examined:
 - delivery in prisons;
 - Work Programme provider delivery; and
 - the claimant experience.

Methodology

Fieldwork was undertaken from January 2013 to May 2014. Evidence for the evaluation was obtained from:

- qualitative interviews with 21 senior stakeholders from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Ministry of Justice, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), the Scottish Prison Service and Work Programme prime providers;
- qualitative interviews with 19 Employment and Benefit Advisers¹ (EBAs) and 29 resettlement staff² in prisons;
- qualitative interviews with 57 prisoners³;
- qualitative interviews with strategic managers from prime providers and provider operational managers and employment advisers (2 waves). A total of 65 individuals were interviewed in wave 1 and 35 in wave 2;
- a telephone survey of 1,013 PG9 claimants⁴;
- qualitative interviews with 61 PG9 claimants and observations of 29 customer-adviser sessions.

The qualitative research was conducted in six Contract Package Areas⁵ (CPAs). The qualitative interviews with providers and claimants were based around two prime supply chains per CPA. Interviews with providers were undertaken in two waves. Wave 1 took place between May and August 2013 and wave 2 between April and May 2014. There was only one wave of research in prisons and with stakeholders and claimants. The research in prisons took place between March and July 2013. Interviews with stakeholders took place between January and February 2013, and interviews with claimants during October 2013 to January 2014.

¹ Jobcentre Plus (the public employment service) staff members based in prisons providing advice to prisoners on employment and benefit issues.

² Resettlement staff interviewed included resettlement governors, staff from housing, education, CARAT (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare) teams, National Careers Service and various prison services.

³ These are individuals who at the time of the fieldwork were in prison and had made a pre-release JSA claim but were yet to be referred to a Work Programme provider.

⁴ These are individuals who at the time of the fieldwork had been released from prison, were claiming JSA and had been referred and attached to a Work Programme provider. (Attachment refers to the initial engagement between provider and claimant.)

⁵ These are the geographical areas for which Work Programme prime providers have been contracted by DWP to deliver support. There are 18 in total across Great Britain.

Key findings and conclusions

The following summarises the key findings and conclusions for each of the evaluation research objectives.

How far has policy been implemented as intended?

Many elements of the policy have been implemented successfully, increasing prison leavers' employment support. Issues around implementation include:

- Referral numbers were reported as much lower than estimated. This constrained the development of PG9-specific provision (Sections 4.1.2 and 8.3).
- Co-working between government departments was positive, although data sharing was constrained by legal and data protection issues (Section 2.2.1).
- The prison setting was problematic for pre-release activities due to practical aspects (insufficient facilities in terms of phone lines, broadband and space) and the working environment (independent from outside agencies and regimented) being less flexible to external needs (Section 2.2.1).

Development of delivery models and innovation

A number of prime providers reviewed their delivery models in response to day one mandation; though none explicitly changed their post-release model for prison leavers, changes did occur. These included: introducing specialist providers, offender and other specialists, e.g. in substance abuse (Section 2.3.2); pre-release work; and adaptations to existing models, which included:

- the prime providing training on Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and special case referral participants (Section 2.3.2);
- the prime requiring that each provider have at least one person with training on MAPPA participants (Section 2.3.2);⁶
- end-to-end providers introducing specialist offender advisers (for offenders generally, rather than PG9 specifically) (Section 2.3.2);
- adding offender specialist subcontractors to the supply chain to provide short courses on disclosure (Section 2.3.2);
- extending employer engagement work to assist claimants with a criminal record to gain employment (Section 5.5).

Two innovative types of change were identified:

- Increased working with probation. Co-location was particularly successful. Co-ordination between providers and probation prevented duplication of services, resulted in more appropriate support, and helped agencies and claimants manage prison leavers' conflicting demands (Section 2.3.3).

⁶ Such provision should have been in place since the start of the Work Programme to meet MAPPA restrictions.

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- Pre-release work, where a provider contributed to the development of a 'market place' in two prisons. This brings together organisations (e.g. Work Programme providers, local projects and housing organisations) monthly, to share information with prisoners and address queries (Section 3.4.1).

How offenders are prepared for entry to the Work Programme

An important change for claimants is the ability to make advance claims within prison. Though not directly related to Work Programme preparation, it is likely to aid attachment and engagement, as it diminishes financial difficulties and is one less demand on the individual on release (Section 3.3).

Preparation for entry to the programme includes EBAs promoting the programme, e.g.:

- putting leaflets and posters about day one on prisoner notice boards;
- discussing day one at pre-release sessions (although these were often poorly attended);
- sending letters to prisoners via prison officers, inviting them to attend an appointment with the EBA (Section 3.2.2).

Mainly when contact was over a longer period, EBAs helped with bank accounts and discussed job opportunities with prisoners (Section 3.2.4).

Some claimants and providers reported less positive views on EBA work with prisoners (Sections 3.3 and 3.4). However, engagement with EBAs by prisoners is voluntary, and not all prisons have full-time EBAs – at times, some do not have any. EBAs stated not being able to provide detailed information about the specifics of the support provided by the Work Programme due to differences in provider support and because prisoners are randomly allocated to providers (Section 3.2).

EBAs work in all prisons that require this service (i.e. where there is a sufficient volume of prisoners being released). NOMS data show there are currently approximately 180 EBAs working across prisons in England, Wales and Scotland.

Providers who undertook pre-release work provided information to prison staff and prisoners (Section 3.4). The market place, described above, was innovative and enabled prisoners to gather information on a range of services.

How providers determine what support they offer to which PG9 claimants

Prison leavers' support is determined in the same way as other claimant groups, though sometimes taking more time to establish the full extent of their needs (Section 4.2). Existing assessment tools may be less appropriate for prison leavers, as establishing trust generally took longer and the tools were unsuited to barriers resulting from prison institutionalisation and the need for re-integration in society.

The survey indicates that skills assessments and action planning were not universal. Both would appear to be important for all claimants, particularly as there was evidence (including an association with employment status) that claimant involvement in action planning might improve outcomes.

How support is prioritised between PG9 claimants

There was no obvious prioritisation between PG9 claimants (Section 4.2). Some providers did discuss differences in supporting those with short versus longer sentences, describing the differences in the barriers, confidence and motivation. Additionally, repeat offenders were seen to be more problematic, due to having little time to work with them and because their offending was seen as more intrinsic to their lifestyle (Section 4.3.2).

The barriers addressed by providers

Providers tackle claimants' work-related barriers by providing employability and vocational training, with some providing or signposting⁷ IT training (Section 5.1). They addressed individuals' lack of knowledge of workplace norms of behaviour and practice, including through in-work support (Section 7.2). In some CPAs there were issues related to double funding which prevented access to European Social Fund-funded courses (Section 5.4).

Providers addressed wider barriers such as health, disability, finances and debt (Section 5.1). Many PG9 claimants with substance misuse problems were receiving professional help and providers felt unable to add further value to claimants' existing non-Work Programme support (Section 5.1).

The main offender-specific barrier that providers addressed was disclosure of offences (Section 5.1). Providers also attempted to find employers who were amenable to employing ex-offenders, or promoted their PG9 claimants, and other ex-offender claimants, when engaging with employers (Section 5.5).

There was variation in the emphasis and degree to which these barriers were addressed. A number of providers highlighted the complex and long-standing barriers they needed to address for this group. The barriers, though not necessarily different to those of other payment groups, were seen to be more extensive in general (Section 4.3).

Providers did not report addressing re-offending directly, stating that getting individuals into employment was, however, a vital aid in its prevention (Section 5.2).

Differences in support within the group and between PG9 claimants and others on the Work Programme

The primary difference in support between PG9 claimants and others was tackling the consequences of having a criminal record, although this, obviously, is relevant to all claimants with a criminal record.⁸ Other differences reported by providers were:

- PG9 claimants requiring and receiving a wider range of support (such as housing support, mental health support and substance misuse support⁹). This included a greater need for IT courses. Claimants who had a MAPPA status (regardless of payment group) could have restrictions around computer use (which could hinder online job search) (Section 5.6);

⁷ Signposting refers to Work Programme providers making claimants aware of services external to the prime provider's network of organisations.

⁸ Some Work Programme claimants with a criminal record will not be in the PG9 claimant group, for example prison leavers who are not claiming JSA, prison leavers who have made a JSA claim 13 weeks after release, or individuals with a criminal record but who were not in custody.

⁹ Although some providers commented that the support provided by the prison service and probation meant that additional support for substance abuse was rarely needed.

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- PG9 claimants receiving longer sessions with advisers (Section 5.6);
- PG9 claimants more often receiving one-to-one sessions with advisers. To some extent this was due to one-to-one sessions being required for MAPPA claimants (Section 5.6);
- being less likely to refer prison leavers to DWP for sanctions because their circumstances made compliance harder to achieve (Section 6.2.3);
- promoting PG9 claimants for specific vacancies and actively seeking employers who were not averse to employing ex-offenders. This was not limited to PG9 claimants (Section 5.5);
- the longer period before which job outcome payments are paid for PG9 claimants having led to different provision for PG9 claimants compared with some other JSA claimants.¹⁰ This included keeping in-work support with the adviser for this period of time rather than handing it over to a centralised call centre and extending the period of in-work support (Section 7.3.2).

The extent of and reasons for providers bringing in different or specialist subcontractors

There was evidence of some increase in the use of offender specialist subcontractors. Other providers had increased specialist in-house training, in part motivated by reducing costs and avoiding staff reductions (Section 2.3.2).

Whether financial incentives drove changes in provision

Financial incentives were important, but there was a clear ethos, at least amongst advisers, of a commitment to supporting claimants and getting them in to employment (Section 8.2). In some organisations, the higher payment for PG9 claimants was used to incentivise advisers¹¹ (formally or informally) to support this group. In other organisations, the higher payments were not believed to outweigh the higher costs of this group. This particularly affected provision of externally-paid support, notably for vocational training (Section 5.4.1).

Providers which did not increase specialist provision for prison leavers gave a number of reasons: the level of referrals meant that specialist provision was not financially viable; DWP programme targets concentrated efforts on other payment groups; and PG9 claimants' and claimants in other payment groups differed little in their support needs (Sections 2.3.2 and 8.1).

At the strategic level, some interviewees stated that low referral numbers prevented the development of PG9-focused support, due to lack of potential return (Sections 2.3.2 and 8.3).

The programme payment structure, with the recent removal of attachment payments and a greater emphasis on sustainable employment, had led to some providers putting a greater focus on in-work support (Section 8.2.1).

¹⁰ Job outcome payments for PG9 claimants are paid after six months of cumulative or continuous employment. In contrast, job outcome payments for some other JSA harder-to-help groups are paid for after three months of cumulative or continuous employment. There are other JSA groups who have the same time requirement as PG9 claimants.

¹¹ The term 'advisers' refers to Work Programme advisers. When discussing Jobcentre Plus or other advisers, this will be specified in the text.

Approaches perceived to be most successful

The following approaches were perceived to be most successful:

- Advance, pre-release benefit claims were viewed positively by EBAs and claimants. The application process was easier and less time consuming for claimants, and earlier receipt of benefit payments helped avoid financial hardship (Sections 3.2 and 3.3).
- Support from specialist ex-offender advisers tended to result in support that addressed wider barriers and higher quality support in respect of offending and disclosure (Section 5.2).
- Good, trusting relationships with advisers, whether specialist or not, seemed important in maintaining engagement and supporting claimants to talk to employers about their records. Good relationships appear to have been aided by adviser continuity, as those who saw the same adviser most of the time reported this as helpful (Section 5.3).
- Important specific types of support were: for housing; to maintain a focus on job search; computer training; and computer access for job search (Sections 4.3.2, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4).
- Closer working with probation services helped improved engagement and information sharing (Section 2.3.3).
- Work with employers to provide access to vacancies for PG9 claimants (and others with a criminal record), both work with employers known to take offenders (to ensure awareness of their vacancies) and work with employers not known for taking offenders to encourage them to take specific offender applicants. However, this work was intensive and rare (Section 5.5).
- In-work support (because PG9 claimants were seen to have less knowledge of work and also to lack peer support to counter this), to help familiarise them with work norms and to overcome problems. They therefore needed support from an adviser. Direct liaison between employers and advisers could also be helpful, although this was rare. Moreover, PG9 claimants more often found temporary jobs and so more often required assistance for follow-on jobs (Chapter 7).

Policy recommendations

A number of factors were identified which appeared to reduce success:

- Pre-release advance benefit claims are viewed positively by EBAs and claimants. Not all prisoners who later claim JSA attend a meeting with an EBA, and some of these individuals may miss scheduled appointments. In some cases this can be due to the availability of an EBA, and appointments can be hindered by the prison regime (Section 3.2). **There is, therefore, scope for a greater number of prisoners to attend meetings with EBAs to obtain information on the Work Programme and make an advance claim whilst in custody.**
- **There is a need for improved co-ordination between resettlement staff, Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme providers, at a minimum between EBAs, Jobcentre Plus advisers and Work Programme staff.** This is to ensure; prisoners have a better understanding of the programme pre-release; that problems with inaccurate information (e.g. contact details) can be resolved more quickly; and better sharing of information on claimants' pre-release activities to avoid duplication of support. It may also aid pre-release

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work by providers (Chapter 3).

- Claimants who move out of the area in which their provider is based and have not been transferred to a local provider receive more limited support (Section 4.1.2). **Allowing transfer would be beneficial.**
- Specialist offender advisers appeared to more consistently address PG9 claimants' multiple needs than generalist advisers (Sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3). Some advisers lacked adequate knowledge of offenders, and lacked the skills or confidence to talk about criminal records and offending which are needed to provide PG9 claimants with the confidence and tools to deal with their criminal record. **Improved training of advisers in respect of offenders, or more specialist provision, would be useful.**
- **Ensuring PG9 claimants have stable housing would reduce a major barrier to employment** (Sections 3.2.4, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3).
- Some providers reported that lack of finances limited access to vocational training. This was particularly acute for those needing higher-level, longer courses, but affected all levels. It also resulted in ex-prisoners being unable to complete courses they had started in prison (Section 5.4). **Increased funding or access to other paid-for provision would be useful.**
- A supportive and trusting relationship with a personal adviser, facilitated by seeing the same adviser, was viewed as beneficial by claimants. Therefore, the multiple provider model (where the claimant works with a number of main providers across the course of the programme) might be more problematic for PG9 claimants, as it impacts on the important adviser/claimant relationship. However, whether detrimental effects were countered by the, presumed, benefits on motivation was unclear. A similar issue arises for in-work support, where this is handed to an in-work specialist (Sections 5.3.2 and 7.3.3). **It would be useful if prime providers using multiple-provider models considered their suitability for this group.**
- Although the majority of PG9 claimants were aware of sanctioning for non-compliance, a substantial minority of PG9 claimants were not (Section 6.2.2). **Ensuring improved awareness of sanctions is important.**
- DWP's use of performance targets for payment groups 1, 2, and 6¹² in the management of Work Programme contracts may reduce support to prison leavers. This was probably most severe in organisations which saw PG9 claimants as not being commercially successful, due to their higher costs of support and lack of outcomes (Section 8.1). **DWP might wish to consider the need for performance targets including this group.**
- Providers reported that the level of funding was problematic, given the higher support needs of this group and their lower success rates. Outcome-related funding per se was not the issue, although the length of time for achieving job outcome payments (26 weeks) was, given the difficulties for this group. This was exacerbated by greater difficulty keeping in touch with PG9 claimants particularly, e.g. identifying and tracking PG9 claimants if they returned to prison (Section 8.2). **Consideration might be given to the maintenance of attachment fees and the development of 'distance travelled' measures for this group.**

¹² Payment groups 1, 2 and 6 are JSA 18 to 24, JSA 25 and over, and Employment and Support Allowance new customers, respectively.

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- Day one mandation of all prison leavers claiming JSA to the Work Programme may not be appropriate (Section 4.1). Respondents reported that not all are ready to participate soon after release, often due to other pressing demands such as housing. Many PG9 claimants need extensive support for chronic problems (e.g. mental health issues, substance misuse, and illiteracy and innumeracy), the existence of which means they are very far from employment (Section 4.3). **This indicates that some individuals need intensive support for longer-term problems before or alongside the Work Programme.**

1 Introduction

The Work Programme is an active labour market programme launched on 10 June 2011. It is the largest single payment-by-results (PbR) programme in Great Britain. The programme is for individuals who are at risk of long-term unemployment and covers a range of claimants who are in receipt of different benefits. Individuals' benefit status determines whether their participation is mandatory or voluntary, when they enter the programme, and their Work Programme payment group.

In August 2011 it was announced that prison leavers claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) would be required (i.e. mandated) to join the Work Programme immediately on release from custody. This was based on the recognition that prison leavers' extensive barriers to employment indicated a need for greater employment assistance for the group.

Referral to the Work Programme for all prison leavers aged 18+ who claim JSA on release has been in place since 1 March 2012. To enable mandation on 'day one' of release, Jobcentre Plus makes possible advance JSA claims for those in custody within five weeks of release. Without this facility it would not be possible to have day one mandation. Prison leavers who claim within 13 weeks of release will also be mandated to the programme. The change was part of the Government's Social Justice Strategy.¹³ Key parts of this strategy included promoting work and joint working across government departments.

Work Programme participants are allocated to Work Programme claimant groups depending on their benefit claim. Prison leavers are one of the six mandatory JSA Work Programme claimant groups and are classified as payment group 9 (PG9).¹⁴

The Work Programme is delivered by providers through a results-based contract in 18 Contract Package Areas¹⁵ (CPAs) across Great Britain. In each CPA two to three prime providers deliver the programme in conjunction with organisations they have subcontracted into their delivery supply chains. The Work Programme uses a 'black box' model, allowing providers the freedom to design provision, subject to a small number of minimum service standards. Therefore providers have the flexibility to design support that addresses the needs of individuals and local labour market conditions. Providers receive payments on achieving outcomes according to the claimants' payment group. Differential payments are intended to reflect the support needed by each group and incentivise providers to support all participants. To encourage long-term employment, payments focus on sustained employment outcomes.

¹³ HM Government (2012). *Social Justice: transforming lives* Green Paper (Cm8314, March 2012), available online at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-justice-transforming-lives, accessed on 29/12/2014.

¹⁴ The other mandatory JSA groups on the Work Programme are: JSA claimants aged 18 to 24 (PG1), JSA claimants aged 25 and over (PG2), JSA 18 year old NEET participants (PG3), JSA Repeaters (PG3), JSA Ex-Incapacity Benefit participants (PG4), JSA Early Access participants (PG3). For further details of participation requirements and the full range of benefit claimants participating on the Work Programme, see *Work Programme: DWP provider guidance*, Chapter 2 – Work Programme claimant groups. Available on world wide web: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340676/wp-pg-chapter-2.pdf

¹⁵ The geographical areas for which Work Programme prime providers have been contracted by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver support.

In addition to Work Programme support, some prison leavers are supported by the Probation Service.¹⁶ The service has a statutory responsibility for supervising those prisoners released on licence who had sentences of 12 months or more.

1.1 Evaluation of day one mandation of prison leavers

DWP commissioned a consortium led by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (CESI/Inclusion) to independently evaluate day one mandation of prison leavers to the Work Programme. The consortium comprises:

- CESI/Inclusion;
- GfK NOP;
- Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR), Birkbeck, University of London;
- Institute for Employment Studies (IES);
- National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR).

1.1.1 Evaluation aims and structure

The main research objectives of the evaluation were to address the following questions:

- How far has the policy been implemented as intended?
- How have providers developed and adapted their delivery model and how far have these changes stimulated innovation?
- How are offenders prepared for entry to the Work Programme?
- How do providers determine what support they offer to which PG9 claimants? How do providers prioritise support (in particular looking at length of sentence, age and gender), what barriers do they address, and how does this support differ, both within the group and between this group and others on the Work Programme?
- What was the extent of, and the reasons for, providers bringing in different or specialist subcontractors?
- Did financial incentives drive changes in provision?
- What approaches are perceived to be most successful?

The evaluation was structured around the following elements of work:

- interviews with strategic and senior staff to examine the policy rationale, and the development and implementation of day one mandation to the Work Programme; and
- programme delivery, which examined:
 - delivery in prisons;

¹⁶ As part of the reforms to probation under the Transforming Rehabilitation programme, it is now divided between the National Probation Service for high-risk offenders and open tender for lower-risk offenders. Additionally, supervision for lower-risk offenders is being increased.

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- Work Programme provider delivery; and
- the claimant experience.

The evaluation examined: the implementation of the policy across government departments, delivery agencies and administrations; the decision-making process undertaken by providers in relation to their delivery model design on the introduction of day one mandation; the delivery of support for PG9 claimants by providers; and the claimant experience. Evidence was gathered through:

- qualitative interviews with 21 senior stakeholders from DWP, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), the Scottish Prison Service and Work Programme prime providers;
- qualitative interviews with 19 Employment and Benefit Advisers¹⁷ (EBAs) and 29 resettlement staff¹⁸ in prisons;
- qualitative interviews with 57 prisoners;
- qualitative interviews with strategic managers from prime providers, and provider operational managers and employment advisers (2 waves). A total of 65 individuals were interviewed in wave 1 and 35 in wave 2;
- a telephone survey of 1,013 PG9 claimants;
- qualitative interviews with 61 PG9 claimants and observations of 29 customer-adviser sessions.

The report, when discussing prisoners, is referring to individuals who, at the time of the research, were in prison and had made a pre-release JSA claim; they were yet to be referred to a Work Programme provider. When discussing PG9 claimants, the report is referring to those who, at the time of the research, had been released from prison, were claiming JSA and had been referred and attached¹⁹ by a Work Programme provider.

The evaluation started in January 2013, and the final fieldwork was completed in May 2014. The qualitative research was conducted in six CPAs. The qualitative interviews with providers and claimants were based around two prime supply chains per CPA. Interviews with providers were undertaken in two waves; wave 1 took place between May and August 2013, and wave 2 between April and May 2014. There was only one wave of research in prisons²⁰ and with stakeholders and claimants.

Details of the methodology for the component parts of the evaluation are given in Section 1.1.2.

¹⁷ Jobcentre Plus (the public employment service) staff members based in prisons providing advice to prisoners on employment and benefit issues.

¹⁸ Resettlement staff interviewed included resettlement governors, staff from housing, education, CARAT (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare) teams, National Careers Service and various prison services.

¹⁹ Attachment refers to the initial engagement between provider and claimant.

²⁰ The research team did attempt to re-contact prisoners who had left custody to participate in the claimant research strand; however, the response was extremely low. Only 2 out of 35 contacts collected during research in prisons were able to be re-contacted for a second interview.

1.1.2 Methodology

Stakeholder interviews

In the first few months of the evaluation (January to February 2013), 21 interviews were conducted with senior stakeholders from DWP, MoJ, NOMS, the Scottish Prison Service, and Work Programme prime providers. A sample was provided by DWP and MoJ; all individuals in the sample were interviewed.

This element of the evaluation aimed to gain an understanding of the policy rationale for day one mandation and to establish how well the policy was being implemented at that point in time. The interviews also discussed the process of joint working between government departments and what lessons could be learned for future joint ventures.

Delivery in prisons

Fieldwork was carried out in 11 prisons²¹ across six CPAs between March and July 2013. It consisted of semi-structured interviews with 57 prisoners, 19²² EBAs and 29 prison resettlement staff. Observations of 57 sessions where EBAs set up benefit claims with prisoners were conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the processes involved.

All EBAs working at each of the prisons were interviewed for the study unless they were on leave at the time of the fieldwork. Convenience sampling was used to select resettlement staff and prisoners for interview. This involved interviewing whoever was available during several days of fieldwork conducted at each of the prisons. However, some additional telephone interviews were also undertaken to ensure staff from a range of resettlement services were included. The prisoners were interviewed after attending an appointment with the EBA.

Survey of claimants

The survey covered claimants who had recently been released from prison, classed as PG9, and attached by a Work Programme provider between March 2012 and July 2013. Those who were never attached by a Work Programme provider (meaning that initial contact could not be established) were not included in the sample. The initial sample was provided by DWP and comprised 10,000 contacts. This was later boosted by 10,000 additional contacts to provide a total sample of 20,000 contacts, effectively representing a full census of the PG9 population. This was deemed necessary after respondents in the initial sample proved difficult to contact. All individuals who were part of the initial sample were sent a letter informing them about the research, its content and purpose which provided them with an opportunity to opt-out of being contacted by telephone. They received another opportunity to give their consent to participate when telephone contact was established.

In agreement with DWP, sample size was further boosted through including those individuals

²¹ These included a female prison, a private prison, two prisons in Scotland, four local prisons and a mix of category B, C and D prisons. The closure of one of 12 prisons selected for the research was announced before fieldwork had begun and therefore it was not possible to gain access to that prison. However, the EBA was interviewed by telephone.

²² Two interviews were conducted with Jobcentre Plus staff based in the community to discuss handover arrangements from prison.

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from the initial sample without valid postal addresses but valid phone numbers. This group, as well as the booster sample, were not sent an opt-out letter. Instead they received information about the research and its aims as part of first telephone contact and asked for their consent to participate in the survey during this call.

Interviews were conducted by telephone, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Contacts were randomly selected from the available sample. In total, 1,013 interviews were completed between September 2013 and February 2014, which exceeded the target of 1,000 interviews.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) covered the following topic areas:

- confirmation of referral to Work Programme;
- work history prior to referral to Work Programme;
- referral from Jobcentre Plus;
- level of support received;
- nature of support received;
- views on support received;
- work outcomes and impact;
- in-work support and progression;
- mandation;
- attitudes and beliefs about work/looking for work;
- demographics.

Weighting

The bases of the tables included are generally unweighted. However, the values in the tables (counts and percentages) are generally weighted. The differences in base counts were minimal as the weighting only needed to address small oversampling issues of gender, ethnicity and age compared to the overall sample population.

Some findings are mentioned in the text with no data representation in tables because they had very small bases and are therefore to be interpreted with extreme caution despite delivering significant results. The corresponding tables can be found in Appendix B.

For bases below 50, the count has been used rather than percentage values. Confidence tests for statistical significance were conducted on cross-tabulations applying the standard 0.05 confidence interval.

The following conventions have been applied when representing data in the tables:

* Less than 0.5 per cent

0 No observations

[] Numbers in square brackets are frequencies based on fewer than 50 observations

Claimant interviews

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The qualitative research with claimants was undertaken between October 2013 and January 2014. The research included interviews with 61 claimants and 29 observations of mainly one-to-one sessions between advisers and claimants.

All claimant contact details were obtained through their prime provider. The prime providers released contact details of consenting claimants from which the research team were able to arrange interviews; however, many of the interviews and observations were organised directly by the providers on an agreed date and were undertaken on their premises. The difficulty of recruiting claimants for the research made it necessary to have extensive help from providers.

The research aimed to obtain claimants' views on their experiences of the programme; this covered topics such as attachment, impressions of initial sessions, and the support and training provided. The interviews also obtained information on claimants' perceptions of their barriers to employment and their general views on the Work Programme.

Provider research

The research with providers took place in two waves. Both waves were conducted in six CPAs, with two prime supply chains participating per CPA. The initial contact was made with the prime providers who supplied contact details for their subcontractors that supported PG9 claimants. The sample was selected purposefully to include specialist ex-offender providers wherever possible.

Wave 1 interviews were conducted in April to June 2013. A total of 65 interviews were conducted with high-level senior strategic managers from prime providers and with operational managers and employment advisers from prime and subcontractor providers in the CPAs.

The aim of wave 1 research with strategic managers was to examine the mechanisms to achieve change and their rationale, including: the services offered; tailoring; differentiation between offenders and non-offenders; differentiation amongst offenders (nature of offending, length of sentence); whether delivery is by a specialist ex-offender provider; measures of performance; and views on the funding model and its effects.

The aim of wave 1 research with operational staff was to explore: the transition from prisons; maintaining contact in differing circumstances; assessment and action planning; barriers faced by offenders and the nature of support they require, the type of support offered and why (including the role of PbR); how claimants respond to the different types of provision and support, and what is successful and why; how they are working with other organisations (data sharing), including how referrals are made to specialist providers; how support interacts with other support provided by probation, NOMS; and particular issues in respect to certain types of offender.

Wave 2 interviews took place in April and May 2014. Thirty-five individuals were interviewed in the second wave. Interviewees were again senior strategic managers from prime providers, and prime and subcontractor operational managers and employment advisers. Whenever possible, the same organisations and individuals from wave 1 were re-interviewed. However, this was not always achievable due to a small number of organisations leaving their supply chain, availability for interviewing within the specified fieldwork period, and staff turnover.

Wave 2 interviews with strategic managers explored: developments to Work Programme

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delivery for prison leavers since wave 1 in terms of provision and supply chain design, and finance and outcomes for PG9 claimants; the nature of the developments; and the reasons why changes were or were not made since wave 1.

Wave 2 interviews with operational staff examined: developments in Work Programme delivery for prison leavers since wave 1; reasons for any changes made since wave 1; and additional information on pre-employment and in-work support.

1.1.3 Report structure

The development of day one mandation, including its policy rationale, contractual and implementation issues and the structure of day one support, is discussed in the next chapter. Pre-release engagement and the operation of day one in prisons is described in Chapter 3. The referral and attachment process and how decisions on support are made is described in Chapter 4. Barriers to the employment of day one claimants are also discussed in Chapter 4. Pre-work support and its usefulness, as well as work with employers, are described in Chapter 5. Mandation and sanctioning are detailed in Chapter 6. The support provided once claimants are in-work is described in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 turns to issues of finance and performance management, and how these affect support.

2 Contract and implementation

This chapter describes the policy rationale for day one, contractual and implementation issues and Work Programme design. It goes on to discuss the structure of day one support: the delivery model; subcontracting; and minimum service standards, and how these related to and were affected by day one.

2.1 Policy rationale

In recognition of prison leavers' barriers to employment and that early intervention and employment reduce re-offending,²³ the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) introduced mandatory referral to the Work Programme from day one of release. This provided immediate employment support to prison leavers who claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) within five weeks before release and 13 weeks post-release.

Research on the links between having gainful employment and reduced re-offending was commonly mentioned when discussing the policy rationale for day one. Respondents also cited data analysis undertaken jointly by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and DWP which had shown that prison leavers were spending much longer on benefits than the average claimant of JSA. This served to underpin the day one policy and to highlight the potential cost efficiencies (at a time when spending was being cut) in supporting prison leavers into employment.

The case for providing immediate support from day one of release was made in recognition of the additional disadvantages faced by prison leavers, including having a criminal conviction, when trying to seek employment, and the historic difficulties of engaging with prison leavers at an early stage of release and attaching them to the Work Programme; for example through Fresh Start Appointments at Jobcentre Plus:

'For day one there was concern about the time lag between offenders leaving prison and entering the Work Programme or signing up for JSA if they did not have a job and may re-offend during this time due to a lack of support. Some of them have very poor skill levels and basically their employability levels were very poor, if we can put it like that. They also had the added barrier of having the criminal conviction so we felt that prisoners leaving custody were clearly a group of people who probably should have more intensive support right from the start so that was the policy rationale basically.'

(MoJ, Policy Lead)

Testing the efficacy of two government departments working together was also regularly noted as a useful by-product of the policy as both were often dealing with the same group of people so there was a mutual benefit in working more closely:

²³ For example, May *et al.* (2008). *Factors Linked to Reoffending: A year one follow-up of prisoners who took part in the Resettlement Surveys 2001, 2003 and 2004*, London: MoJ; McNeil *et al.* (2005). *21st Century Social Work: Reducing Reoffending*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

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‘One of the key aims to stop people re-offending is to actually get them into a job, and also I think it was an exercise for DWP and MoJ to start exploring co-commissioning and using that more joined up approach to get outcomes rather than having everything segregated.’

(DWP, Labour Programmes Manager)

2.2 Contractual and implementation issues

2.2.1 Pre-release

The interviews with the senior stakeholders highlighted three main and linked issues regarding the implementation of day one in prisons. These concerned: referral numbers; the quality of the data necessary to facilitate the contact and the referral process whilst still in prison; and the challenges of working in the prison environment.

Referral numbers

Certainly in the initial stages, the number of referrals to day one was reported as lower than expected. This was a commonly mentioned problem when discussing implementation.

‘We have got ongoing issues with that whole volume of people below what we expected ... less than half at the moment.’

(Manager, National Offender Management Service (NOMS))

Sharing and quality of data

In part, contact with prisoners and their referral to day one were being hindered by problems with the data being used to enable the day one process. These included national-level practical and legal or data protection issues relating to data sharing between: government departments using different data systems; and between DWP and the Scottish Prison Service where no legal framework existed for the transfer of data. Addressing such anomalies required significant investment of time during the initial stages:

‘There are various legislative barriers ... to sharing of data with other departments. So legal gateways and then actually how you physically share data. [These] are very, very big issues and not just for our two departments but basically across government. That should be a big part of any project to future joint commissioning.’

(MoJ, Policy Lead)

In addition, at the ‘local’ or prison level, there were some problems mentioned with the accuracy of data provided on prisoners’ release dates and difficulties in getting the necessary contact information, including home address and telephone number, for Work Programme providers to make contact with prisoners after their release from custody:

‘A lot of prisoners come out without, contact details ..., so we are dealing with customers that we’re really struggling to engage with, because we have a lack of information about where they are and how to contact them.’

(Supply Chain Manager)

Working in the prison environment

Another difficulty mentioned concerned the practicalities of providing the necessary IT infrastructure in prisons, including external phone lines and broadband for use by Employment and Benefit Advisers (EBAs)²⁴. One respondent, for example, noted the very practical problems associated with fitting broadband cable into 'Victorian establishments':

'Each prison was different but even getting the broadband installed – the thick walls caused problems. The more modern the prison, the easier it was to support the day one policy.'

(DWP, Jobcentre Plus Implementation)

However, there were also challenges of working within the prison system with its necessary rules and regime, and the need to promote day one to prison authorities and to 'get the message across'. One respondent noted that '[we] underestimated how independent the prison sector is', noting some ongoing difficulties for EBAs in getting cooperation from prison management to carry out their work.

One respondent noted the need for flexibility to work within 'a very strict regime' within prisons, giving the example of EBA appointments missed due to prison lock-downs.

Other implementation issues mentioned during interviews with senior stakeholders included the lack of pre-release engagement between the Work Programme providers (see Section 3.4.3 for barriers to provider pre-release work) and the prisons, despite this being encouraged as good practice, and problems with the length of time required to complete a claim via the call centre:

'Making the claim is very difficult, EBA can be on the phone an hour to make a claim, and there just isn't time in their schedule, prisoners sometimes get bored and walk away – all EBAs raise that as a problem.'

(DWP manager)²⁵

2.3 Work Programme design and development

2.3.1 Overview of the Work Programme delivery model

Day one claimants, like all Work Programme claimants, are allocated randomly to one of the prime providers in their locality (Contract Package Area (CPA)) which will provide support for the full two years they are on the Work Programme. Prime providers have their own models for the structure and delivery of support:

- **Single provider model:** attachment to an end-to-end provider (which could be the prime itself) to determine and oversee support throughout the claimant's participation on the programme; they will also provide most or all support.

²⁴ Jobcentre Plus (the public employment service) staff members based in prisons providing advice to prisoners on employment and benefit issues.

²⁵ In October 2014, following on-going feedback from advisers in prisons, a dedicated referral number was introduced to reduce the time taken to get through to a contact centre in order for a claim to be taken.

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- Multiple provider model: claimants are moved through a series of providers, each of which takes full responsibility for the claimant whilst attached to them, i.e. they determine, oversee and provide support for the claimant in the same way as do single providers, but for less than the two years each claimant participates in the Work Programme; transfer between providers follows a rigid timetable; the prime provider using this model believes that claimant motivation is increased by changing provider.

In both models, these providers are known as end-to-ends (even though, for the multiple-provider model, this is a misnomer). In both models some support may be subcontracted, with the end-to-end provider maintaining responsibility. However, some single provider models allow for a substantial period of attachment to another provider (e.g. 18 weeks), with referral dependent on claimant need. The subcontractor takes over full responsibility for the claimant whilst they are attached to them (and receives outcome payments if achieved). Therefore these subcontractors act, for a period, as end-to-end providers and are referred to as end-to-ends. Other subcontractors providing a more limited service (such as a short course, debt advice) are referred to as spot providers, or spots for short.

Within either model, prime providers may employ generalist end-to-ends only or a combination of generalist and specialist end-to-ends (e.g. offender, health, disability specialists). In the former case, Work Programme claimants are allocated geographically to their local end-to-end (or series of local end-to-ends). This is the most common model.²⁶ Where specialist end-to-ends are used, specialist provision may be available across the CPA or in some locations only; referral to the specialist provider may be of all claimants within the specialist group(s) (e.g. all offenders, all people with certain disabilities, all within a certain payment group) or decided on by an assessment of needs.

As well as subcontracting to other providers, end-to-ends may signpost²⁷ claimants to other forms of support. Referrals are both to paid and to free-of-charge provision.

For further information about the structure and models of support, see findings from the Work Programme evaluation.²⁸

Minimum Service Standards

Minimum Service Standards govern provision to payment group 9 (PG9) claimants (and other Work Programme participants). Minimum Service Standards were proposed by prime providers in their tender for the Work Programme and, therefore, differ between prime providers. Whilst they were agreed at the contract award stage, they can be adjusted with the agreement of DWP.

The types of services Minimum Service Standards cover include, for example: claimants having a curriculum vitae (CV); doing a better-off-in-work calculation; and the frequency of contact with a personal adviser. The former two standards had linked time frames, e.g. within four weeks of entry to the programme. A Minimum Service Standard norm for personal adviser contact seemed to be fortnightly. Some Minimum Service Standards required this to be face to face, but others required phone contact only.

²⁶ Newton *et al.* (2012). *Work Programme evaluation: Findings from the first phase of qualitative research on programme delivery*, DWP Research Report No. 821.

²⁷ Signposting refers to Work Programme providers making claimants aware of services external to the prime provider's network of organisations.

²⁸ Newton *et al.* (2012). *Work Programme evaluation: Findings from the first phase of qualitative research on programme delivery*, DWP Research Report No. 821.

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Providers stressed that the Minimum Service Standards were a minimum and, particularly in respect of personal adviser contact, that for many claimants they exceeded their minimum.

Minimum Service Standards for PG9 claimants were no different from those for other participants.

2.3.2 Model design and development

The following section focuses on the providers' delivery models post-release. Pre-release provision and changes to provision are discussed in detail in Section 3.4.

Strategic managers described two approaches to the Work Programme model design and development. One approach was based on financial analysis and planning of the different stages of provision; the other was built on existing practice. One manager using the latter approach said,

'Our Work Programme bid was very much based on what we learnt from a live office with real customers rather than a bid team being locked away in a room for six months.'

(Prime strategic manager)

Providers using this approach examined areas such as training, office environment, employment adviser changes and behaviour, and the impacts of these on participants.

Changes in models of support

Qualitative research with providers in 2013 found that the introduction of day one had led some prime providers to review their models of support.

Some prime providers had decided that their general approach adequately tailored provision to claimants' needs, including the needs of PG9 claimants. As with non-PG9 claimants, specialist needs were expected to be catered for by the generalist end-to-end, either internally or by referral to a subcontractor or other support facility. Rationales for the generalist model were that it had the flexibility to provide for a range of needs, including those of PG9 claimants, and that many claimants, whether PG9 or not, had similar barriers and needs to PG9 claimants (including having a criminal record) and so different provision was not required. However, some providers did describe making adjustments within their generalist model. Such adjustments included:

- the prime providing training on MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) and special case referral participants;
- the prime requiring that each provider (including spot providers) have at least one person with training on MAPPA claimants;²⁹
- end-to-ends introducing specialist offender advisers (for offenders generally rather than PG9 claimants specifically); and
- adding offender specialist subcontractors to their supply chain to provide short courses on disclosure.

²⁹ This has been in place since the start of the Work Programme to meet MAPPA requirements. It is not clear whether the reported adjustment was an error or whether the adjustment was because day one had increased the number of MAPPA claimants, resulting in some providers which had not previously had MAPPA claimants having some.

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Similarly, where specialist end-to-ends did not cover the whole CPA, some prime providers had made changes to their generalist provision, e.g. a prime provider had increased guidance on training for advisers for assisting PG9 claimants (largely around reducing re-offending, employability and 'selling' participants to employers).

Some with a generalist model had introduced specialist end-to-ends into their supply chain due to day one or to a re-offending pilot³⁰. However, access to the specialist end-to-ends varied. One prime, participating in the re-offending pilot, restricted access to their specialist end-to-end to pilot participants. At the other extreme, one delivered its specialist end-to-end provision through a Probation Trust, but allowed access to all participants, including those without a criminal record.

Another change in some models was to increase personal adviser specialism relevant to PG9 claimants within generalist end-to-end providers. In some cases this was through the introduction of specialist PG9 or MAPPA personal advisers, or through additional training for generalist personal advisers (e.g. on disclosure). In some cases, the change was at the instigation of the prime and in others at the initiative of the end-to-end. Other generalists had made no changes, either because they felt their advisers were already adequately skilled for PG9 claimants or because they saw it as inappropriate (that it would be treating PG9 claimants differently and, under the Work Programme, they believed all claimants should be treated equally).

Reviews of the model for support for PG9 claimants and of the need for in-house specialist advisers were continuing at wave 2 of the provider research. Some prime providers with the generalist model were considering whether a specialist end-to-end approach would be better, whilst others were considering whether they should have specialist PG9 claimant advisers within their generalist end-to-ends.

Strategic managers who reported not establishing more focused provision for prison leavers stated that it was unnecessary as PG9 claimants' barriers were not greatly different to other claimants, although some acknowledged that they were likely to have more entrenched issues. Additionally, financial considerations came into play as the reported low referral numbers, and subsequently lower than expected payments, meant they felt it was not a financially viable option.

Programme targets were also given as an explanation for the lack of development of specific support for PG9 claimants. One strategic manager described how the programme targets concentrated efforts on other payment groups:

'When you get measured on particular things, then it tends to be that your behaviour is directed towards particular things.'

(Prime strategic manager)

³⁰ In two CPAs where the day one evaluation was being undertaken, the MoJ and DWP had co-commissioned a pilot as part of the *Breaking the Cycle* Green Paper (Cm 7972, December 2010) to test the application of payment-by-results approaches to the area of criminal justice and the reduction of re-offending.

2.3.3 Subcontracting and other referral for support for PG9 claimants

Whichever model (single or multiple end-to-end and generalist or specialist end-to-end) was used, some end-to-end providers referred PG9 claimants (and other offenders and ex-offenders) to other providers for specialist support (for example, on disclosure, mental health and substance abuse). Referrals were to both paid-for and free-of-charge provision, but the use of each appeared to vary substantially by provider.

The reason for variation in use was, in part, due to differences in specialist in-house provision. For paid external provision, the main constraint was budgetary. However, one generalist said that they were unable to work with specialist organisations in the supply-chain because *'our legal team aren't happy with the level of ... checks'* on whether these organisations *'can be working with our customers'*. This referred to whether the specialist organisations had suitable provision and whether they were Disclosure and Barring Service checked. Therefore the organisation signposted but did not refer PG9 claimants to these organisations. A third factor restricting subcontracting was lack of appropriate specialists in their existing supply chains. The low number of PG9 claimant referrals was seen by some providers as a constraint on developing additional specialist subcontractors.

Changes due to day one

Whilst few of the support needs of PG9 claimants were seen as unique to this group, the introduction of day one had increased the need for certain types of support. Some providers had believed their existing provision adequately met these needs and so had made no changes. For others, day one had prompted changes, with some end-to-end providers which had not previously had specialist offender support establishing a network of specialist providers, whether paid or unpaid.

At the time of the wave 1 fieldwork with providers, some providers were investigating whether to make changes. However, by wave 2 of the research with providers, some reported a reduction in referrals to specialist subcontractors, either due to specialist subcontractors withdrawing from the supply chain or due to the end-to-end providers switching to in-house provision to reduce the financial impact of the overall fall in referrals to the Work Programme (across all payment groups). At the same time, some providers reported a growth in the use of other, unpaid, specialist support, as they became more familiar with external sources of specialist support (including probation and Jobcentre Plus). Both these types of changes had occurred more generally in the Work Programme, but for some providers it clearly affected specialist offender provision.

Work with probation

Day one had led to changes in relation to work with the Probation Service, which was reported as having the resources to fund support beyond that of the Work Programme. Some providers described working closely with probation: agreeing changes in action plans with them; ensuring participants received the most appropriate support; and that there was neither duplication nor conflict. For example, a generalist end-to-end said that the biggest difference for them working with PG9 claimants was their relationship with NOMS:

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'We have found them to be a fantastic support, they can open up funding streams for us. We can also co-ordinate activities, appointments, share goals for the customers' rehabilitations and stable employment. We do find that if they don't know the answer they can point us in the right direction. So in terms of co-ordination, support and funding we find that it is a significant assistance to us.'

(Prime strategic manager, generalist end-to-end)

Some providers and probation services shared premises, which was reported as improving engagement and contact, with advisers seeing the claimant whenever the claimant saw probation. Sharing premises was also seen as reducing the opportunity for claimants to play the two organisations off against each other. For example, the improved communication between advisers and probation meant that claimants were less able to claim successfully that requirements from the other prevented them participating in an activity.

2.4 Summary

In order to mandate on 'day one' it was necessary to institute advance claims pre-release. This required EBAs to work in prison environments, which were often not well structured for the task. As well as facilities such as broadband and external telephone lines not always being available, the prison system with its own rules and ways of working did not easily lend itself to the promotion of day one.

Wider issues surrounding the sharing of data between departments and with the Scottish Prison Service also hindered implementation, as did problems with the accuracy of the data supplied to Work Programme providers on a more local level. Referral numbers were much lower than expected, which influenced both the pre- and post-release provision by some providers as the numbers discouraged a specific focus on the group (see Sections 2.3.1 and 8.3).

By the time of the 2013 research with providers, day one appeared to have prompted some prime providers to change their Work Programme model through introducing specialist advisers or adding specialist end-to-ends to their supply chains. Other prime providers had introduced more specialist training for generalist advisers in generalist end-to-ends, although the benefits of this were less clear. However, by 2014, some generalist end-to-ends were reducing their use of specialist subcontractors, a factor which seems likely to reduce the quality of support for PG9 claimants.

Day one had also led to greater co-operation between Work Programme providers and probation services and, in some cases, a sharing of premises led to particularly close collaboration. Work Programme providers found collaboration very useful, both because probation had greater access to support resources and because collaboration increased the possibility of increased coordination and communication between organisations working with the same claimant.

3 Pre-release engagement

In this chapter the pre-release engagement of prisoners to day one mandation is described. The facilities and staffing available for the operation of day one are detailed, highlighting barriers to its promotion and uptake in the prison setting. The chapter then discusses prisoners' and claimants' views on pre-release engagement, before detailing providers' pre-release activities, as well as discussing changes made by providers between the two waves of interviews.

3.1 Overview of the referral process

As a way of providing immediate employment support on release and facilitating reduced re-offending, prisoners and prison leavers who claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) within five weeks pre-release and 13 weeks post-release are mandated to the Work Programme from day one of release. In some cases, mandation will not apply, namely:

- where entry to the Work Programme is deferred. This is not a common occurrence and tends to be when support other than Work Programme provision could lead to an employment outcome within the three-month deferral period;
- where individuals have already completed two years on the programme, so they will be referred to the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) post-Work Programme support; or
- if the individual is already on the programme as a prison leaver or another payment group.

The ability to make advance claims prior to release is essential for day one mandation. Claims within prisons are made with the help of Employment and Benefit Advisers (EBAs), who also refer the claimant to the Work Programme. Additionally, the EBA is the point of contact for providers to share information with the claimant prior to release. Referrals made within 13 weeks of release will be administered by Jobcentre Plus. The referral process is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

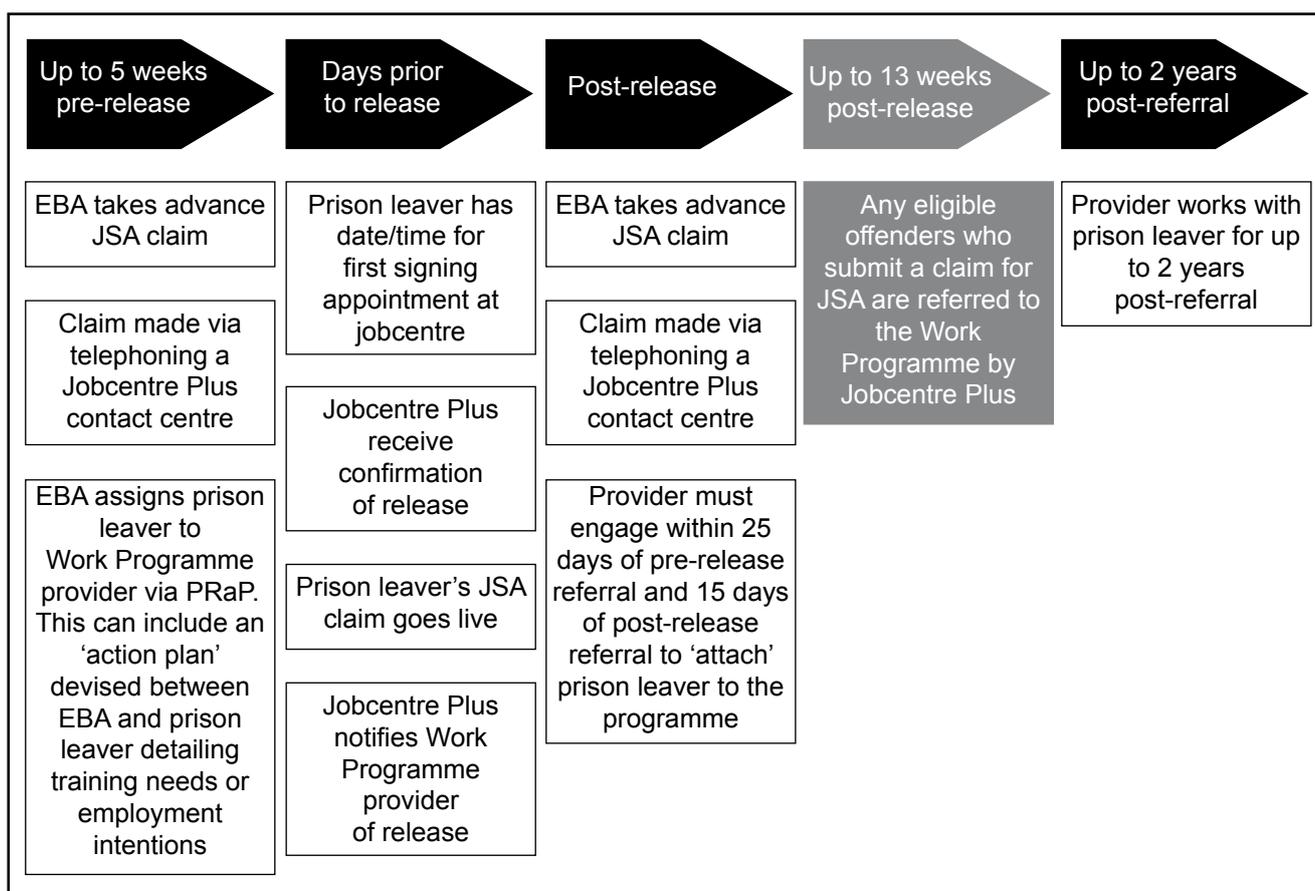
Claimant referrals are randomly assigned to providers. The majority of referrals (apart from special cases, see below) will be through the electronic Provider Referrals and Payments (PRaP) system, where a minimum level of referral information should be available to providers. The minimum information should include items such as contact details, qualifications, aims, job preferences, employment history, and vulnerable participant status, amongst other details. When claimants are referred whilst in custody, providers should in addition receive the contact details of the EBA and the expected release date. Referrals cannot be made without a correspondence address; if the claimant does not have a fixed address or accommodation, a friend's address may be used or, if no other is available, the local Jobcentre address.³¹

³¹ *Work Programme: DWP provider guidance*, Chapter 4 – Accepting Referrals, Initial Participant Engagement and Registering an Attachment, p.5-6, available online at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340677/wp-pg-chapter-4.pdf, accessed 29/12/2014.

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There are some specified variations in the information given through electronic referrals, for example Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) claimant referrals will not include all of the participant's information. MAPPA entails the co-ordinated working of police, probation, prison services and other agencies in the monitoring and supervision of ex-offenders who are deemed to be high risk. It should be noted that EBAs will be unaware of the MAPPA status of prisoners pre-release. This information is only available to Jobcentre Plus from police or probation post-release.

Figure 3.1 Day one referral process



Claimant referrals are randomly assigned to providers. The majority of referrals (apart from special cases, see below) will be through the electronic Provider Referrals and Payments (PRaP) system, where a minimum level of referral information should be available to providers. The minimum information should include items such as contact details, qualifications, aims, job preferences, employment history, and vulnerable participant status, amongst other details. When claimants are referred whilst in custody, providers should in addition receive the contact details of the EBA and the expected release date. Referrals cannot be made without a correspondence address; if the claimant does not have a fixed address or accommodation, a friend's address may be used or, if no other is available, the local Jobcentre address.³²

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³² *ibid.*

not include all of the participant's information. MAPPA entails the co-ordinated working of police, probation, prison services and other agencies in the monitoring and supervision of ex-offenders who are deemed to be high risk. It should be noted that EBAs will be unaware of the MAPPA status of prisoners pre-release. This information is only available to Jobcentre Plus from police or probation post-release.

Referrals for individuals who have Special Customer Record (SCR) status are paper based (clerical referrals) and must not be entered on an electronic system. SCR status applies to individuals where open access to their data 'poses a demonstrable risk to the individual's safety'. In some cases MAPPA participants may have SCR status.

3.2 EBA and resettlement staff in-prison work

3.2.1 Day one staff and facilities in prison

Jobcentre Plus deliver an employment and benefit service which is available in all prisons that require the service (i.e. where a sufficient volume of prisoners are discharged into the community). The introduction of day one had changed the focus of the role of EBAs from advising on a range of benefits to primarily promoting advance applications for JSA and referral to the Work Programme on release.

Staffing

The EBAs were generally based within prison resettlement teams but their degree of integration with other resettlement services varied by prison. Those services, which had been working in the prison over the long term, were better integrated and on the whole had formed good working relationships with prison staff. For example, the longstanding relationship between prisons and Jobcentre Plus was seen as positive, as EBAs were perceived to understand the prison rules and regime well.

The most common model of working across the prisons was two or more EBAs working on a part-time basis with some degree of overlap. Three prisons had one full-time EBA and one had an EBA present for only one morning per week which increased the likelihood that some soon-to-be-released prisoners could be missed.

Facilities in prison

Delivery of day one was dependent on the National Offender Management Service in England and Wales and the Scottish Prison Service supporting Jobcentre Plus by:

- providing office space, broadband and phone lines in prisons for EBAs to conduct interviews;
- providing accurate release dates and data (including National Insurance number and destination address) for all prison leavers (up to five weeks in advance); and
- escorting prisoners to and from interviews with the EBAs in prison (and ensuring a safe environment during the course of the interview).

In 9 of the 11 prisons, EBAs had private offices or access to interview rooms in which to conduct sessions with prisoners. In two prisons EBAs had desks in open plan areas or shared office space with prison officers. A few EBAs reported taking claims on the wings or in shared space. In two prisons, when more than one EBA was on duty, some claims had to be

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taken clerically because there were not enough computers or external phone lines available for two EBAs to work simultaneously.

The implementation of day one mandation had required certain adaptations to existing Jobcentre Plus facilities in prison, including installation of external phone lines and internet access. All prisons provided EBAs with access to a computer and landline, but in 5 of 11 prisons, there was no access to broadband internet at the time of fieldwork. In three of these prisons, broadband had been available previously but the connection was no longer working. Most EBAs had access to a computer linked up to prison systems such as the Prison National Offender Management System (PNOMIS)³³ as well as a Jobcentre Plus laptop.

3.2.2 Publicising day one

Various common strategies were reported by EBAs to advertise and promote day one. These largely focused on the opportunity for prisoners to organise benefits in advance of their release rather than the prospect of attending the Work Programme. Strategies included:

- making prisoners aware of day one mandation and what this involved as part of their induction to prison;
- putting leaflets and posters about day one on prisoner notice boards;
- discussing day one at pre-release sessions, although these were not well attended by prisoners (as reported by the EBAs);
- sending letters to prisoners via the wing officers, inviting them to attend an appointment with the EBA;
- proactively seeking out soon-to-be-released prisoners via the prison release lists to inform them about day one;
- ensuring colleagues in other resettlement services were aware of day one mandation and the opportunity for prisoners to make an advance JSA benefit claim.

Overall, the coordination of the resettlement services in participating prisons was inconsistent, and though there was some promotion of day one by the other resettlement services³⁴ operating in the prisons, this was not routine. It was more common where relationships between the EBA and resettlement staff were most established, for example where the EBA had been in post for some time.

³³ PNOMIS is the operational database for the management of offenders. The system contains information including offenders' personal details, type of offences, custody, sentence length, movement between prisons, release dates, case notes and details of rehabilitation activities.

³⁴ Resettlement staff interviewed included resettlement governors, staff from housing, education, CARAT (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare) teams, National Careers Service and various prison services.

3.2.3 Claims and referral process

Identification of potential day one claimants

EBA identified prisoners four to six weeks prior to their release. This was done in a number of different ways. These included use of the Case Assessment and Tracking System (CATS)³⁵, although several respondents complained that the list was unwieldy due to repetition of prisoner names and a lack of information such as National Insurance and prison numbers. EBAs in some prisons in England and Wales had access to prison systems such as PNOMIS, or a release list, and some, as noted, also made contact with prisoners through pre-release sessions.

Prison staff would also on occasion alert EBAs to those prisoners who were near to release. In Scotland, different data protocols were in place between DWP and the Scottish Prison Service (compared to England and Wales) because of differences with Scottish legislation, so there was a greater need for Scottish prison staff to make prisoners aware of day one and the option to make the advance benefit claim.

EBA appointments

Across Great Britain, generally, a first contact with the EBAs consisted of a short interview where the prisoner was informed about the option of making an advance claim for JSA and that this would involve referral to the Work Programme. They were then given the opportunity to arrange a second appointment to make the claim. However, this could all be done in a single session, especially if release was imminent.

Appointments with EBAs were voluntary, and there was no sanction for non-attendance. The appointment in which the claim was made usually took place around two weeks before release, with some EBAs making claims up to two days before release (see also Section 3.2.4). In most cases claims were taken through a Jobcentre Plus contact centre, although there were a number of EBAs who preferred to take the claims clerically. The speed of response by contact centres was reported by the EBAs to have improved since the inception of day one mandation, but claims often entailed lengthy waits, as noted by one EBA respondent:

'It takes ages to get through ... It doesn't work well. I've suggested a direct line. I'm lucky I'm not dealing with dangerous prisoners. But they can get twitchy and uneasy while they're waiting. It's an unnecessary delay. It's been the worst frustration from the beginning.'

(Employment and Benefit Adviser)³⁶

Sometimes the wait was used as an opportunity for the EBA to talk about prisoners' ambitions for work or training, or other issues they faced. Prisoners were generally given a date for their first signing appointment at Jobcentre Plus, although this was sometimes sent on to their cell at a later date. They were also told to expect a letter from their Work Programme provider within two weeks of their release. Whilst the appointment with

³⁵ CATS is a software package that allows key workers and managers to track and monitor prisoner movement and activity through the prison estate and in the community.

³⁶ In October 2014, following on-going feedback from advisers in prisons, a dedicated referral number was introduced to reduce the time taken to get through to a contact centre in order for a claim to be taken.

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Jobcentre Plus could be soon after release, Work Programme requirements are that providers have the initial face-to-face meeting (attach the claimant) within 15 days of release (or 25 days if the referral was pre-release).

EBA's often provided leaflets about the Work Programme and prisoners were generally told the name of their provider (if it was clear where the prisoner would be assigned), that they risked benefit sanctions if they did not attend that appointment, and that they could be with the Work Programme for up to two years.

During observations, prisoners were also often told to make as much use of the Work Programme as they could, that they would only *'get out what they put in'*. If prisoners mentioned needing particular qualifications, such as Construction Skills Certification Scheme cards or fork-lift licenses, EBA's would generally tell them that the Work Programme would deal with this. Most EBA's also routinely mentioned the need to use Universal Jobmatch³⁷ and would explain or show the prisoner what this system entailed.

The influence of the prison regime

As noted earlier (see Section 3.2.1), EBA's had to work within the particular prison regime. In practice this meant restrictions on the timing and length of appointments with prisoners and often a reliance on prison staff to escort prisoners to and from these appointments. Prisoners were generally collected by a prison officer and escorted to their appointment or made their way to the appointment during periods of free flow³⁸. However, there was some variation by prison regime and, notably, systems worked best where the EBA had developed good working relationships with the prison officers. For example, in one prison, an officer collected small groups of prisoners for the EBA to interview and this worked well; whilst in another, prisoners with appointments were regularly missed by officers from the unlock lists³⁹ and, as a result, often failed to attend their session with the EBA.

3.2.4 Barriers to uptake of day one

Those serving short-term sentences, and those transferred or released on Home Detention Curfew at the end of sentences, were reported by EBA's to be at risk of being missed for day one because of not being around during pre-release (six weeks in advance of release date) or not showing up on the prison system in time to make a claim prior to release. In such cases, and if the EBA was aware, they would make the prisoner a Fresh Start appointment with their local Jobcentre Plus, and several EBA's reported making a note on the Labour Market System (LMS)⁴⁰ stating that the individual was a prison leaver and should be mandated to the Work Programme if claiming JSA.

³⁷ Universal Jobmatch is a government service that enables individuals to search and apply for jobs through a personal account.

³⁸ Free flow is the term given to set periods of time when prisoners move from their cells to other parts of the prison for education, work etc., often unescorted by prison officers.

³⁹ Unlock list is the list a wing officer has to alert him or her that a prisoner needs to be let out of their cell to attend an appointment.

⁴⁰ The LMS is an IT system used by DWP to support getting people into work, whether they are in receipt of benefit or not. The database contains personal details such as National Insurance number, name, gender, refugee status, whether currently in receipt of benefits, amongst other information.

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Issues raised by EBAs and other resettlement staff included that many prisoners are far from job ready (e.g. they are homeless, lacking official forms of identification or bank accounts, have limited past work experience or qualifications and often have substance misuse problems) and that the current economic climate and their offending record will limit the type and extent of work available to them. Many of the prisoners interviewed expected to be homeless on release, often reporting that they had no accommodation arranged for release or citing temporary places in hostels or bed and breakfast accommodation. The majority of those interviewed saw support with finding stable accommodation as an immediate priority for them.

Prisoners having no bank account or any official identification documents was another barrier to making an advance claim; these were complicating factors in a number of observations conducted of EBA sessions with prisoners. In some prisons there was a facility for prisoners to set up bank or credit union accounts and they were encouraged to do this before claiming benefits. At one prison an appointment was set up before release to make sure that each prisoner had a bank account, address and National Insurance number before they made their advance JSA claim, making this process more straightforward.

The following highlights the very practical difficulties encountered when working with newly released prisoners whose lives were often in a state of flux:

'They've got huge issues when they first come out of custody – drugs, accommodation – even though they've given you a care of address, that normally just falls through. Phone numbers change. You need to get a firm foundation before you start referring people on.'

(Adviser, Jobcentre Plus)

The EBAs estimated a significant and increasing number of prisoners they saw were being re-referred to the Work Programme, i.e. they had previously been referred to the programme and were now being referred again with the re-initiation of the JSA claim.⁴¹ Estimates of around half of claimants seen were given in some cases. The proportion varied according to the category of prison, with those holding prisoners with longer sentences less likely to need re-referral.

3.2.5 EBA and resettlement staff perspectives on day one

The opportunity to make an advance benefit claim was viewed positively by most of the EBAs and prison resettlement staff interviewed. The following comments were typical: *'it takes a weight off prisoners' shoulders'*, and *'if they're released without benefits some will resort to old habits'*. A minority felt the lack of any direct contact with local Jobcentre Plus offices could be a disadvantage when seeking local employment opportunities, although they would still have some contact with Jobcentre Plus on release. In the longer term, support towards employment was seen as crucial to prevent re-offending; however, as noted above, this was generally considered as inseparable from other forms of support, particularly having access to stable accommodation.

EBAs reported little or no actual contact with Work Programme providers. Some EBAs had attempted contact with Work Programme providers, inviting providers into the prison, but to no avail.

⁴¹ Work Programme participants' referral to the programme is two years. The provider to which they are referred supports them for that period of time.

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This did not mean that information was not provided to the Work Programme provider on the prisoner. EBAs routinely sent Work Programme providers an action plan through PRaP. The level of detail varied but the plan could include a list of the courses prisoners have taken whilst in custody, work interests, suggestions from the EBA of further training needs and the EBA's contact number for any follow-up information. Most EBAs reported never having had any queries from Work Programme providers.

The main source of information for the EBAs about what was happening in practice was talking to prisoners who had already been on the Work Programme and had then been returned to prison. Although a biased source, given their return to custody, these conversations had raised concerns for some EBAs that the support was insufficient, for example a text every two weeks, or that there were delays in providers contacting prisoners after their release.

Several resettlement staff voiced their concern that due to the lack of communication between Work Programme providers and the prisons, the providers knew little about preparatory work for employment or training already undertaken with prisoners, raising the risk of duplicating activities and limiting cost effectiveness of resettlement interventions.

There was also some frustration expressed by those working in the Careers and Education services about the effect of JSA conditionality; a requirement that JSA claimants are available to search for work which can preclude them from participating in employment-related training when claiming JSA, although not all career advisers and education staff were aware of this potential conflict. One interviewee described the frustration of finding training opportunities for prisoners then being told they were unable to attend.

A final common topic in the interviews with the EBAs was that their role of assisting prisoners to make advance claims for JSA and referring them on to the Work Programme was narrower in scope than before day one, when they had advised about a number of different welfare benefits – including crisis loans and the Community Care Grant – and employment queries. For some EBAs this made their current job less interesting or challenging.

3.3 Prisoner and claimant perspectives

3.3.1 Prisoners' perspectives

Prisoners, like the staff interviewed, were positive about the opportunity to make an advance claim, as often their previous experience of claiming benefits post-custody had involved long waits or '*lots of telephone calls*'. Most understood that attendance at the Work Programme was mandatory; we observed that they were routinely informed about the risk of benefit sanction if they failed to attend their appointments. However, at this pre-referral stage, they were much less clear about what support the Work Programme was offering and it was suggested by the EBAs that amid their other concerns in the run-up to release, information about the Work Programme was unlikely to sink in. In addition, EBAs were unable to provide detailed information about what support the Programme might provide as they had little idea themselves. The reasons for this are discussed in Section 3.4 but include the random allocation of prisoners to Work Programme providers and the limited contact between the providers and the prisons.

Prisoners who had been on the Work Programme previously could not always remember what this had entailed or had not received an appointment before being returned to prison.

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Where feedback was provided, views were mixed as to its usefulness. However, one issue raised was the length of wait for contact for a first appointment after release, with some reporting four weeks or more, and one ten weeks. Communicating with the prison leaver may have been difficult because of a lack of contact details post-release and claimants' circumstances on leaving custody (discussed in Section 3.2.4).

Expectations of what support the Work Programme might provide were sometimes vague, with a number of interviewees stating they did not know or 'had no clue'. Those who had some expectations mentioned general employment support, including access to training, help with writing curricula vitae (CVs) and applying for jobs, and advice on whether or not to declare convictions when applying for work.

3.3.2 Claimants' perspectives on advance benefit claims

Claimants reported mixed experiences of the support they had received in prison prior to release. A number discussed contact with EBAs, with this happening from 16 weeks to shortly before release. In general, EBAs helped them set up their advance benefit claims, though a few who had had contact over a longer period of time mentioned help setting up a bank account and discussions around CVs and potential jobs. Some respondents who had previous experiences of claiming benefits discussed the advantage of advance claims. They reported that claiming pre-release was easier and less time consuming than claiming in the community. Additionally, a few respondents reported that it helped them avoid financial hardship.

As would be expected, when claims were set up pre-release, individuals reported receiving their benefits in a shorter period of time, with one stating receipt within a few days of release. This individual was positive about the entire process:

'It helps you get your money quicker and you haven't got to attend so much appointments when you first get out. You've got enough to get on with as it is without remembering this remembering that ... It does help in a big way yes.'

(Claimant)

A number of those who claimed whilst in prison stated receiving their payments within one to three weeks. One claimant had expected payment to be quicker and some had said the time they needed to wait before receipt of their payment had caused difficulties, with some mentioning that crisis loans⁴² were no longer available.⁴³

However, not all prison leavers mentioned seeing an EBA, and a number of those interviewed made their claim after release. Additionally, a prison leaver mentioned having contact with EBAs a few times prior to release but had not had a claim set up. The interviewee felt dissatisfied with the meetings as the discussions centred around jobs for which he felt unqualified rather than discussing benefits and realistic employment options.

Of those submitting claims after release, the time period for receipt of benefits ranged from ten days to six weeks after the claim was made. Some of these claimants also discussed the financial difficulties of waiting for payments. Although Short Term Benefit Advances were in

⁴² Crisis loans no longer exist, having been replaced by Local Welfare Provision administered by local authorities, each of which operate their own schemes.

⁴³ Short Term Benefit Advances were established after the removal of crisis loans on 1 April 2013.

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place, the claimants who mentioned their financial difficulties did not discuss them, and we are unable to establish from this research whether they were aware of the facility.

Initial information to claimants about the Work Programme

The majority of survey respondents⁴⁴, (63 per cent; see Table 3.1) did not attend an information session on the Work Programme before their release. Those who had spent more than 12 months in prison were less likely to report attending an information session prior to their release than those who spent less than 12 months in prison. These sessions are distinct from the meetings to make an advance claim.

Table 3.1 Attendance at an information session prior to release and differences by time spent in prison

	Total %	Time spent in prison ¹	
		Less than 12 months %	More than 12 months %
Yes	28.5	29.0	27.6
No	62.5	60.1	66.1
Don't know	9.0	10.8	6.3
<i>Base</i>	1,013	585	428

Base: All respondents.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level, percentages do not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Of those attending information sessions, nearly three-quarters found their session useful (74 per cent) (see Table 3.3a in Appendix B). Where claimants did not attend an information session they often still had a clear understanding of what support the Work Programme would offer on the basis of information supplied to them by their Jobcentre Plus adviser. Twenty-eight per cent (Table 3.2) had no understanding of the support that would be available.

⁴⁴ PG9 claimants who had been attached by a Work Programme provider between March 2012 and July 2013.

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Table 3.2 Understanding of support available from Work Programme of those who did not attend an information session and differences by time spent in prison

Extent of understanding	Total %	Time spent in prison ¹	
		Less than 12 months %	More than 12 months %
Yes – completely understood support available	33.9	35.5	31.6
Yes – understood to some extent support available	33.8	30.5	38.6
No – did not understand at all what support was available	27.9	28.1	27.7
Not sure/cannot remember	4.4	5.9	2.1
<i>Base</i>	710	408	302

Base: Those who had not attended an information session or do not know.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

In the qualitative interviews with prison leavers, a few mentioned discussing the Work Programme with their EBA whilst in custody. The claimants reported being told that they would be provided training or help with finding jobs, whilst some were not given any information.

3.4 Providers' pre-release engagement

DWP guidance to Work Programme providers states that providers can engage with prisoners pre-release, but this is not a requirement.⁴⁵

3.4.1 Pre-release engagement

During the first wave of provider interviews, a number of providers discussed working in prisons. This consisted of providing information to either prisoners or prison staff. For example, management staff from one prime had organised fairs in the prison to promote the programme. Another had given talks to soon-to-be-released prisoners on a monthly basis since August 2012. The talks provide details of the programme and aim to convey the importance of attendance to avoid sanctions and losing benefit payments.

Providers also worked with prison staff to improve effectiveness of the programme, as well as attending targeted events. One subcontractor described how the prime had established a dedicated liaison officer to work with prisons; they also reported visiting a prison with other providers to improve their relationship with the prison service and probation. Another prime reported attending a DWP partnership meeting that aimed to promote a more seamless connection between the various services for ex-offenders.

Some providers at the time of the wave 1 interviews reported attempts to arrange pre-release work. For example, two prime providers in one contract package area (CPA) were

⁴⁵ *Work Programme: DWP provider guidance*, Chapter 4 – Accepting Referrals, Initial Participant Engagement and Registering an Attachment, available online at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340677/wp-pg-chapter-4.pdf, accessed 29/12/2014.

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in discussions with resettlement teams in two private prisons to hold monthly sessions with soon-to-be-released prisoners. The interviewee discussed the benefits of working with the other prime in the area. When re-interviewed at wave 2, joint pre-release work was not in place, but one prime had established a good standard of pre-release engagement, as described by the strategic manager:

'The idea was that we would hold a market place. So each month individual outside agencies, so a Work Programme provider, local community-based projects, housing, would all come in into a room, we'd be sitting around tables and prison leavers would come in and then they would be able to go to the agents that they wanted to speak to and find out more about. The idea was then to engage with them, to talk about the Work Programme, the benefits of the Work Programme.'

(Strategic manager)

The prime has involved its subcontractors in the supply chain, with a number of them on a rotational basis going to the prison for monthly visits. More recently the prime has taken the idea to two other prisons, one of which was a public prison which held its first 'market place' shortly before the wave 2 interview.

Other providers reported visiting prisons, some with subcontractors and one with another prime, to raise awareness of the programme. One subcontractor, after much negotiation, had been able to get security clearance to work in all the prisons from where they obtained referrals. However, this only related to working with claimants who had previously been attached and subsequently re-entered custody.

3.4.2 Advantages of engagement pre-release

A number of providers indicated that they would like to engage with prison leavers prior to release, with some saying they saw the benefits of this in other support they provided. For example, a manager from an ex-offender specialist subcontractor felt that pre-release engagement resulted in improved attachment rates.

An adviser at a prime discussed how the programme could be improved by engaging and working on action plans with prisoners whilst they are still in custody. She believed that working with them intensively at that stage could prevent them from developing negative behaviour in relation to the programme.

3.4.3 Barriers to engagement pre-release

Barriers to pre-release engagement broadly related to: random allocation of prison leavers to Work Programme providers; difficulties in gaining access to prisons; and the reported low number of referrals exacerbated by some prison leavers leaving the CPA on release.

There were very few reports of attempted or actual joint pre-release work between prime providers. Random allocation of claimants to providers was given as a primary reason for this; providers do not know which prisoners will be referred to them and therefore believe pre-release work is not worthwhile. Random allocation was also given as a reason against more-focused engagement. A further constraint on pre-release work is costs, with some providers saying the low referral numbers made it unviable financially.

Establishing contact with prisons to try to institute pre-release work was reported to be difficult. One provider said that the local private prison had shown more openness to

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engaging with them and felt that it may be easier to access private establishments. They reported that finding the correct person and gaining access in prisons was time consuming, with current payment group 9 (PG9) numbers not warranting this investment. A delivering prime echoed the views on the difficulty of gaining entry into prisons and stated that they would ideally like to operate a model which included supply chain partners that were already working in the prison. Similarly, a manager from a prime stated that they had tried to make contact with a number of prisons in their area but were not able to pursue this as Jobcentre Plus saw it as overwhelming for the prisoners and inappropriate in terms of competition with the other prime.

Other barriers included individuals leaving the area on release as well as the overall low number of PG9 referrals, which providers reported made it financially unviable to undertake pre-release work (the latter was also stated to be prohibitive to investing further in pre-work provision for this payment group). A provider said that they had discussed the possibility of seconding a staff member from a local prison to work with claimants in prison before starting the programme. However, they would only do this if they had more prison leavers on the programme.

3.5 Summary

Two important aspects of day one mandation in the pre-release stage are: the facility to make advance benefit claims; and the provision of information on the Work Programme.

3.5.1 Advance claims

Advance claims were viewed positively by many claimants and EBAs. The process is easier than when claiming post-release and the generally faster receipt of benefit payments helps prevent financial hardship. Nevertheless, there were a number of issues related to advance claims:

- Delays in processing claims due to prisoners lacking identification, bank accounts or National Insurance numbers. In some prisons EBAs and other resettlement services were assisting individuals to obtain identification and to open bank accounts, and this should be practised more widely to reduce processing delays.
- In some prisons the claims process was started as little as two days prior to release, thereby greatly decreasing the likelihood of faster benefit receipt on release.
- EBAs at times had difficulties making contact with prisoners, particularly those serving very short sentences, those transferred at short notice, or those released on Home Detention Curfew. Contributing to this difficulty was either the lack of an EBA or only a single part-time EBA in the prison.⁴⁶ Additionally, some prisoners miss scheduled appointments due to not being released from their cells; this appears to be less likely where EBAs have a longer-standing relationship with prison staff.
- Prisoners see EBAs on a voluntary basis, so those who decline the meeting or are unaware of it will be precluded from making an advance claim. As not all PG9 JSA claims are made in prison it is possible that some of these claims could have been made pre-release if individuals had actively considered this option whilst in custody.

⁴⁶ The EBA service is provided according to the volume of discharge. The level of resources varies and is dependent on the volumes of prisoners being released from each prison.

3.5.2 Information on the Work Programme

Providing information on the Work Programme was more problematic due to poor co-ordination between those carrying out pre-release work and Work Programme providers, and due to limited pre-release work. For example:

- There was a lack of routine contact between EBAs, prison resettlement staff and Work Programme provider staff which led to limited information being provided on programme support and a concentration on warnings about sanctions. This was detrimental to the promotion of the programme.
- Some EBAs appeared to incorrectly indicate that the Work Programme would provide qualifications. This gave prisoners unrealistic expectations as, in reality, this was often limited to a guaranteed job outcome.
- There was not a great degree of pre-release work; an example of innovative pre-release work was of a 'market place' in a prison that enabled prisoners to meet a range of service providers, including Work Programme providers.

Improved contact may facilitate pre-release work by providers by making access easier. Though this may not be sufficient to overcome providers' stated financial disincentives arising from random allocation and low referral numbers, at a minimum it should allow them to make better use of existing services to promote the programme.

4 Initial contact and decision-making

If prison leavers are referred within prison, providers are required to attach them within 25 working days of referral. For those referred within 13 weeks of release this is 15 days, i.e. the same time period as for other mandatory payment groups.⁴⁷ Attachment refers to the initial engagement between provider and claimant.

This chapter describes: claimants' and providers' views on referral and attachment to the Work Programme once they have left prison; claimants' and providers' perspectives on how Work Programme support is decided; and barriers to finding employment as seen by prisoners, claimants and providers.

4.1 Referrals and attachment

4.1.1 Claimants' experiences

Of the claimants interviewed, a number discussed first hearing about the Work Programme from Jobcentre Plus after release. Of these, some reported not being given any information about the nature of support offered, whilst others reported being told that they would get help with training and finding work. Several claimants also stated that Jobcentre Plus advisers discussed the mandatory nature of the programme and the consequences of non-attendance.

Half (50.1 per cent) were contacted initially by post (see Table 4.1). Younger prison leavers were much more likely to be contacted initially by telephone or a mobile phone number.

⁴⁷ *Work Programme: DWP provider guidance*, Chapter 4 – Accepting Referrals, Initial Participant Engagement and Registering an Attachment, p.3-4, available online at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340677/wp-pg-chapter-4.pdf, accessed on 30/12/2014.

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Table 4.1 Initial mode of contact of participants and differences by age

Mode of contact	Total %	Age ¹	
		Younger than 25 %	25 and older %
Letter in the post	50.1	46.7	51.9
Telephone/mobile	34.7	41.6	21.2
Meeting at the Jobcentre	8.0	7.3	8.4
Customer made contact	1.4	1.4	1.3
E-mail	1.2	0.9	1.4
In prison	0.5	0	0.7
Meeting at Work Programme office	0.5	0.5	0.6
No contact	0.4	0	0.6
Others	2.0	1.7	2.2
Not sure/cannot remember	1.0	0	1.6
<i>Base</i>	1,013	<i>237</i>	<i>776</i>

Base: All respondents.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level. Percentages do not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

When asked how long it took to start the programme after they had agreed to participate, over 40 per cent of respondents indicated that they had started with their provider within two weeks of their referral to the Work Programme (see Table 4.2). A further 19 per cent were attached to the programme within three weeks. However, a substantial minority (16 per cent) were not attached for four weeks or more, which tallied with provider reports that they had substantial difficulties getting hold of participants due to partial or incorrect contact details (see Section 4.1.2). It should be noted that participants might change address following release which could mean that if contact details were held by Jobcentre Plus these could be out of date.

Table 4.2 Time elapsed between agreeing with Jobcentre Plus to take part in the Work Programme and starting with a provider

Time elapsed	%
Less than a week	20.0
At least 1 but less than 2 weeks	22.5
At least 2 but less than 3 weeks	19.2
At least 3 but less than 4 weeks	8.9
4 weeks or more	16.3
Don't know/can't remember	13.1
<i>Base</i>	1,013

Base: All respondents.

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The claimant interviews provided different views on the appropriateness of the time period from release to attachment. A number felt that the transition to the programme had been very swift, with a few feeling that they needed more time to organise other aspects of their life before engaging with the programme, as described by one claimant:

'I've just, where I've just come out of, and I'm just trying to get my head round everything and, you know, within days I've got to go and start doing all this sort of thing. Actually what I needed was a few weeks just to get my head round it, how to handle what I'm doing.'

(Claimant)

In contrast, some interviewees were happy with the quick attachment and wanted to start looking for work as soon as possible. Payment group 9 (PG9) claimants are a heterogeneous group and their distinct opinions are likely to reflect personal circumstances and barriers.

Additionally, at times, quick attachment could be followed by little subsequent interaction or by a fairly long gap between attachment and further contact (e.g. a month) which was seen as unhelpful; sometimes subsequent follow-up was delayed due to providers being unable to contact claimants.

4.1.2 Providers' views on attachment and referrals and managing contact

Referral and attachment rates

Providers generally reported that PG9 participants were more difficult to attach and in some cases the gap between referral and attachment was greater for this group. Many of the providers pointed out the low rate of PG9 attachments by giving attachment numbers, or percentage comparisons of prison leavers' attachment in relation to the overall level for all participants. Reported attachment at wave 1 ranged from as low as 42 per cent for a specialist ex-offender subcontractor to 90 per cent for a managing agent prime. These figures can be compared to the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) statistics,⁴⁸ which show that the attachment rate for PG9 claimants is around 73 per cent across the programme for the period of March 2012 to August 2013.^{49, 50}

Providers also reported low referral numbers for this group. Some providers said that the low numbers meant that it was difficult to focus on this group in terms of differentiating performance or designing specific provision.

⁴⁸ This figure was calculated using the DWP's tabulation tool to examine referrals and attachments for PG9 claimants for the period March 2012 to August 2013. The tool is available online at: http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/WorkProg/wp_mon_jo/tabtool_wp_mon_jo.html, accessed on 30/12/2014.

⁴⁹ The first wave of field work ended in August 2013.

⁵⁰ The attachment rate of prison leavers has been increasing through the course of the programme; DWP figures show that the total attachments for years 3 and 4 are around 90 per cent.

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In the second wave of interviews some providers discussed changes in referrals, identifying a decline in numbers in comparison to the previous year and saying that the claimants being referred were more often further from employment and had more complex needs. However, some advisers did highlight that the lower numbers meant that they could work more intensively with individuals.

Difficulties in attachment

A number of providers discussed the issues participants faced on release and acknowledged that the Work Programme was not their first priority on release.

'We can't rely on a customer to walk out of a prison and think the most important place they need to go is to a Work Programme provider. It is not going to happen.'

(Manager, delivering prime)

Due to difficulties in attachment an adviser at a prime provider believed that those with longer sentences of at least two to three years should be given six weeks to adapt after release to enable them to deal with issues such as arranging accommodation and to adjust to life outside of prison. The adviser felt that trying to involve claimants too early could be counterproductive.

'It's a two-year programme, ... all the things you're expected to do, when they're literally just out, it is quite a lot, and then actually they might disengage.'

(Adviser, delivering prime)

Despite difficulties in attaching some prison leavers, providers in general mentioned the importance of early face-to-face contact to ensure participants engaged.

A number mentioned the necessity of improving handovers from prisons, saying that currently warm handovers were not in place. One manager from a specialist ex-offender subcontractor discussed being dissatisfied with the extent of Employment and Benefit Adviser (EBA) involvement after release, believing them to be too uninvolved once the claimant had left prison. One subcontractor pointed out that if a prison did not have an EBA then referrals were not received from the prison for that period of time.

A number of providers discussed the much lower attachment rates from prisons which tend to hold offenders who previously resided in other parts of the country who, when released, often left the contract package area (CPA). One provider believed that referrals and attachments could be improved if referrals were direct from Jobcentre Plus, saying that a call could be made by Jobcentre Plus to the provider whilst the participant was at the Jobcentre Plus office, thereby increasing the chances of maintaining contact with the claimant.

Many providers stressed the difficulty of establishing contact and therefore attaching customers due to receiving incorrect contact details. The issue of incorrect contact details was repeatedly highlighted by providers and was seen as greatly hampering attachment. One provider discussed the difficulty for Jobcentre Plus of keeping up-to-date details but still emphasised the importance of doing so:

'... quite often because offenders don't have an agreed place to go, before they leave prison, so I understand I'm not blaming Jobcentre Plus for that, but equally what I'm saying is how important it is to get hold of these people from the very first moment possible.'

(Manager, delivering prime)

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The same provider said that adding the Jobcentre Plus office address was equivalent to not having an address.

Related to this was the issue of not receiving up-to-date information on changing participant circumstances, with some providers being unaware of participants' return to custody for a considerable period of time.

Difficulties in engagement

Not only was attachment in general more difficult for this group but engagement on the programme was also an issue. Providers noted that prison leavers are '*a slightly more transient group*' with more '*chaotic lifestyles*'.

Maintaining contact was also challenging if participants left the area.⁵¹ (DWP provider guidance states that claimants who move away from a prime provider's CPA remain the prime provider's responsibility.⁵²) Those that had offices in the new location would try to transfer the individual. One provider discussed trying to negotiate an arrangement with the Work Programme provider in the new area to act as their subcontractor for claimants who had engaged, thereby keeping the referral with the original prime. If participants had not engaged they would attempt to track the participant through the local probation provider.

If the claimant could not be supported by another provider they were contacted by telephone or letter, though this seemed to be the default for some providers when participants moved away. A number of providers discussed the inadequacy of this type of support, though one provider stated that there were benefits of prison leavers moving to a different area as this removed them from previous acquaintances.

When participants returned to custody, providers reported stopping engagement until they were informed of their subsequent release. However, one provider had gained access to individuals who they had previously attached and had re-entered custody. This had come about from their attempts to establish pre-release work which had been limited to working with individuals they had previously engaged.

In relation to private and public prisons, a number of providers stated that they did not find any real differences in terms of referrals or attachments.

⁵¹ Transforming Rehabilitation aims to locate the majority (at least 80 per cent) of offenders in resettlement prisons that are in their home location for the final months of their custody to ease the transition process. The women's and young adult's estate are to be considered.

⁵² *Work Programme: DWP provider guidance*, Chapter 5 – Change of Circumstances and Notifications, p.5, available online at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340678/wp-pg-chapter-5.pdf, accessed on 30/12/2014.

4.1.3 Information received on referral and attachment by providers

Information on claimants is exchanged between Jobcentre Plus and prime providers through the Provider Referral and Payment (PRaP) system⁵³. The provider guidance indicates that a minimum level of referral information should be available to providers.⁵⁴

Only prime providers are able to access PRaP. When subcontractors are used in the supply of provision, the prime must ensure that secure procedures are in place when information is exchanged and stored outside of PRaP.⁵⁵

Providers generally reported a lack of information on PRaP, and found this to be problematic. A key omission was individuals' contact details, which made attachment extremely difficult. Jobcentre Plus will enter contact details whenever they are known; at times this could be the claimant's last mobile number prior to entering custody or the local Jobcentre Plus office if there is no known address. As many prison leavers do not have stable accommodation on release, the likelihood of having correct contact details for this group soon after release is likely to be low. Several providers felt that the information provided on release was inadequate, with one subcontractor describing having contact details for less than half of their caseload and missing action plan information in the notes section.

In addition, a number of providers said that they had not always been informed of participants' Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) status which they felt could potentially have significant consequences in terms of safeguarding the range of individuals with whom the participant could come in contact. A subcontractor reported changing their working practices by always having two advisers attending the initial meeting and scheduling it at the least busy times of the day. They also had a higher initial risk assessment for the PG9 group in comparison to other claimants before deciding whether to involve them in group activities. This was due to concerns that they may be unknowingly working with a high-risk individual.

Providers also wanted more details of the participants' offences rather than having to garner the information from the individual, which is not always reliable. Providers wanted offence information: to target provision; to corroborate what they had been told by the participant; or because of anxieties for staff safety. Some providers discussed the need for risk information and stated if they could not get the full offence history they would like risk markers. The provider also pointed out that a safeguarding flag was available for some other payment groups but not prison leavers. Providers who made this request appeared to be unaware that Jobcentre Plus does not have claimants' offence history.

⁵³ The PRaP system provides a single repository of Contracted Employment Programmes data including providers, contracts, services and charges.

⁵⁴ The minimum information should include items such as contact details, qualifications, aims, job preferences, employment history, and vulnerable participant status, amongst other details. Work Programme: DWP provider guidance, Chapter 4 – Accepting Referrals, Initial Participant Engagement and Registering an Attachment, p.5-6, available online at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264168/wp-pg-chapter-4.pdf, accessed on 30/12/2014.

⁵⁵ Association of Employment and Learning Providers (2008) 'DWP briefing on Provider Referral and Payment system', available online at: www.aelp.org.uk/news/general/details/dwp-briefing-on-provider-referral-and-payment-syst/, accessed on 30/12/2014.

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In contrast, a few providers were happy to receive minimal or no information to start with a 'clean slate'.

In some cases providers used their contacts at the Probation Service or Jobcentre Plus to gain further information. This, however, was reliant on personal relations, with one provider describing having good relationships with two of their Jobcentre Plus offices but not the other. One provider stated that they have little interaction with the Probation Service and it would be helpful to know the claimants' probation conditions. Another suggested that there should be an information-sharing agreement on MAPPA participants with the Probation Service similar to that in place for drugs and alcohol. The provider added that the Ministry of Justice and DWP had encouraged them to make their own links with probation. However, because this required claimant consent, providers raised concerns regarding their ability to address potential safety issues prior to meeting the claimant.

4.1.4 Non-randomised referral

Providers were asked about the potential for non-randomised referral in the first wave of interviews. Some providers, both prime providers and subcontractors, felt that random allocation was fine or more fair and so did not see the need to change the system.

An adviser from one prime saw some scope for non-randomised referral, stating that they could further develop their current pre-release work with the individuals who would be referred to them. A manager at a subcontractor said that their low level of PG9 referrals prohibited them from working with prison leavers as a separate group, which they had found useful with claimants from other payment groups. The manager therefore felt prison leavers should be purposefully allocated to ensure providers have sufficient numbers to encourage them to provide more targeted services.

4.1.5 Summary

Providers state that attachment of PG9 claimants is more difficult in comparison to other claimant groups. One of the reasons given by many of the providers is the outdated contact details they receive on referral via PRaP. Details obtained pre-release or just after release can become obsolete in a great part due to individuals' uncertain circumstances on release. Another reason given by some providers is that of prison leavers moving out of the area on release, making attachment and subsequent engagement challenging. Providers also discussed prison leavers' challenging circumstances on release, particularly in relation to accommodation, and their multiple barriers and '*chaotic*' lifestyles.

The three issues mentioned above draw attention to the timings of certain requirements of the programme. For example, the first two problems may be mitigated to some extent by giving providers a longer period of time to attach PG9 claimants, enabling more current contact and location details to be collated and entered on PRaP. This would also give more time for prison leavers' MAPPA status to be established, which is only available to Jobcentre Plus on the advice of the police or probation services after release.

Mandation to the Work Programme immediately on release may not be suitable for all prison leavers who claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)⁵⁶. The evidence from the research is conflicting. Some EBAs, prison leavers and providers discussed the merits of quick

⁵⁶ Day 1 mandation only applies to prison leavers who claim JSA. Actively seeking employment is a condition of JSA receipt.

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support to enable individuals to swiftly focus on employment, and thus also diminishing the likelihood of re-offending. However, in contrast, other providers, advisers and PG9 claimants discussed the demands and the difficulties of life just after release. One of the principal issues is homelessness or being in temporary accommodation, but prison leavers also have to juggle the demands of probation, their personal and family relationships, accessing money and readjusting to life outside of prison. For some, mandation to the Work Programme will add a level of stress that impacts on attachment and engagement. The fact that there are contrasting views can be explained to some extent by prison leavers' differing circumstances and characteristics. The experience and capability of an individual with a drug misuse problem involved in repeat offending differs vastly from someone with one, possibly longer-term conviction and different barriers.

4.2 Deciding on support

4.2.1 Assessments and action plans

After attachment and induction to the programme, support to the participant starts with an assessment from which an action plan is drawn up. The preliminary assessment, with information received from Jobcentre Plus, is the starting point to the action plan. The action plan is primarily a record of the provision received by the claimant, and their planned activity, including mandatory activity, through their time on the programme. It details: the support given; the participants' requirements through a series of activities; the outcomes of these activities; as well as the changing requirements as individuals progress through the programme.

Claimants' perspectives

Claimants were not expressly asked about assessments and action plans in the interviews. The first wave of provider interviews established that the process was the same for all Work Programme participants regardless of payment group, and detailed information on these areas have been obtained as part of the Work Programme evaluation.⁵⁷ Instead, prison leavers were asked to discuss their first session with their Work Programme provider and, if not the same session, their first session with the Employment Adviser. These initial sessions are usually when assessments are carried out, with the information obtained being used as the starting point for action plans.

Individuals reported doing a range of activities in their initial sessions; a few stated that they only had an induction at the first meeting, and these respondents tended to think the session was not useful. Others reported having an induction, as well as an assessment or drawing up a curriculum vitae (CV) or action plan with their adviser. Claimants who felt positive about the first few sessions gave reasons such as: gaining important information about the programme; learning about the consequences of not attending to their benefits; having clear goals to work to; and feeling more confident. One respondent felt relieved to be able to openly discuss his criminal convictions, whilst another greatly appreciated having support which he felt he had not had in the past. He added that the lack of support in part may have contributed to his re-offending. This individual reported that he was 'buzzing' after his first session and described how the support had given him confidence:

⁵⁷ Newton *et al.* (2012). *Work Programme evaluation: Findings from the first phase of qualitative research on programme delivery*, Chapter 6 (Assessment) and Chapter 8 (Action Planning), DWP Research Report No. 821.

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'A bit of support perks you up a bit, makes you put your chest out a bit.'

(Claimant)

Several of the responses showed the impact and importance of claimants' interactions with their advisers. These individuals discussed how their advisers made them feel welcome or more confident about getting a job, whilst one said he liked having a dedicated adviser with whom he had a good relationship.

Those who were not happy with the sessions stated that they did not make good use of their time as the sessions could have been done by telephone or because they did not add to their existing efforts. Another claimant felt that it was a fairly standardised service rather than being a personalised session that took into account his offending history.

Providers' perspectives

Providers have standardised procedures for assessing participant circumstances, with the same provider-specific tools and processes being applied to all participants, regardless of payment group.

The primary stage of the assessment entails gathering information, often through a series of structured questions or discussion. The prime providers tend to have bespoke computer-based tools, which are also used by some of their subcontractors. Providers report assessing participants over a range of areas, such as their current situation, employment-related needs and barriers, and wider obstacles to finding employment.

The preliminary information is used in two ways: firstly, as a means to initiate more in-depth discussions between the participant and their adviser in order to formulate an action plan; and secondly, to assess individuals' job readiness. In the latter case, participants are often categorised into groups according to their closeness to achieving employment. Participants' job readiness ratings usually prescribe the type and amount of contact they have with the adviser. This was the same for all participants, though some providers felt that the assessment process served PG9 participants less well as they tended to be more reticent at early stages, and therefore the degree of their barriers and needs were not fully established until later in the programme. Another indicated that the assessment may be less effective for prison leavers as individuals who have been through the criminal justice system have been exposed to many questionnaires and could therefore be skilled in giving the responses they feel to be the correct ones.

Not all providers use the initial information for this type of classification; some make the decision after more detailed conversations with the participant. One provider was keen to highlight that their assessment was thorough and took place over a period of time rather than in front of the computer in one session:

'... we're sitting people down over a period of a couple of months ... and understanding the individual and finding out the barriers before we actually recommend what the intervention should be.'

(Operational staff member, specialist offender subcontractor)

Another provider discussed how participants are reassessed after a period of six months in conjunction with being moved to a different adviser. They reported that at this stage prison leavers are more comfortable discussing their needs and barriers. Providers state that they move claimants between advisers if it is better for the claimant or adviser. Some also reported moving them after a period of time to get a fresh perspective and new ideas.

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As well as pure employment-related needs, providers discussed evaluating claimants' soft skills and a range of issues such as housing, physical and mental health, and substance misuse; this is in addition to PG9 claimants' offending-related barriers. Some of this is garnered through the initial information gathering stage; other details are revealed by the individual as the claimant and adviser establish a relationship. For example, one subcontractor reported that the nature and extent of participants' needs are determined over the course of the first six months of engagement. The efficacy of the process was also discussed by a manager from a prime who stated that the experience of the staff, including their previous welfare-to-work experience, have helped them be more effective in their assessments.

Providers describe how action plans make use of assessment data as well as information gathered from the dialogue between the adviser and participant during their regular contact.

Action plans can specify: claimants' goals – these can be short and long-term; identified barriers; and more immediate actions, such as applying for a particular job. A key feature of the plans is to be an ongoing record of participants' progress from initial engagement to programme exit. They are therefore modified to detail actions and outcomes throughout programme participation. Therefore providers reported noting the steps taken by claimants to fulfil the specified tasks and the continual updating of plans as described by a subcontractor manager:

'That's where the action plan starts and then in a nutshell as we go along, month by month for the two years, any training or any job experience, work placements, volunteer, gets jotted down on the action plan. So in theory, at the end of two years the action plan should be a kind of road map of what they've done.'

(Manager, generalist subcontractor)

A number of providers discussed the importance of claimant involvement and stressed that it was two-way process conducted on a one-to-one basis with the adviser and participant. Though the extent of claimant involvement and degree of direction by the adviser will vary, with factors such as participants' engagement with the programme, how proactive they are, their self-confidence and their expectations of finding work effecting their contribution. In addition, as part of the process, actions are agreed to by claimants, with one provider mentioning that plans are printed off and signed by the claimants, and another reported creating a tick list that is signed and agreed by claimants.

A number said that they have regular and/or informal updates every two weeks, i.e. to match the minimum fortnightly contact they are required to have with claimants. Some providers report having shorter updates every two weeks with more formal updates over a longer time period, for example, at every fourth meeting or after six months.

The process of assessment and producing action plans was not different for prison leavers to claimants from other payment groups but instead focused on the individual.

Providers reported not making changes to their process of determining support for prison leavers between the wave 1 and wave 2 interviews. Support needs were determined in the same way for all claimants, which providers said was on an individual basis. Any changes that had been made were minor and related to understanding claimants' barriers; for example, one subcontractor stated using the diagnostic tool more effectively.

When discussing any remaining problems in deciding support for prison leavers, some of the responses related to the diagnostic tools. One strategic manager asserted that their tool was more than adequate to identify issues for prison leavers. However, an operational manager

from the same prime felt that it could be refined for prison leavers to better address the impact of institutionalisation, or to give insights into how to improve reintegration after release.

Other issues discussed by providers in determining support related to insufficient co-ordination with pre-release services and wanting a greater level of information about the prison leaver prior to the in-house assessment so they were not '*starting from scratch*'.

4.2.2 Summary

PG9 claimants whose initial session was solely an induction reported that the session was not useful, in contrast to those who had some form of assessment, support and/or contact with their personal adviser at the initial meeting.

The process of assessing and drawing up action plans for PG9 claimants did not differ to those undertaken with other Work Programme participants. As this is supposed to be a personalised process determining individual needs, it may not be of great importance. Some providers did, however, indicate that the method was not entirely satisfactory for the group as they could require more time to reveal sensitive information. In addition, the tools may not be sufficiently insightful to ascertain the impact of institutionalisation and the need to reintegrate into society.

4.3 Barriers to finding employment

4.3.1 Prisoners' and claimants' perspectives

Prisoners' perspectives

Prisoners in the pre-release interviews were asked about their opinion of the barriers which prevented them getting jobs on release. Most commonly, criminal record was mentioned as an inhibiting factor; others highlighted their lack of accommodation as a significant problem, and some stated their lack of qualifications. Some mentioned ongoing substance misuse and a number their limited work experience. Their views on the likelihood of getting paid work on release were more or less evenly split between those who thought it was likely and those who thought it was not.

Claimants' perspectives

PG9 claimants, already on the programme, gave similar reasons to prisoners, with many citing their criminal record as the main issue, often believing that employers are either unwilling to recruit them or are tied by company policy. For other prison leavers it was the seriousness of their offence. In these cases, the offences were violent or sexual in nature. One respondent discussed the fact that his sentence would never be spent. He also stated that despite having had a professional career, his past experience and qualifications were no longer valid so his current options were low-skilled, low-paid work or self-employment. Several other claimants also mentioned the inability to work in jobs in which they had previous experience or qualifications. One claimant described how his criminal behaviour, related to past substance misuse, meant he could no longer work in the career in which he qualified:

'I'm a qualified plumber – who's going to want me in their house when I've burgled people in the past?'

(Claimant)

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As well as barriers directly related to their offending behaviour, prison leavers also discussed their insufficient experience, as well as their lack of work history, qualifications and skills.

A number described wider barriers such as substance misuse, homelessness, age and ethnicity, whilst others pointed out that the jobs they could apply for meant that they would not be able to meet their basic financial commitments or that they were hardly better-off in work.

4.3.2 Providers' perspectives

In discussing prison leavers' barriers, a number of providers discussed the similarity in the barriers for PG9 participants with other payment groups. Providers stated that barriers such as homelessness, mental health problems, substance misuse, and inadequate employability skills were shared across Work Programme participants. They also pointed out that an important proportion of their participants, though not prison leavers, are ex-offenders. Hence, some provider staff indicated the irrelevance of individuals' payment groups. Similarly, providers discussed the importance of focusing on individuals' needs, not their payment group. Also to be noted are the small number of PG9 referrals to some providers, which in some cases made it difficult to distinguish patterns for the group.

However, other providers did discuss the differences between prison leavers and other payment groups, though at times they did not distinguish between prison leavers and ex-offenders more generally. Some providers discussed PG9 claimants' greater needs, stating that they had a greater extent of barriers than other Work Programme participants as well as having multiple and complex needs. One provider reported that, though prison leavers' barriers are similar to other participants, the issues are more pronounced in this group. A strategic manager reported that, though prison leavers' barriers did not differ greatly from other claimants, they were deeply entrenched. He related extensively higher rates of barriers from their diagnostics of their referrals (e.g. 170 per cent more likely to suffer from mental health conditions than other JSA claimants).

Barriers for prison leavers fell across three areas: their personal circumstances; employment/ employer related; and those associated with their offending history.

In terms of personal circumstances, providers most often reported issues related to accommodation, substance misuse, and mental health problems.

Accommodation, both finding suitable housing and related problems, was a key issue for prison leavers. One specialist subcontractor reported that many individuals who come out of prison are 'sofa-surfing'. Another said that they often lived in bail hostels, which gives an unfavourable impression to employers. The expense of temporary accommodation was another issue, which one adviser reported as a potential deterrent to accepting part-time work. Also mentioned was the difficulty for providers in maintaining contact when participants lived in insecure accommodation.

In discussing substance misuse, an adviser at a delivery prime stated that prison leavers have higher rates of substance misuse, whilst a manager at a specialist subcontractor stated that they were more likely to have higher dependency and Class A drug problems. Prison leavers had often been involved in substance misuse programmes in prison or were referred to community services, and in these situations providers did not appear to add any extra provision.

Providers also discussed prison leavers' disruptive, unstable lifestyles, with one respondent stating that they were more easily distracted from the goals of the programme in comparison

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to other claimants. A manager pointed out the need to help prison leavers re-integrate into society, and some providers discussed PG9 claimants' difficulties in adjusting to life outside of prison, stating that they: were not always used to planning and doing things for themselves; were used to interacting with people in prison but found outside interaction more difficult; and needed to learn the norms of the working world, as described by a manager:

'How you present yourself to an employer ... clocking in at 9, going home at 5, how you dress for an employer, how you speak to an employer ... that sort of thing.'

(Manager, generalist subcontractor)

Disruptive lifestyles were also seen as one aspect in the difficulty of getting PG9 participants to engage with the programme.

Providers felt that lack of confidence was a common problem for prison leavers, which often stemmed from their belief that employers would not be interested in them because of their offending history. One provider said their lack of work experience also meant they had less confidence in their abilities.

Some providers stated that some PG9 participants were hindered by their negative attitudes and unwillingness to try to find work. Conversely, other providers believed that prison leavers were more motivated, particularly in the first few months after release; a manager at an end-to-end subcontractor said they were *'really driven for change'*. Another reported that PG9 claimants had in their favour the qualifications they gained whilst in custody and their positive attitude and determination to change their lives.

However, a number of providers stated that in terms of motivation and confidence, prison leavers were like other participants, with some being motivated and/or confident whilst others were not. This is unsurprising as prison leavers are a diverse group, having served sentences of varying lengths and for crimes of varying severity, as well as the potential individual differences in their wider barriers.

In direct relation to employment, providers discussed prison leavers' lack of work-related skills in terms of literacy, numeracy and IT. One provider believed that there was a high degree of undiagnosed learning disabilities amongst prison leavers. Another said that, although PG9 participants discussed the training and qualifications they had undertaken in custody, many had problems completing a straightforward application form due to poor literacy. A strategic manager pointed out the high degree of innumeracy and illiteracy for the group, stating that this should not be left for a programme for the long-term unemployed to identify and resolve but instead should have been addressed prior to participation in the Work Programme⁵⁸.

Providers also mentioned that some PG9 claimants did not have adequate CVs or covering letters. Whilst an adviser at a generalist subcontractor felt that they were more likely to be unprepared for work on a number of levels:

'Sometimes when they do come to us they've literally got nothing, they've not got a CV, they've never had an interview so they don't know how to dress.'

(Adviser, generalist subcontractor)

⁵⁸ From August 2014 new mandatory assessment for all newly received prisoners in England have been introduced by the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service providers. This will ensure that all offenders receive a learning assessment (focused around English, maths and hidden disabilities) rather than those that just go onto learning.

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Some of the PG9 claimants' employment barriers stemmed from their offending history; a key one being employers' attitudes to having ex-offenders in their workforce. Some providers stated that employers were becoming more stringent in relation to Disclosure and Barring Service checks, stating that they are becoming a requirement for the majority of jobs, and that a number of employers do not recruit any individuals with a criminal record. Whilst another provider pointed out that the claimants' release conditions could restrict the jobs for which they were available. Hence PG9 participants have a limited number of employers and sectors from where they can seek work. Providers reported having to manage prison leavers' expectations and the fact that they may have to change their career paths, which is further hindered by training costs.

Also problematic were prison leavers' lack of work experience and/or gaps in CVs, with some participants having considerable spells of unemployment or having never worked. Gaps in CVs were not limited to those with custodial sentences; a manager from a specialist ex-offender subcontractor highlighted the difficulty of explaining gaps when individuals' non-custodial sentences had prevented them from working.

Sentence length was discussed in terms of those with shorter sentences having relatively fewer barriers and being motivated to find work. However, those who had short sentences but were repeat offenders were seen by some providers as having the biggest barriers in terms of offence history as they were seen to be stuck in a cycle, more likely to use offending as part of their lifestyle and because providers had limited scope to work with them in between their periods of custody.

In discussing claimants who had served longer sentences, providers reported that they had problems such as adjusting to life outside prison, and issues related to disclosure and unspent convictions. Additionally, an issue for ex-offenders with longer sentences related to their actual offence. The severity and type of offence was seen as a barrier for some prison leavers. Providers in particular mentioned ex-offenders who had convictions for sexual and violent crimes and those with a MAPPA status. However, providers also said that individuals who had served longer sentences had had the opportunity to gain qualifications and are keen to change their lives.

4.3.3 Summary

PG9 claimants' criminal record has resulted in specific barriers, many of which will impact on their likelihood of being recruited. Examples of these barriers are: employers' attitudes; their own confidence; long and possibly numerous gaps in their CVs; and being automatically excluded from consideration because of company policy or because of the nature of their offence. In the latter case there may be a direct link to the offence and the responsibilities of the position, e.g. theft and having responsibility for cash. However, it may also be due to the seriousness or type of offences, e.g. a violent or sexual crime.

Moreover, prison leavers have an extensive range of other barriers, as acknowledged by prisoners, prison leavers and providers. Whilst PG9 claimants' barriers may be similar to other Work Programme participants, the qualitative evidence suggests that the degree of their disadvantage and obstacles to work are in general greater than other claimants. Wider barriers include the greater level of mental ill health, substance misuse and illiteracy and innumeracy in this group. And indeed there is much existing research that finds

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that prisoners have higher levels of mental health issues,⁵⁹ lower levels of literacy and numeracy,⁶⁰ and a greater prevalence of substance misuse than the general population. Additionally, those in a cycle of repeat offending have been reported as the hardest to support. This indicates that some prison leavers need a substantial amount of help before they will be ready to consider employment, and some may not get to this point during the two years of the programme.

Additionally, prisoners' immediate needs soon after release are an obstacle to successful engagement with the programme, with some claimants reporting the need to organise other aspects of their lives before seeking work (see Section 4.1.1). A key issue at this point is their housing needs; a number of prison leavers are homeless, some are 'sofa surfing', and others are in hostel accommodation. Importantly, non-resolution of this issue could be detrimental to overall engagement (see Section 5.1.2).

However, within the PG9 group there are those who are willing, motivated and able to start employment support soon after release. In addition, there will be PG9 claimants who, though they may have significant barriers to finding work, will nevertheless benefit from the support given on the programme. However, before mandating all prison leavers to the Work Programme, it would be advisable to ascertain that acute needs are resolved and/or supported (e.g. housing) so that when the claimants do join the Work Programme they have minimum hindrances to fully engaging.

⁵⁹ Singleton *et al.* (1998). *Psychiatric morbidity among prisoners in England and Wales*, London: TSO; Harrington, R. and Bailey, S. (2005). *Mental health needs and effectiveness of provision for young offenders in custody and in the community*, London: Youth Justice Board.

⁶⁰ HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2002). *A second chance: a review of education and supporting arrangements within units for juveniles managed by HM Prison Service*, a thematic review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons carried out jointly with the Office for Standards in Education.

5 Pre-work support

The Work Programme was designed to provide support to address the range of barriers to employment. Therefore, as well as standard labour market support (such as job seeking, employability and vocational training), provision addresses wider barriers to employment (such as health, disability, finance and debt) (see findings from the Work Programme evaluation for descriptions of the variety of support provided).⁶¹

This chapter describes the type of support received by payment group 9 (PG9) claimants and its perceived effectiveness. First, an overview of types of support is provided. More details of three important aspects of support (the package, the role of the personal adviser and training) are given in the following three sections. Work with employers is then described. Next, differences in the support provided to PG9 claimants compared with others is examined, before claimants' views on pre-work support as a whole are presented.

5.1 Types of support

The survey of claimants showed the wide range of support PG9 claimants received. The majority of respondents (62 per cent, Table 5.1) remembered receiving help with their curriculum vitae (CV), job applications and job interviews. Nearly half (49 per cent) reported that they had an action plan drawn up⁶², and 43 per cent recalled having a skills assessment. Thirty-four per cent said they had received help with the cost of looking for work, such as travel expenses or interview clothing. Around one-quarter (27 per cent) were referred to a careers adviser. Thirty per cent reported that they had received targeted advice on how to deal with their criminal record. Whilst this might appear low for prison leavers, the qualitative research with claimants found that the need for such support from the Work Programme was not universal, due to claimants receiving advice on employment and their criminal record from probation (or having received it previously). However, the qualitative research did identify some unmet need for such support. A relatively small proportion of respondents received advice about starting a business, although some advisers saw this as one of the most viable employment routes for prison leavers with trade and craft skills.

⁶¹ Newton *et al.* (2012). *Work Programme evaluation: Findings from the first phase of qualitative research on programme delivery*, DWP Research Report No. 821.

⁶² Minimum Service Standards require an action plan to be drawn up for all claimants and for claimants to be made aware of the requirements on them. However, the Minimum Service Standards do not require claimants to be involved in drawing up the plan and only some prime providers stipulated such involvement in their individual Minimum Service Standards.

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Table 5.1 Advice and support received

Support category	Multiple responses
Type of support	%
Skills assessment and action planning	
Assessment of skills	43.4
Drawing up an action plan	48.9
Careers and CV advice	
Help with CV, job applications, interviews	62.3
Referral to a careers adviser	26.5
Basic skills, training, work placements	
Training course at college or other training provider	19.5
Session on motivation and confidence	11.2
Basic skills (maths, reading, writing, English)	11.2
Work experience or voluntary work	9.1
Financial advice and business start-up	
Help to cover cost of looking for work (e.g. travel expenses)	33.7
Support and advice to start a business/self-employment	14.9
Other financial advice	16.6
Health, care and housing	
Advice and support regarding health or disability	10.1
Help or advice regarding child or adult care	3.9
Help with drug or alcohol problems	9.3
Help with housing issues	10.8
Advice on dealing with criminal record and other advice	
Help and advice on dealing with a criminal record	29.2
Other type of assessment, advice or support	3.7
None of these ¹	14.3
Don't know	*
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents, multiple responses.

¹ This will include respondents who received support that they did not identify as being in the preceding categories.

The qualitative research identified two other aspects of support which were important to some: computer access and the provision of a structure for activities. Computers are an important tool for job search and are also used in delivering support on the Work Programme; providing computer access to those without a home computer was seen, by both providers and claimants, as an important element of support. The structure that day one provided was useful for PG9 claimants. This was described variously as a need for structure because of the contrast between prison and being outside; something to keep them busy and out of trouble; and providing the time, space and facilities to spend time on job search.

Whilst a range of activities may be useful, a substantial minority (45 per cent) reported some experience of pressure to engage in activities that they did not see as suitable. An example was provided by the qualitative research with claimants:

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'They told me that they can arrange for somebody from Citizens Advice to come in to talk to me, if I need them for any reason and things like that ... But once again if I'd needed and wanted to see Citizens Advice, I'd go and see them. I wouldn't wait for 2 or 3 weeks for an appointment.'

(Claimant)

5.1.1 Differences in pre-work support by PG9 claimants' personal characteristics

There were some differences in the configuration of support between younger and older prison leavers (Table 5.2). Those aged under 25 were less likely to have received a skills assessment or an action plan compared to all respondents, and they were less likely to have been referred to a basic skills course or support for motivation and confidence building. They were, however, more likely to have been referred to careers advice and work placements. Older prison leavers (aged 25+), in contrast, were more likely than other respondents as a whole to have negotiated an action plan, attended motivation and confidence building provision, and received help with the costs towards looking for work.

Given the reported tailoring of provision to individual needs, the differences in support by age may stem from differences in needs. However, the reported greater use of skills assessments and in drawing up action plans by older PG9 claimants is surprising, as these might be expected to be needed similarly across age groups.

Table 5.2 Type of support received and differences by age

Type of support	Total Multiple responses %	Age ¹	
		Younger than 25 Multiple responses %	25 and older Multiple responses %
Skills assessment	43.4	40.7	44.9
Action plan	48.9	44.7	51.0
Referral to a careers adviser	26.5	29.0	25.2
Motivation and confidence	16.0	12.1	18.1
Basic skills	11.2	9.0	12.4
Work placements	9.1	10.0	8.5
Financial help with looking for work	33.7	31.0	35.2
<i>Base</i>	1,013	237	776

Base: All respondents, multiple responses.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

Support received was also analysed by employment status at the time of interview. This found significant differences in support received by employment status (see Table 5.3). Respondents who were in employment when they were interviewed were more likely to have reported having been engaged in a skills assessment, as well as having been referred to a careers adviser. They were more likely to report having received advice and information to start a business (20 per cent) or financial advice of some sort. They also were more likely to have received advice on how to deal with their criminal record.

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Those respondents who had been employed after starting on the Work Programme, but had subsequently lost their job, were the most likely to have received help and support with the cost of applying for jobs, such as travel expenses or interview clothing (Table 5.3). Nearly 19 per cent of this group had received financial advice of some sort. However, there was also a comparatively large proportion in this group (18 per cent) who indicated that they had not received any of the types of advice generally offered to Work Programme participants.

Those respondents who had not found employment since starting the Work Programme were most likely to have received help with CVs, job applications and interviews, or a referral to a careers adviser. They were also most likely to have received advice regarding health and housing issues.

As with the differences in support by age identified above, differences in support by employment status may stem from the tailoring of support to need and so should not be interpreted, automatically, as indicating a causal link. For some types of support, the disparity in support by employment status is clearly linked to need (e.g. those who were employed were less likely to have received assistance with health, disability and drug problems). However, the disparity in involvement in action planning by employment status might be indicative of the effectiveness of the claimant being involved in action planning, since such involvement might be expected to be useful for all.

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Table 5.3 Type of support received by current employment status

Support category Type of support	Total Multiple responses %	Employment status		
		Currently in employment Multiple responses %	Not currently in employment, but been in employment since starting on the Work Programme Multiple responses %	Not currently in employment and not been in employment since starting on the Work Programme Multiple responses %
Skills assessment and action planning				
Assessment of skills	43.4	48.3	43.4	41.4
Careers and CV advice				
Help with CV, job applications, interviews	62.3	55.6	60.0	65.3
Referral to a careers adviser	26.5	27.5	21.1	27.1
Basic skills, training, work placements				
Training course at college or other training provider	19.5	20.1	15.9	19.9
Session on motivation and confidence	11.2	14.5	11.0	17.5
Basic skills (maths, reading, writing, English)	11.2	6.1	9.1	13.6
Financial advice and business start-up				
Help to cover cost of looking for work (e.g. travel expenses)	33.7	43.1	44.0	28.2
Support and advice to start a business/self-employment	14.9	19.6	12.7	13.3
Other financial advice	16.6	21.8	18.7	14.2
Health, care and housing				
Advice and support regarding health or disability	10.1	6.5	10.0	11.6
Help with drug or alcohol problems	9.3	6.4	8.2	10.7
Help with housing issues	10.8	8.8	9.4	11.8
Advice on dealing with criminal record and other advice				
Help and advice on dealing with a criminal record	29.2	35.9	27.8	26.7
None of these	14.3	14.3	17.5	13.7
<i>Base</i>	1,013	253	110	650

Base: All respondents, multiple responses.

* Significant at the .05 level.

5.1.2 Claimants' views on pre-work support

For all the types of support described above, a high percentage of recipients of the support (around three-quarters or more) saw it as useful in helping them find work or moving them closer to getting paid work (see Table E3 in Appendix B). This reached 92 per cent for help or advice in relation to looking after children or adults, and 87 per cent for help or advice related to their criminal record and for motivation or confidence sessions. Indeed, with only three exceptions, between 45 per cent and 55 per cent saw the support as very useful. The exceptions were work experience placement or voluntary work (with 39 per cent seeing this as very useful), drawing up an action plan (35 per cent seeing it as very useful) and an assessment of their skills (33 per cent seeing it as very useful).

There were significant differences by age in the perceived usefulness of work placements and voluntary work (Table 5.1b from Appendix B).

The qualitative research with claimants provided more details on the perceived usefulness of support. (Claimants' views on adviser support and on training are given in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 respectively.)

Vacancy identification was seen as very useful by some, but others felt that the vacancies they were presented with were inappropriate. Some felt pushed towards jobs they were not keen on and did not feel assisted with types they were interested in. An example given was failure to provide assistance for office jobs. Findings from observations of the claimant/adviser sessions indicate that claimants were generally seeking work appropriate to their skills and abilities.

Addressing housing needs was an important area, albeit one which some received assistance with from outside the Work Programme. Where support had led to meeting housing needs, this was seen as a major benefit. However, where housing remained a problem, it could result in other Work Programme measures being seen as irrelevant, because the claimant did not feel they could benefit from the support. For example, a claimant living in a homeless hostel (where he said most residents had drug problems and so were a negative influence on him) wanted to find somewhere to live before looking for work. He said:

'The focus on work does not help me. I want help with housing. Now it's all right practising for this CSCS [Construction Skills Certificate Scheme] card and doing everything else, but without accommodation how am I going to get up every day to go to work? How am I going to come home and feed myself? How am I going to do my packed lunch? You've got to have a settled environment to get that job.'

(Claimant, generalist end-to-end provider)

Disclosure is a major issue for offenders and claimants saw support around disclosure as very useful. Whilst the survey showed high levels of satisfaction with support on disclosure, the qualitative research with claimants showed that lack of good support on disclosure was a major omission.

'The most effective thing I could have received would have been somebody sitting me down and telling me, you know, about the real world when you've got a conviction behind you, you know, that was glaringly obvious.'

(Claimant with a generalist end-to-end)

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Support on disclosure was subcontracted to specialist organisations or provided by the personal adviser. The support provided by the latter is discussed in Section 5.3. Criticism of the quality of support on disclosure was not confined to generalist providers, with a specialist offender end-to-end provider criticised by a claimant for a lack of understanding of ex-offenders' needs, particularly in respect of disclosure.

5.2 The package of pre-work support

The previous section described individual elements of support. The qualitative research with the providers showed how this formed packages of support and the degree to which this took into account the particular needs of PG9 claimants.

For example, a specialist end-to-end said:

'We start by looking at their lives. If they need housing or have a drug or mental health problem, we need to signpost and get those sorted before we can move on to look at employment. We work on both general and employability barriers. We support them to develop the best CV they can, support with applications, job matching, interview preparation. We look at disclosure and what impact it will have on their employability.'

They commented that: 'Quite a lot of it's what you would get with any generic training provider but it's geared towards the offending slant.' A wide range of needs, combined with assisting with convictions and disclosure, tended to be emphasised by the specialists. On convictions, another specialist provider said their special assistance was:

'... the information around disclosure, how to deal with conviction ... what types of jobs are appropriate ones to be going for if there's any restrictions on employment.'

At the other end of the spectrum, some end-to-ends described support with either little or no difference between that provided to PG9 claimants and to other claimants. Some stressed that participants were not treated differently based on their payment group. Some of these providers explained the lack of difference in support by their policy to tailor all support to the individual. However, except in one case, where the respondent said that many participants had the same needs as PG9 claimants, whether PG9 claimants actually received support to address their needs was unclear.

In between were providers describing a range of support, but none that related to convictions. For example, one described support for: literacy skills, particularly writing CVs and cover letters; vocational skills; housing problems; clothes for job interviews; support through the interview process; job search sessions; and for getting money advice. Additional support was provided to help PG9 claimants prepare for the application and interview process for those deemed close to the labour market.

The more comprehensive programmes with specialist offender support were found in the specialist offender end-to-ends and, in some of the generalist end-to-ends, with PG9 claimant specialist advisers. Generic support, without PG9 claimant-specific support, was described by advisers in generalist end-to-ends without specialist PG9 advisers. The extent to which the generalists without specialist advisers addressed the multiple needs common to prison leavers seemed more variable than amongst those employing specialist advisers or amongst specialist providers. This greater awareness and provision to address the multiple needs common to prison leavers amongst specialists compared with generalists suggested to us that specialists might provide better support to PG9 claimants, but that cannot be

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established by this evaluation.

Although the Work Programme does not appear to deal directly with re-offending, a number of providers acknowledged that getting PG9 participants into work was important in preventing them from offending again and returning to custody. One provider pointed out that prison leavers do not know how to 'play the benefits system' and understood that the best way of not re-offending was to find work. However, another reported that their lack of knowledge of the system meant when they had issues in work they were less likely to leave the job and sign on again but instead would leave and return to offending.

In addition, several providers highlighted the fact that the Work Programme is an unemployment programme where the primary goal is to ensure that participants find sustainable employment. Although dealing with wider issues was a necessary part of this, it was not their primary goal. Providers tended to highlight this in relation to re-offending; however, one strategic manager also discussed this in relation to broader, complex problems:

'Our task is to get people into work. It's not to address their complex barriers, or their needs, that's simply not the ambition of the Work Programme. It's not what it's designed for. It's designed to get people into work and to keep them there. There's a whole range of additional needs that are for other agencies to address.'

(Strategic manager, delivering prime)

5.3 Personal adviser support

Personal advisers are at the heart of Work Programme provision. The personal adviser provides direct support and advice and also signposts and refers participants to other support (whether in-house, subcontracted or signposting free-of-charge support).

This section describes key features of personal adviser support: the format and frequency of meetings (Section 5.3.1); the extent of continuity of the personal adviser for PG9 claimants (Section 5.3.2); and the content of meetings (Section 5.3.3). It also discusses the relationship between the personal adviser and the claimant, as this is believed by providers to be a key element influencing successful support (Section 5.3.4).

5.3.1 Format and frequency of personal adviser contact

Providers in the qualitative research described tailoring the frequency of personal adviser contact to individual claimant needs, with contact varying from two or three times per week to fortnightly. Personal adviser contact (frequency and/or format) is covered by the Minimum Service Standards for many prime providers. As referrals (over the whole Work Programme) had dropped, some providers had increased the intensity of personal adviser support, either through increasing the length of session or increasing frequency.

The survey of PG9 claimants showed that nearly all respondents (90 per cent, see Table 5.4) had face-to-face interactions with their Work Programme advisers, close to half (48 per cent) noted telephone contact, and 41 per cent were involved in group meetings. Claimants can receive a variety of these interactions whilst on the programme; receiving one form does not preclude another. Older participants (aged 25+) more frequently reported group interactions compared to those who were younger.

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Table 5.4 Format of Work Programme meetings and differences by age

Format of meeting	Total Multiple responses %	Age ¹	
		Younger than 25 Multiple responses %	25 and older Multiple responses %
Group meeting with other people	40.8	36.7	43.0
Face-to-face with adviser	89.9	87.6	91.0
By telephone	48.4	46.0	49.7
By text message	23.1	20.1	24.7
By e-mail	22.1	21.0	22.6
Skype or video call	0.6	0	0.9
Letter in the post	5.3	5.1	5.5
Others	*	0	0.5
None	*	0	*
Not sure/cannot remember	3.5	5.7	2.4
<i>Base</i>	1,013	237	776

Base: All respondents, multiple responses.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

One-third of respondents indicated they met with their adviser on a fortnightly basis (Table 5.5). A further quarter (24 per cent) said they had contact with their advisers more frequently than fortnightly, which may have indicated a more intensive support model. Just over one in ten (12 per cent) of respondents indicated that they had very infrequent interactions, which suggested this group was receiving a different experience to others.

Table 5.5 Frequency of meetings

Frequency of meetings	%
Weekly or more frequently	23.9
Fortnightly	33.3
At least every 3 weeks but less than every 2 months	23.1
Every 2 months or less frequently	12.1
Don't know/can't remember	7.6
<i>Base</i>	1,013

Base: All respondents.

Qualitative research with claimants and with providers suggested that meetings with advisers tended to last at least 30 minutes and sometimes up to an hour or more. Few claimants described meetings for shorter periods. Those who did tended to be dissatisfied with their adviser support.

5.3.2 Personal adviser continuity

Seven in ten claimants (71 per cent) always or almost always had contact with the same adviser, 16 per cent sometimes interacted with the same adviser, whilst 9 per cent met with a different adviser each time (See Table 5.3a in Appendix B). There was some indication that those who saw the same personal adviser almost all or for some of the time found this continuity useful to their progress and that seeing a different adviser each time was viewed as less helpful overall (see Table 5.6). This was supported by the qualitative research with claimants; those who had had more than one adviser seemed to find the change disruptive. Not only did they have to repeat information, but sometimes advisers were unaware of what they had already achieved and would send them back to the same activities. Moreover, it appeared as though the claimants felt let down or had been unable to develop the trusting relationship which many of those with a single adviser portrayed. Similar issues arose for the claimants who reported advisers had missed their meetings.

Table 5.6 Respondents' views on the helpfulness of adviser continuity

Adviser continuity	Very helpful %	Helpful %	Not very helpful %	Not helpful at all %	Don't know %	Base
Saw the same adviser always or almost always	48.8	37.7	5.5	6.9	1.1	721
Saw the same adviser sometimes	21.7	48.3	16.8	10.7	2.5	166
Saw a different adviser each time	5.9	26.8	26.1	36.8	4.4	85
<i>Base: All who responded to qualifying question¹ except Don't know/can't remember¹</i>						972

¹ Qualifying question: Which of the following statements applies: you saw the same adviser always or almost always; you saw the same adviser sometimes; you saw a different adviser each time; don't know/can't remember.

5.3.3 Content of personal adviser meetings

The qualitative research with claimants discussed the content of meetings with personal advisers. This suggested a diversity of approaches. Some claimants reported support limited to job search (discussion of jobs applied for and vacancies, together with some discussion of how to improve job search). Some claimants found this narrow focus very useful, but others did not. Others described meetings which were aimed at identifying career routes and training. Yet others described a focus on offending:

'... with the first lady I had, I was with her for a few months, we basically talked about it [offending] all the time, every time I seen her. It made me confident to talk about it in interviews.'

(Claimant with specialist offender end-to-end)

Observations of sessions found that they were generally informal, though the level of informality depended on the adviser relationship with the claimant and, at times, the level of engagement by the claimant. Despite the ease of many of the interactions, the advisers consistently checked that claimants were meeting the programme requirements. They often

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reminded claimants of their obligation to: complete Jobcentre Plus job sheets; maintain their Universal Jobmatch profile in order to evidence their job searches; and attend appointments.

In the observed sessions, much time was spent discussing CVs and applications, and at times, claimants applied for jobs during the sessions. Advisers also verified claimants' recent job search activities. Advisers showed some flexibility in which jobs they asked claimants to apply for; this was more obvious when the claimant was proactively applying for numerous positions and attending training. In these cases advisers encouraged claimants to try to obtain their preferred job rather than applying for any possible position. Advisers mostly appeared to be suggesting realistic employment opportunities; they also tried to take into account the claimants' preferences, though the emphasis seemed to be finding work which matched existing experience rather than aiming for higher-level jobs.

5.3.4 The relationship with the personal adviser

The relationship with the adviser appeared very important to claimants. Advisers seemed to work hard at establishing trust and building the relationship; though it may not have always been successful, the attempt was there. Claimants seemed to be either very complimentary or highly critical of their adviser. Advisers being able to adapt their approach to the claimant's perceived needs (e.g. job-focused support or wider support) and, if necessary, develop further support, seemed very important. The need for such tailoring was illustrated by some claimants greatly appreciating wider support, especially around housing, whilst others felt no need for it because they received such support from the Probation Service. A supportive relationship with the adviser in which they could acknowledge their offending was important for some and helped develop their confidence with talking about their criminal record to employers. Related to this was the importance of one-to-one sessions. Some PG9 claimants described having almost only group sessions (e.g. in a group of 35 claimants with two advisers) and found these too large to be useful. Given the apparent importance of the relationship with the adviser, it appeared as though lack of one-to-one sessions would be a problem, irrespective of the size of group sessions.

Discussing problems finding work

Most respondents (69 per cent) felt either completely comfortable to discuss their problems and difficulties in finding work with their adviser or comfortable to some extent to do so (Error! Reference source not found.). Those who were currently in employment were significantly more comfortable discussing problems in finding work with their advisers compared to other respondents. Notably, those who had found work whilst on the Work Programme and who had subsequently lost their job were significantly less comfortable to discuss issues around finding work with their advisers than other respondents. Those who had no experience of employment since joining the Work Programme showed no significant differences to the population average.

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Table 5.7 Feeling comfortable discussing problems and difficulties in finding work by current employment situation

Current employment status	Extent of comfort discussing problems				Base
	Completely	To some extent	Not at all	Not sure/ don't know	
	%	%	%	%	
Currently in employment	58.7	22.4	14.9	4.0	253
Not currently in employment, but been in employment since starting Work Programme (drop-outs)	48.7	28.3	20.1	2.9	110
Not currently in employment and not been in employment since starting Work Programme	45.9	31.7	17.6	4.8	650
Total	49.5	19.0	17.2	4.3	1,013

Base: All respondents.

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

Problematic issues for discussion with the adviser

The qualitative research with claimants identified some of the issues which claimants had difficulty raising with their adviser. Some claimants reported a reluctance to raise the need for vocational training, with some feeling they would be seen as too demanding if they did so. However, the main problematic area was around criminal record: either a lack of discussion of criminal record or claimants' belief that advisers did not understand the implications of a criminal record.

The survey of claimants found 29 per cent of claimants received support on having a criminal record (see Table E1 in Appendix B). Whilst the qualitative evidence showed some received support elsewhere (e.g. from probation), some failed to receive support due to a reluctance, by both advisers and claimants, to talk about criminal records. Some PG9 claimants were reluctant to talk about their criminal record and not all realised that advisers could give this support. Some advisers would discuss disclosure only if they had details of offences or if the claimant raised the topic. As not all providers make their advisers aware of claimants' PG9 status, this could be a serious barrier to receiving tailored support. It suggests that advisers might need to be more sensitive to the difficulties some PG9 claimants (and others with a criminal record) have over revealing this information. The observation research noted the lack of privacy (e.g. no individual interview rooms) to discuss more sensitive issues, which may also have been a constraint.

Although the majority of respondents (75 per cent, see Table 5.8) thought that their adviser understood the implications of having a criminal record to some extent, 16 per cent did not believe they did and 8 per cent were either unsure or did not know. Those who were currently employed more frequently reported that their adviser understood the implications of this. However, those who had started but lost their job since commencing the Work Programme tended to think that their adviser had little understanding of the implications of having a criminal record. This was exemplified in the qualitative research by some claimants reporting being asked to apply for jobs where their offence was prohibitive.

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Table 5.8 Perceptions of adviser understanding of implications of criminal record by current employment situation

Current employment status	Extent of comfort discussing problems				Base
	Completely %	To some extent %	Not at all %	Not sure/ don't know %	
Currently in employment	55.8	20.0	16.1	8.1	253
Not currently in employment, but been in work since starting on the Work Programme (Drop out)	49.6	21.3	22.5	6.6	110
Not currently in employment and not been in employment since starting on the Work Programme	44.5	30.8	17.7	7.0	650
Total	48.0	27.0	17.9	7.2	1,013

Base: All respondents.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

5.4 Training

The types of training reported by providers and claimants included: job search and employability; confidence building and motivation; vocational skill training, including IT; disclosure; and basic skills (literacy, numeracy and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)) training. Provision could be in-house, subcontracted or by providers to which claimants were signposted for free (to the Work Programme provider) provision.

Vocational training, in most cases, seemed to be short, with the most commonly described training in, for example, IT, CSCS, other construction, food hygiene, hospitality, fork-lift truck training, first-aid, retail, administration, and customer service. Some described more extensive courses, for example, training for National Vocational Qualification courses from Level 1 to Level 4 in social care, business administration, mechanics, body repairs, construction or Business and Technology Education Council qualifications in customer service and retail. However, the impression was that vocational training was normally of very short duration, unless it could be accessed at no cost to the provider.

Claimants were also offered IT-related training, to increase their employability or to aid them in their job searches. Such training was not necessarily tied to a job outcome. Computing support appeared very important, providing access to computers to those without home access and training to those without computing skills; its lack limited job search and precluded access to other support which involved the use of computers.

For training which could not be delivered in-house, the main constraint was cost to the provider. This seemed to constrain vocational training particularly. To avoid charges, in England providers tended to signpost claimants to Skills Funding Agency (SFA)-funded training, where available. Some providers had SFA funding for in-house courses. In Scotland, claimants were asked to use their Individual Learning Accounts (which provide individuals who meet certain criteria with up to £200 towards the costs of training) to pay for or to co-fund their training. Claimants were signposted to European Social Fund (ESF)-funded

training where appropriate. However, claimants were not always eligible due to ESF funding rules.⁶³

Externally-provided training which had more than a minimal cost to the provider was limited by some providers to claimants where there was a very strong expectation they would get a job requiring the training, with some limiting funding to claimants with a job guaranteed on successful completion of training. Such limitations were financially driven, with a greater expectation of recouping training costs through job outcome payments.

At wave 2 of the interviews with providers, a number of providers reported that access to training had been reduced because the amount of free provision had fallen.

5.4.1 Claimants' perceptions of training

In the qualitative research with claimants, all types of training (such as employability, confidence building, disclosure, vocational skills and certification, e.g. CSCS) were reported as useful and motivating, although some claimants felt that they were only receiving training for things they already knew. This related to issues such as job search, employability and disclosure.

The main problems with training reported by PG9 claimants were more often in terms of what was not provided. The qualitative research with claimants indicated a strong demand for training, particularly for vocational skills and qualifications. These were believed by claimants to be a very useful route into a job. However, financial constraints meant that the claimant demand for training for longer courses, for higher levels (above Level 1) and for qualifications was not necessarily met or was limited to those with a guaranteed job offer. This was seen as a serious omission by some claimants. Moreover, some claimants reported being referred backwards and forwards between their provider and Jobcentre Plus in their quest for training funding. There was also frustration amongst those who had started a course in prison but were not able to complete it on the Work Programme, either because the hours infringed the availability for work requirement or there was no funding.

Failure to identify training needs could also be a problem. As described above, some claimants had poor computing skills (which limited their job search) which did not always seem to be identified and addressed.

5.5 Work with employers

Providers identify vacancies, including working with employers to facilitate access to vacancies. For many, the approach is generic across all Work Programme participants. However, some either target specific employers and work with these employers to encourage recruitment of PG9 claimants, or target an employer in respect of a specific vacancy and PG9 applicant. This approach may result in a single or small number of employers being targeted, although one of the specialist subcontractors used a specialist recruitment agency that focused on ex-offenders.

⁶³ The Work Programme is ESF-funded. Receiving support from other ESF-funded provision therefore means they receive two sets of funded-support from the ESF: they are 'double-funded'. Whilst it is possible to access support from more than one service funded by the ESF, it is necessary for there to be additionality for the ESF scheme to claim on an outcome, or for the scheme to achieve a different outcome.

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The work with employers could be labour intensive: in encouraging consideration of PG9 applicants; assisting the employer to understand the issues; and in providing post-recruitment assistance to the employer.

The structure and resources applied to employer engagement, as would be expected, were related to the size and economic capabilities of the provider. Larger, national organisations could have both national teams and local consultants. The national teams were geared to dealing with larger employers, whilst local ones used their knowledge of the regional labour market to establish relationships with employers and recruitment consultants in their area. Additionally, some advisers reported undertaking this role.

The employment engagement teams performed a primarily externally-facing role which entailed building relationships with employers to encourage them to use the programme as a recruitment channel. One prime provider reported using a range of activities to achieve this, including attending job fairs and networking at events such as those run by the Chamber of Commerce, as well getting employers to use their site to undertake live recruitment.

The employment engagement consultants' work in many of the providers focused on finding vacancies and then trying to find suitable applicants from the pool of claimants. However, one generalist subcontractor reported working 'backwards', starting with the claimant rather than matching individuals to vacancies.

Some providers had negotiated national agreements, and one described having guaranteed interviews with a national employer. Very few had exclusive arrangements, though some stated that because of their existing relationship with a particular employer they may get exclusivity for one-off positions.

The consultants did not tend to target vacancies for PG9 claimants but several of them actively identified employers who are open to recruiting ex-offenders or where an offending history is not prohibitive to employment, such as industries where it is not the norm to carry out Disclosure and Barring Service checks. As many claimants, other than prison leavers, are ex-offenders, this targeting will not be exclusively for PG9 claimants.

The consultants also had an internally-facing role. This involved screening and preparing participants for interviews and liaising with advisers to match claimants to vacancies. The preceding was the normal approach for many consultants, but a small number were much more proactive and attempted to change employers' attitudes to ex-offenders. A specialist ex-offender provider was notable in having developed varied and seemingly good-quality activities to engage employers. They connected with networks that focused on ex-offenders and had created their own group with the assistance of the local authority. This group held job fairs that invited employers to meet ex-offenders and tried to widen the number of employers willing to employ ex-offenders by changing their attitudes.

As the programme progressed there was some sense of the increasing importance of engaging with employers, due to diminished referrals and the cessation of attachment payments.

5.6 Differences in provision for PG9 and other Work Programme claimants

Prime providers and end-to-end providers stressed that the support for each claimant (whether or not a PG9 claimant) was tailored to the claimants' barriers to employment and needs. Under individual tailoring, support may differ between payment groups due to average differences in needs between payment groups. In this section, differences which may have arisen due to tailoring and differences arising from explicit differences in treatment by payment group are identified.

Whilst individual PG9 claimants might differ little in their needs from non-PG9 claimants, as a group they more often required wider types of support (such as housing, mental health and substance misuse support⁶⁴) and support for disclosure. It is therefore likely that, as a group, the pattern of support differs from other payment groups. In respect of training, with the exception of training on declaring convictions, few providers saw any difference between the training needs of, or provision for, PG9 claimants and other Work Programme claimants. However, some providers believed PG9 claimants, on average, had a greater need for and interest in IT courses and that there were some restrictions around training for Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) claimants.

The main differences in provision identified in the treatment of PG9 claimants were:

- PG9 claimants were more likely to receive one-to-one, rather than group, assistance. Some providers provided one-to-one rather than group sessions to all PG9 claimants; some felt the need to provide such support to some PG9 claimants based on an assessment of risk to other claimants or to the claimants themselves (e.g. MAPPA claimants) or based on the claimant's own needs;
- adviser sessions tended to be longer for PG9 claimants than for other Work Programme claimants;
- increased support where the provider believed there was a high risk of re-offending (which was often seen as greater early in the programme); and
- work with employers. Some providers' work with employers and on vacancy identification was aimed at assisting claimants with a criminal record. This approach may result in a single or small number of employers being targeted, although one of the specialist subcontractors used a specialist recruitment agency for ex-offenders only. The work with employers could be labour intensive, both in encouraging consideration of PG9 claimant applicants, assisting the employer to understand the issues, and in providing post-recruitment assistance to the employer.

Another difference was in the location of provision. A generalist provider said that PG9 claimants who were judged a risk to other claimants were seen at the probation office on a fortnightly basis and, as a result, had access to less support.

Differences in support according to offence or length of sentence were not found, with the exception of MAPPA claimants. Restrictions on internet access could be a problem, resulting in greater difficulties in providing support. Moreover, some subcontractors were unable to accept MAPPA participants, thus reducing provision for this group.

⁶⁴ Although some providers commented that the support provided by the prison service and probation meant that additional support for substance abuse was rarely needed.

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One provider said that:

[whether there were differences in provision] really depend[s] on the severity of their crime, and how much of a threat they are to the public. For those we would do a lot more intensive one-to-one support.'

Finally, prioritisation of claimants on the re-offending pilot due to their higher financial return was found (see Section 2.3.2). This illustrates how important higher levels of funding were to some providers.

The ability to offer different support based on payment group was restricted in that not all providers gave their personal advisers payment group information.

5.7 Claimants' assessment of pre-work support

Slightly more than half of respondents (54 per cent) reported that they felt they had received sufficient help to find work under the Work Programme (Table 5.7a in Appendix B).

Of the 374 respondents who were currently in work, 57 per cent (Table 5.7b in Appendix B) noted that the support they had received through the Work Programme played no role in helping them find employment. In contrast, nearly a quarter (24 per cent) thought that the support they had received played a big role in finding work. However, evidence from the qualitative research with claimants suggested that some assistance received under the Work Programme (notably from subcontractors and signposted sources) and reported as useful, might not have been recognised as Work Programme support. For example one respondent with a specialist offender provider, referred to provision from this specialist organisation as useful, but associated the Work Programme only with the generalist provider which had referred him to the specialist.

There were 598 respondents who, since starting on the Work Programme, had not started any employment and remained unemployed. Nearly 40 per cent of these reported that the support they received through the Work Programme had no impact on their likelihood to find work, whilst 33 per cent believed it had made a minor impact on them, and 25 per cent thought that the support made them a lot more likely to find work (see Table 5.7c in Appendix B).

For claimants who thought the Work Programme was not useful, the qualitative research with claimants identified reasons for this (the reasons of those who found the Work Programme useful are given in the next section). Some claimants felt that they did not require the support that was available; they were highly motivated to find a job and believed they had the skills to do so. Of those that wanted support, a number believed it to be inadequate as it focused on lower-than-appropriate vacancy identification or training. The latter was said by claimants with Level 3 qualifications and some seeking Level 2 qualifications. For some the issue was the support (or lack of) that related to their barriers and needs. For example, one claimant said that, instead of focusing on jobs he did not want, it would have been better to help him obtain stable housing. Another thought that the support was narrowly directed at finding a job and neglected wider issues. Whereas another claimant believed they were not receiving support because they had high barriers.

5.8 Summary

The Work Programme, as intended, was providing a wide range of support, but with a concentration on job application support. Personal advisers appeared to be good at developing a trusting relationship with claimants which, when this occurred, was much valued by claimants and affected their perception of the value of the Work Programme.

There was evidence that day one had led to more support tailored around prison leavers. PG9 claimants were more likely than other claimants to receive one-to-one and longer sessions with advisers; support was higher for those deemed at risk of re-offending; and there was increased activity (although still limited) in employer engagement focusing on gaining jobs for claimants with a criminal record. However, for some PG9 claimants, restrictions – for example in relation to computer access for MAPPA claimants or safety issues in relation to staff – could result in a lesser service.

Only just over half of PG9 claimants believed the Work Programme support was sufficient to help them find work, whilst fewer than half who had found work believed the Work Programme had played a role in this. Nevertheless, most PG9 claimants found aspects of the Work Programme useful (such as work placements and voluntary work, and support towards the cost of interviews). However, the variation in which elements were identified as useful confirms the need to tailor support to individuals.

The areas where there seemed to be a greater need for tailoring to needs were in:

- support for PG9 claimants with higher-level skills, both in the types of vacancies towards which they were supported and also in access to further qualifications and training;
- early provision of support for those with very low computing skills to ensure access to computerised job search and other Work Programme provision;
- assistance to complete courses which had been started in prison, particularly where these incurred fees;
- support to address housing needs, although the nature of the support might be outside the scope of the Work Programme; and
- support around disclosure and the need for this to be raised with all PG9 claimants.

There was evidence (including an association with employment status) that claimant involvement in action planning might improve outcomes, but such involvement did not appear universal. Extending involvement in action planning and extending skills assessment to all claimants would be useful.

In terms of organisation and delivery, the use of offender specialists, whether specialist organisations or specialist advisers within generalist organisations, appeared likely to improve support. Moreover, continuity of adviser support seemed particularly important for PG9 claimants because of the need to address and tailor support around criminal records. This may mean that delivery models which are designed to include movement between providers for 'end-to-end' support and the delivery of in-work support (particularly at an early stage of employment or at the need for re-employment) may be less effective for PG9 claimants compared with those which provide continuity of adviser support.

For PG9 claimants (as with others with a criminal record), work with employers to identify vacancies for which a criminal record was not a bar and to identify employers willing to take claimants with a criminal record was important. However, this targeted employer engagement was limited and expensive, whether in encouraging consideration of PG9 applicants, assisting the employer to understand the issues, and/or in providing post-recruitment assistance to the employer.

6 Mandation and sanctions

Prison-leavers who make a claim for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) are referred to the Work Programme. They must participate on the programme (i.e. they are mandated to participate) as a condition of receiving JSA. Once on the Work Programme, Work Programme providers have the discretion to require claimants (i.e. to mandate claimants) to undertake activities (e.g. job searches and to attend appointments with their advisers, support or training sessions). Should claimants fail to undertake a Work Programme mandated activity without good reason, they may be sanctioned by Jobcentre Plus, i.e. their benefit may be stopped for a period.⁶⁵ The process for sanctioning is that the provider reports the failure ('raises a doubt') to Jobcentre Plus. The 'doubt' is investigated by a Jobcentre Plus labour market decision maker who decides, based on evidence provided by both the Work Programme provider and the claimant, whether a sanction is applicable and for how long. Work Programme providers themselves do not make decisions about sanctioning. See the evaluation of the Work Programme for details of the sanctioning referral process.⁶⁶

This section examines the providers' approach to mandation and referral to sanctioning for payment group 9 (PG9) claimants, and discusses the perceived effect on PG9 claimants' motivation. Throughout, it focuses on differences between day one and other Work Programme claimants, and issues of specific interest to day one.

6.1 Approaches to mandation

Providers' approach to mandation varied. Some mandated all appointments or activities. Others mandated appointments or activities after encountering compliance problems only, although some of these did mandate the first or first few appointments. The approach could be governed by the prime provider's or the subcontractor's policy, or be discretionary to each adviser.

There was high awareness of mandation amongst claimants who responded to the survey, with 75 per cent recalling being told that they had to participate in an activity or they risked losing their benefits. The most common activities respondents were mandated to attend included help and support with job applications, curricula vitae (CVs) and interview techniques, drawing up action plans, as well as a skills assessment (see Table 6.1). However, 50 per cent of respondents reported no experience of being mandated to any of the most common support activities and services, and did not provide details of any activities to which they were mandated.

⁶⁵ For failure to comply with a mandated Work Programme activity, the period is four weeks for a first failure and 13 weeks for each subsequent failure within 52 weeks of a previous failure. Claimants placed in financial hardship may be eligible for payments at a reduced rate.

⁶⁶ Newton *et al.* (2012). *Work Programme evaluation: Findings from the first phase of qualitative research on programme delivery*, DWP Research Report No. 821.

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Table 6.1 Mandation to attend support and advice activities

Support category mandated to Type of support	Multiple responses %
Skills assessment and action planning	
Assessment of skills	10.8
Drawing up an action plan	12.5
Careers and CV advice	
Help with CV, job applications, interviews	24.7
Referral to a careers adviser	6.1
Basic skills, training, work placements	
Training course at college or other training provider	5.2
Session on motivation and confidence	4.0
Basic skills (maths, reading, writing, English)	3.0
Work experience or voluntary work	2.4
Financial advice and business start-up	
Help to cover cost of looking for work (e.g. travel expenses)	6.7
Support and advice to start a business/self-employment	2.2
Other financial advice	1.7
Health, care and housing	
Advice and support regarding health or disability	1.4
Help or advice regarding child or adult care	0.7
Help with drug or alcohol problems	1.9
Help with housing issues	1.6
Advice on dealing with criminal record and other advice	
Help and advice on dealing with a criminal record	6.7
None of these	50.2
Don't know	11.5
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents, multiple responses.

When taking into account previous employment experience and the length of time spent in prison, a significantly higher proportion of those with no prior work experience and shorter stays in prison (less than a year) had been mandated across the range of advice and support available, and mandated across more activities (see Table 6.1b in Appendix B).

Differences between day one and other Work Programme claimants

Some differences were found which affected the extent to which day one claimants were mandated. Only one respondent reported their approach to mandation was different for PG9 claimants than other Work Programme claimants, although she made it clear this was an individual, rather than policy, decision:

'Because they come from a strict regime, I mandate all appointments, but it is up to each adviser. I make a judgment whether necessary for other activities.'

(Adviser manager, end-to-end provider)

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However, other advisers seemed to take the approach that where wider difficulties (e.g. housing) might make compliance more difficult, mandation was less likely to be useful. Although this approach was taken for all claimants, given the higher incidence of wider barriers amongst PG9 claimants, it follows that these advisers were less likely to mandate PG9 claimants.

'For activities, we have to be careful what we mandate because there's no point in setting people up to fail and get sanctioned. We probably mandate fewer activities because of automatic referral to sanctioning.'

(Prime end-to-end)

Compliance with mandation was reportedly higher amongst PG9 claimants compared with other claimants. Reasons given by advisers for greater compliance included: prison experience making them used to complying with requirements and discipline; a greater willingness to conform; and a fear of recall, especially for those on probation. Some believed PG9 claimants had a stronger interest in finding employment and also less understanding of the benefits system.

'To get offenders into work is easier in our experience than people who are in the mainstream, reason being that we find more and more in the mainstream actually know the systems ... how to get the benefits ... how to overcome sanctions and mandations, etc. Whereas offenders ... coming out, they want to go into work... and they also understand that the easiest and best solution for them to not re-offend is getting into employment.'

(Adviser, specialist subcontractor provider)

6.2 Referral for sanctioning

6.2.1 Approaches to sanctioning

The approach to referral to sanctioning varied, although there was a general presumption in favour of referral for non-compliance with mandated activities.

Some providers automatically referred all cases of non-compliance with mandated activities, as did some advisers in organisations where this was not policy. Others allowed some degree of non-compliance (e.g. x missed meetings) or exercised discretion in response to the claimant's explanations. Failure to respond to initial contacts was seen, by some providers, as non-compliance and resulted in referral. However, other providers would not refer unless personal contact had been made, on the grounds that contact details might be inadequate. Automatic referral was believed to be useful because it was clear to the claimant and left no room for ambiguity. However, others felt that discretion was important, as referral could destroy the trust and rapport that had been built between the adviser and claimant. Moreover, some advisers saw the threat of sanctions as adequate to gain compliance; reminding non-compliant customers of the conditionality of benefits re-engaged participants, although others thought claimants only changed their behaviour after they had been sanctioned.

Sanctioning policy was set by the prime or by subcontractors. Prime-imposed policies sometimes caused conflict. For example, a specialist end-to-end saw the new administration system introduced by their prime as too inflexible for the needs of day one claimants.

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They believed this had affected their ability to engage prison leavers and resulted in PG9 claimants being sanctioned before they had started to participate with the provider.

The differing approaches to sanctioning were apparent from the qualitative research with claimants. Some claimants described automatic referral (and being sanctioned), despite their believing there was good reason for non-compliance. Others had experienced the discretionary approach. For example, a claimant who had never been sanctioned said: *'... he cut me a bit of slack when it was needed'*.

Providers reported changes in their approach to sanctioning between the two waves of fieldwork, although changes and practices were not consistent across providers. For example, an adviser in a prime provider reported a switch to automatic sanction referral because they felt it was *'now demanded by DWP'*, and this had led to an increase in sanction referrals. Conversely, a generalist end-to-end reported that they had moved away from a policy of referring all non-compliance as, according to them, DWP had encouraged greater discretion over sanction referral. They thought this could make things more difficult for claimants because of the reduced clarity.

6.2.2 Claimants' awareness of sanctioning

Although a large majority of PG9 claimants were aware of mandation and failure to comply, a substantial minority were not.

Prior to being referred to the Work Programme, 81 per cent of respondents said they completely understood what would happen if they failed to attend their first appointment with the Work Programme provider (Table 6.2a in Appendix B). A further 12 per cent had at least some idea of the consequences.

Whilst taking part in the Work Programme, nearly three-quarters of respondents (73 per cent) were aware that they could be sanctioned and lose their benefit if they did not comply with what was asked of them (Table 6.2b in Appendix B).

In the observations of adviser/claimant meetings, advisers regularly stressed the importance of complying with Work Programme requirements, checking that claimants' job searches were evidenced, as well as ensuring that they understood the importance of attending appointments.

6.2.3 Incidence of sanctioning

Of all survey respondents, 28 per cent had all or part of their benefit stopped because they failed to do something that their Work Programme provider asked them to do. Respondents who were younger than 25 years were significantly more likely (31 per cent) to have all of their benefit stopped compared to those aged 25+ (19 per cent) (Table 6.2c in Appendix B).

The most frequent reasons for sanctions to be applied were reported by respondents as: failing to attend an interview with an adviser (42 per cent); failing to attend a referral interview (24 per cent); and failing to attend an information session (19 per cent) (Table 6.2d in Appendix B).

Differences in referral for sanctioning between day one and other Work Programme claimants

It appeared as though PG9 claimants might be less subject to sanctioning when they failed to comply. This was either because some advisers believed the consequences of sanctioning for PG9 claimants might be more serious, or because more PG9 claimants faced issues which made compliance more difficult and which advisers felt excused their non-compliance, for example: '*... due to the temporary nature of accommodation, temporary nature of any part of their situation*' (Adviser, prime partner).

6.2.4 Responses to sanctioning

Underlying advisers' use of mandation and sanctioning were their beliefs about their impact: whether they encouraged compliance; whether they improved job outcomes; and whether they affected re-offending. These beliefs varied. In most respects, PG9 claimants were seen by many providers as no different in their response to mandation and sanctioning than other claimants. Sanctions were hence neither more nor less effective at encouraging PG9 claimants to engage in the Work Programme.

However, for some prison leavers, some providers felt sanctions were a good way to encourage compliance: '*They need that kind of direction. And you say to them, well if you're not getting any money, let's get you a job*'. Other prison leavers were believed by some advisers to ignore sanctions because they were not inherently interested in finding employment nor reliant on JSA for income. Grounds for these beliefs included the apparent wealth of some claimants, beliefs that claimants rented property, and claimants alluding to their adviser that they gained money through robbery.

Providers were concerned about the impact sanctions had on the relationship between advisers and Work Programme participants. They were not against sanctions per se but were concerned that sanctions presented a crucial barrier to developing a trusting and positive relationship with participants.

'If a prison leaver knows that the person who's supposed to be providing them with support has the ability to take away their benefits, they're much less likely to share information.'

(Adviser, Delivering prime)

One adviser explained that sanctions aggravated participants and created a barrier to engaging them effectively. The sanctioning regime made prison leavers feel that the Work Programme was not there to support, but rather to punish and discipline them. One adviser confided that a prison leaver had the impression that the 'system is working against them'. Advisers also reported instances of prison leavers becoming violent because they were sanctioned.

The timing of the use of sanctions was of concern. One provider, where sanctioning was used for failure to attend the initial meeting, felt this created an initial negative response to the provider and that it made engagement more difficult. At the same time, some felt that the threat of sanctions reduced what they saw as a dip in compliance at an early stage for this group of claimants. Some reported this dip after the initial meeting. A number of advisers used discretion when sanctioning, but not all were able to do so.

In the qualitative research with claimants, the effect of sanctioning was explored with those who had been sanctioned or had felt under threat of sanctions due to non-compliance. This identified sanctions as generating a feeling of unfairness. Sanctions are upheld if the decision maker concludes there was not a good reason for non-compliance, but at times claimants believed that their reasons had been valid (e.g. failure to attend a meeting because they were unwell and could not find the phone number to report this; not having been informed about an appointment; failure to complete forms on activities properly). Some claimants objected to frequent reminders of the consequences of non-compliance, when they had always been compliant.

6.2.5 Sanctions and re-offending

Some providers were concerned that sanctions could lead PG9 claimants to re-offend because of a lack of income. However, no providers reported specific cases where they believed re-offending had occurred due to sanctions.

There were concerns that sanctions also led some PG9 claimants to stop claiming JSA altogether and that this was particularly problematic with regards to the rehabilitation of ex-offenders. However, some advisers thought that sanctions made PG9 claimants 'aware that they have to be accountable for their actions in society'. Both evidence of sanctioning leading to individuals ceasing to participate and signing off and to claimants resorting to robbery when sanctioned were found in the qualitative research with claimants.

However, some providers saw the link between sanctions and re-offending as going in the opposite direction: that PG9 claimants' criminal activities prevented them from engaging effectively in the Work Programme. Sanctions were not effective in these cases because participants did not rely on benefits.

6.3 Summary

Providers reported differing approaches to mandation, either using it automatically for certain types of activity, using it for all activities until confident of compliance, or not using it unless there was a failure to comply. In addition, some saw compliance as harder (on average) for this group. They saw a non-mandatory approach as more likely to gain full participation in the longer term. Such advisers were less likely to mandate PG9 claimants. Conversely, some saw mandation as more important for this group because they were used to orders and structure in prison. Similar diversity and rationales were found in whether non-compliance resulted in referral for sanctioning. However, as with much of the Work Programme, the approach was often tailored to the individual, with advisers viewing mandation and sanctioning as beneficial for some and detrimental for others.

Only three-quarters of claimants were aware of mandation, half had been mandated and 28 per cent had been sanctioned. Compliance appeared more difficult for younger PG9 claimants (aged under 25); a higher percentage of PG9 claimants of this age group had been sanctioned.

Advisers were concerned about negative effects of sanctioning, mainly in respect of it destroying the positive relationship with claimants which they saw as very important, and it driving claimants off the programme, but also in respect of sanctions leading to re-offending. Certainly, the response of claimants to sanctioning could be feelings of unfairness and anger. Some claimants reported sanctions led to re-offending. However, no providers identified any examples of sanctions leading to re-offending.

7 In-work support

In-work support is designed to increase the likelihood of claimants staying in work, whether in their initial job or subsequent jobs. It includes measures to assist claimants who fall out of work to move rapidly back in to work.

This section first discusses the importance that providers place on in-work support, before describing the nature of in-work support and the organisation of in-work support. Section 7.4 turns to the difficulties advisers reported of staying in touch with payment group 9 (PG9) claimants once they were in work. Section 7.5 presents PG9 claimants' views of in-work support. The final section draws conclusions.

7.1 Providers' perceptions of the importance of in-work support

Providers saw in-work support as very important for PG9 claimants to remain in employment. Some saw it as particularly important for these claimants because PG9 claimants, as a group, had greater personal needs or because the labour market conditions they faced were more difficult. Perceived greater personal needs included: a lack of peer support to help in the early stages of employment; being more likely to respond to problems at work by quitting; difficulties operating outside a highly-structured environment (as in prison); and less familiarity with financial matters (pay, tax and benefits). Labour market conditions were seen as more difficult because the type of jobs that PG9 claimants tended to get were less secure (e.g. temporary contracts and construction work), which meant they more often needed assistance to move into new jobs. Moreover, once out of work, it was more difficult for PG9 claimants to find another job. Sex offenders' needs for new jobs could also be high because of having to change job if their offence is identified.

7.2 The nature of in-work support

In-work support was similar across providers and comprised:

- pre-start advice on benefits and preparation for working;
- initial financial support to cover specialist work clothing, travel to work costs and similar;
- regular contact instigated by the provider to identify any problems, to provide advice and encouragement, to assist with in-work training and progression, and to help move to another job, if unhappy;
- assistance available at the instigation of the claimant, e.g. the claimant may drop in to the local office to seek advice or other support, or they may phone a call centre for advice;
- vacancy and recruitment assistance to get those who fell out of work back into another job quickly;
- other forms of support from the provider could remain available, e.g. health and well-being services.

In addition, employer contact was made, albeit very occasionally, by some providers. This was either to identify both employer and claimant in-work support needs or to mediate between the

employer and the claimant. For the former, liaison took place only with employers with whom the provider had more general contact. However, some had taken employer contact further. For example, a specialist offender subcontractor had instigated a three-way pre-employment meeting involving the employer as well as the claimant and themselves. This only occurred with some employers with whom they have strong links. A number of providers believed greater contact with employers about claimants would be useful.

7.2.1 The in-work support process

Prior to starting a job, the adviser would assess the claimant's needs, identify and provide financial assistance, and agree a method (phone, text or email) and timetable for contact. Claimant preference, together with constraints due to work patterns (with phone contact only possible during the provider's normal working hours), determined the mode of contact.

The frequency and timing of contact either followed a set pattern or was tailored to each claimant, taking into account their preferences and the adviser's assessment of the risk of falling out of work. Risk considerations included temporary jobs, claimants who had never worked and also the claimant's behaviour and relationship with the adviser during pre-work support. For each claimant, the frequency of contact tended to decline over time. Some providers required contact at certain key support points (the end of the first day at work; a few days into work; the first pay day). Other providers had less frequent contact patterns, e.g. contact at the end of the first week and then either weekly, fortnightly or monthly thereafter; or monthly throughout. In contrast, one provider, an end-to-end subcontractor specialising in disability, had claimant-led contact (i.e. no timetable and advisers did not initiate calls), with a call centre available 24 hours for support.

Support continued throughout the time the claimant was on the Work Programme or was time limited (e.g. for six months), depending on the provider. However, the norm was that the amount and frequency of support declined over time and that many claimants would eventually '*drift away*' in their own time.

Providers' emphasis on in-work support had increased over time. This was for a number of reasons: the payment structure shifting the incentive from attachment to job outcome and sustainment fees; the longer operation of the Work Programme, which means the number of claimants in employment has grown; and the fall in the number of referrals which has focused activity on in-work support. The increased emphasis on in-work support had resulted in some providers (both prime providers) improving the quality of provision, through increased training of advisers, clearer information for claimants and more effective questioning protocols to identify support needs. One of these had reduced adviser discretion over the frequency and timing of contact, introducing higher minimum standards. These improvements were driven by the need to improve sustainment payments.

There was no evidence that PG9 claimants received different in-work support than other claimants, other than to the extent that in-work support was tailored to the claimant's needs. (This is with the exception of the organisation of support, described in the next section.) However, on average PG9 claimants were seen as needing more in-work support (see Section 7.1). This implied that, if support was fully tailored to needs, PG9 claimants received more support than the average Work Programme claimant.

7.2.2 Claimants' experience

Claimants' evidence suggested that in-work support might not be as comprehensive as described above. In the claimant survey, of the 374 respondents who had been in work at some point since starting the Work Programme, only half (52 per cent) reported having had contact with a Work Programme adviser after they started work (Table 7.2a in Appendix B). Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of these respondents said they had contact with an adviser three or more times since starting work (Table 7.2b in Appendix B).

Of the few claimants in the qualitative research who had received in-work assistance, there were descriptions which tallied with the assistance described by the providers above, e.g. travel to work expenses, regular and supportive contact with the adviser, and the adviser calling around agencies when they fell out of work. However, others, who were in temporary jobs and so might be considered at risk of becoming unemployed, described, variously: one call in the first two weeks; monthly calls only; and three calls in six months and no assistance when their temporary jobs finished.

7.3 Organisation of in-work support

7.3.1 General model

In-work support was provided either by the adviser who had been supporting the claimant when they gained the job or by an adviser specialising in in-work support. Some had specialists for those who fell out of work. In-work specialists were located at a central call centre or in the local office. To ease the transfer to a specialist in-work adviser, some providers had an initial period (examples were of 2, 4, 13 and 26 weeks) during which the claimant remained with their existing adviser before transferring to an in-work specialist. Some providers allowed advisers discretion over when to transfer claimants to their call centre or even whether claimants were handed over at all. Some providers facilitated the handover by liaison between the original adviser and the in-work specialist. Some providers allowed the claimant to re-contact their adviser at any time after transfer.

Individual prime providers and subcontractors decentralised to local offices or centralised their support over the last year. The reasons for decentralisation were a belief that: claimants preferred local support; local advisers understood the local in-work issues better; and claimants were more likely to raise issues with someone they knew. The reasons for centralisation were cost and that it enabled more intensive support to be provided. With centralisation, some providers continued to allow claimants to access drop-in advice locally.

7.3.2 Day one-specific organisational issues

Continuity of adviser, from pre- to in-work support, was seen as more important for day one claimants than others. This was because of the greater difficulty of building-up trust with PG9 claimants to be able to discuss issues related to offending. Moreover, dedicated in-work advisers were not believed to possess specialist skills relevant to offending.

Continuity of adviser was the only way the organisation of in-work support differed between PG9 claimants and other Work Programme participants. For example, one provider (in the qualitative sample) gave PG9 claimants in-work support from their adviser for 26 weeks, rather than the 13 weeks provided for most other payment groups. This was due to the longer period (26 weeks) for PG9 claimants to achieve a job outcome payment. The

difference implied both that this provider believed continuity of adviser support to be more effective and that the sustainability payment incentive structure was directing effort as intended.

Continuity was seen as less important where in-work specialists operated out of the local office, because of the possibility of liaison with the pre-work adviser and because claimants were believed to relate better to local staff. Its importance was believed to decline with time in work, and some advisers believed call centres to be as effective at later stages (given by one adviser as 26 weeks).

If advisers are correct, the value of the in-work support a PG9 claimant receives in the earlier stages may vary with their provider's model. However, the advantage of continuity could disappear if financial constraints meant support from the pre-work adviser was more restricted than that delivered by in-work specialists.

7.4 Staying in touch

Advisers differed in their beliefs about the receptiveness of PG9 claimants to in-work support. Some thought they were more receptive and others less receptive than other claimants. They also differed on which and when PG9 claimants were more receptive.

Difficulties over engagement and long-term engagement were identified by advisers. Partly this was attributed to more frequent changes in contact details; partly it was because PG9 claimants were seen as more likely to want to leave 'a bad period of their lives' behind (and this desire may be greater with certain types of offences). The change in adviser (to an in-work adviser) was seen as particularly difficult for those with mental health issues.

On the other hand, some advisers saw PG9 claimants as more receptive, due, for example, to them developing more reliance on their adviser because of a lack of support from family and friends. Some advisers believed those at higher risk of losing their job were more receptive, as those at lower risk did not see the support as so important.

Advisers encountered problems of contact with claimants who had signed-off benefit. They found it difficult to find out where such claimants had gone, including those who had returned to prison (neither which prison nor how to contact them).

7.5 Claimants' views on in-work support

The claimant survey asked those who had had contact with an adviser since starting work about the benefits of in-work support. Respondents to the qualitative interviews who had received in-work assistance were also asked about their views on the assistance.

Over one-third of claimants (36 per cent) felt the in-work support had made no difference (Table 7.1). Some claimants in the qualitative research who had not found the support useful had felt that the contact was merely to check on whether they remained employed.

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Table 7.1 Perceptions of the benefits of in-work support by age

Benefit of in-work support	Total Count (<i>weighted</i>)	Age ¹	
		Younger than 25 Count (<i>weighted</i>)	25 and older Count (<i>weighted</i>)
Motivation	86	[28]	58
Income and progression			
Helped increase income	25	[2]	24
Secured training opportunities with employer	25	[8]	17
Identified opportunities for progression	24	[6]	18
Helped increase number of hours	18	[5]	13
Other relations and negotiating with employer			
Helped employer understand difficulties and provide better support	35	[7]	28
Helped negotiate flexible working arrangements	28	[8]	20
Acted as an advocate for the employee	26	[5]	21
Other			
Helped manage a health condition	14	[0]	14
Other	16	[1]	15
Made no difference	70	[29]	41
Don't know	11	[6]	5
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	191	[44]	147

Base: Those who had contact with an adviser after starting work.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

The most frequently reported benefit was that it helped motivation, reported by almost half of claimants (45 per cent). Other benefits were reported by one in six or fewer claimants. The most frequent of these were related to relations and negotiating with their employer (e.g. helped the employer to understand difficulties and provide better support; helped negotiate flexible working arrangements; acted as an advocate for the employee). Most other benefits were related to improving progression and income. There were significant differences by age and time spent in prison in respect of the benefits that in-work support delivered for the individuals. In addition, in the qualitative research with claimants, support to find another job (especially vacancy identification) for claimants whose job had ended was found to be useful.

7.6 Summary

In-work support is important for PG9 claimants, owing to the barriers they continue to face in employment: their personal characteristics; their greater concentration in temporary jobs; and the greater difficulties gaining a follow-on job.

Providers have placed an increased emphasis on in-work support. This was for a number of reasons: the payment structure shifting the incentive from attachment to job outcome and sustainment fees; the longer operation of the Work Programme, which means the number of claimants in employment has grown; and the fall in the number of referrals which has focused activity on in-work support. This appears to have improved the quality of in-work provision. Nevertheless, there remains substantial variability between providers in their contact with claimants (the main way support is provided once in employment), suggesting variability in quality. Moreover, the claimant evidence suggested that either the regular contact described by advisers might, too often, not be taking place, or that contact was not seen by the claimant as support. Variability between providers in who provided in-work support might also result in variable quality. In particular, it appears that continuity of support through the adviser providing in-work support may be more effective, given the adviser's greater understanding of the claimant and the trust which has often been developed.

Whilst in-work support normally entailed contact with the claimant only, some subcontractors had introduced three-way meetings involving the employer and PG9 claimant. Using this or other approaches involving employers, where appropriate, would increase the effectiveness of in-work support.

There was no evidence of in-work support differing between PG9 and other claimants, other than the tailoring of support to individuals (which was done for all payment groups). However, there did appear to be greater difficulty in engagement for this group, due to greater transience and difficulties maintaining contact details.

8 Performance

8.1 Performance management

The evaluation of the Work Programme provides extensive details on performance management by prime providers.⁶⁷ Its findings provide the performance management context for the present study, which concentrates on performance management issues specific to day one.

Description of performance management in the Work Programme

The evaluation of the Work Programme found that prime providers used standard performance management tools, including quantitative monitoring of subcontractors using each prime's own IT monitoring system, qualitative monitoring of subcontractors (e.g. through monitoring claimants' files; observation of advisers' sessions with participants) and audits. Processes included regular, formal meetings and reviews, day-to-day informal communication, telekits and supply chain-wide meetings. The frequency of assessment and meetings varied between prime providers and increased where there were performance problems. Through these means, prime providers were able to monitor whether subcontractors were on target and to take action if not. Where performance was not adequate, prime providers' responses include providing support and advice to improve, and reallocating referrals to another subcontractor. Ultimately, inadequate performance resulted in termination of subcontractors' contracts.

The evaluation of the Work Programme also found that providers monitored participants' progress by collecting information about their referrals (such as the length of time it took from referral to attachment) and outcomes such as job entries and sustainment. Prime providers were also able to monitor the progress of participants throughout their supply chain, sometimes through networked IT systems.

8.1.1 Department for Work and Pensions performance targets

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has performance targets for three payment groups. These do not include payment group 9 (PG9). Failure to meet targets for the three groups can result in a performance improvement plan (PiP) being imposed on providers. Evidence from this research and from the Work Programme evaluation suggests that PiPs lead to resources being concentrated on the payment groups with targets and away from other groups.

This has a number of consequences for day one. Firstly, it appears that few prime providers managed performance in respect of PG9 claimants specifically. Instead, performance was assessed over different payment groups jointly. Secondly, where a prime was subject to a PiP, they closely monitored and pushed for improvement on both their own and their subcontractors' performance in respect of the payment groups in the PiP. This meant that attention was diverted away from other payment groups not subjected to the PiP, including PG9.

⁶⁷ Lane et al. (2013). *Work Programme Evaluation: Procurement, supply chains and implementation of the commissioning model*, DWP Research Report No. 832.

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The lack of monitoring of PG9 claimants was attributed to the lack of performance targets for PG9. A number of prime providers reported that their IT systems allowed such analysis by payment group.

Prime providers differed in their views on whether performance targets for PG9 would lead to an improvement in outcomes for this group. It was suggested the group was too small to benefit from such an approach. No other rationale was given for why such targets should not be effective, other than, as one delivery prime said: 'you can't focus on everything', which implied that PiPs only resulted in resources being shifted between payment groups.

The greater barriers to work for PG9 claimants meant that some providers felt that, were there performance targets (and outcome measures) for this group, they should be somewhat different to those for existing groups. Suggestions included: that targets might include distance travelled; and that targets should recognise the peculiar difficulties around engagement and maintaining participation (including re-entry to prison).

8.1.2 Approaches supportive of PG9 claimants

The lack of DWP performance targets for PG9 did not mean that PG9 claimants as a group disappeared altogether from prime providers' performance management.

Indeed, one managing agent prime, on the introduction of day one, had changed its performance management system to manage this group separately. It had:

- introduced a specific target for prison leavers within each of their nine key performance indicators (KPIs);
- modified PG9 claimants' KPI on period to engagement (extending it from 7 days to 28 days) as the engagement period needed to take into account that PG9 claimants could make a claim a few weeks before leaving prison; and
- adapted their management information system to accommodate the new payment group and allow the data to be analysed by payment group.

Some subcontractors reported a positive feedback system, under which they were able to meet regularly with the prime provider to discuss any issues, which could include information about PG9 claimants. However, this was absent for subcontractors with other prime providers.

Another prime had created the position of a 'PG9 Champion' to promote performance in relation to PG9 claimants in one of their contract package areas (CPAs). This prime was considering doing this elsewhere.

8.1.3 Monitoring of PG9 claimants' progress

There was little indication that providers managed the performance of PG9 claimants independently from other participants. Only one provider described monitoring the progress of the PG9 payment group separately, but did so only as a result of their participation in the re-offending pilot evaluation.

Some non-end-to-end providers (spot providers) monitored the effectiveness of their services through claimant focus groups and/or evaluation forms. This information was fed through to the end-to-end provider. However, some providers raised concerns that the practice of feeding back information about participants' progress was not reciprocated by end-to-end

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providers. One non-end-to-end provider which specialised in working with ex-offenders reported that they received little or no information about the outcomes for the participants with whom they had worked. This prevented providers from using such information to improve their services. In particular, some wanted feedback about the positive job outcomes of claimants with whom they had worked, which they could then use to promote their services and encourage more claimants to engage.

8.2 Impact of the financial model

The Work Programme contracts with prime providers incorporate a financial model which combines outcome-based funding with performance competition between prime providers for market share.

8.2.1 Outcome-based funding

The Work Programme outcome-based funding emphasises the sustainability of employment outcomes: job outcome payments are triggered after a claimant has been in employment for a given number of weeks, either 13 or 26 weeks depending on payment group. For day one claimants, the job outcome payment is after 26 weeks in employment. Further sustainment payments are then made when the claimant has remained in work for a longer period. An attachment fee (paid when a claimant is attached to the programme) has also been paid, but the size of the attachment fee has reduced over time, declining to nothing by the beginning of the fourth year of the programme (June 2014).

Prime providers are free to use any form of payment structure for their subcontractors. Prime providers have used the same outcome-based structure for all or most of their end-to-end subcontractors (and other subcontractors with a similar role). However, in some cases, such subcontractors have received a relatively larger attachment fee and have been allowed to keep an attachment fee over the course of the programme. Other types of subcontractors tend to be paid on a service basis.⁶⁸

The evaluation of the Work Programme has identified the impact of outcome-based funding generally.⁶⁹ Here we examine any issues specific to day one. Whilst the research identified funding constraints as limiting support, which has been detailed above (e.g. in relation to training provision), this section is concerned with the effect of the payment structure rather than total funding: were payments higher, constraints on services would be less severe.

Differences in support for day one (addressing prison-leaver-specific barriers and their higher barriers) may have been driven by tailoring, rather than by outcome-based funding. However, in some prime providers and subcontractors, there was evidence of outcome-based funding having an impact on this group. In particular, there was evidence of an awareness of the higher payments, including amongst some advisers, and that this had affected the level of support and development of specialist support for this group. In some cases, advisers' performance measures reflected the higher payments. On the other hand, for some providers, the higher cost of gaining outcomes for PG9 claimants was judged to outweigh the higher sustainment payments. This meant that some ran their services at a loss and continued to focus on getting claimants into sustainable employment. In some cases, specialist support had not been developed, nor did outcome payments drive additional

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

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support. Indeed, some had reduced specialist support. Unfortunately, not only were the costs of achieving outcomes for this group seen as higher, but the costs of some specialist support services (e.g. pre-release engagement, specialist PG9 advisers and employer engagement consultants) were particularly high, as the small number of PG9 claimants raised unit costs. This lack of economies of scale was also seen to prevent the development of special programmes for PG9 claimants (as had been done by some for Employment and Support Allowance claimants). Some providers believed that because of the high barriers to employment for PG9 claimants, there was a case for maintaining an attachment fee for this group. According to some, the difficulties in achieving outcomes were increasing, with an increase in people who were harder to help amongst PG9 claimants.

The longer period for PG9 claimants, compared with many other groups, to gain job outcome payments (26 weeks) was regarded as problematic by some providers. Firstly, setting a higher job outcome threshold for a group which was more difficult to keep in employment was seen as inappropriate and some believed it should be lower (i.e. 13 weeks). Secondly, maintaining contact over this period, in order to provide support and to prove continued employment, was difficult and costly. Some reported that this was exacerbated by PG9 claimants being less likely than other claimants to maintain contact (although other providers did not experience this greater withdrawal) and by difficulties identifying respondents who had returned to prison. However, the longer sustainability period had resulted in some providers altering their in-work support to achieve 26-week sustainment, for example, extending the period during which the adviser, rather than a call centre, provided in-work support to 26 weeks.

8.2.2 Market share shift

Performance competition between prime providers is encouraged through 'market share shift'. Performance of prime providers is assessed annually. Where performance between prime providers is significantly different within a CPA, the percentage of future referrals is adjusted to increase the share to the better performing prime(s).

The impact of market share shift generally seemed to be negligible, because the resulting increase or decrease in referrals was very small. Moreover, the size of the shift was also negligible compared with the general decline in referrals to the Work Programme. (For example, one provider reported receiving half their expected number of referrals.) There appeared to be no implications of market share shift for day one specifically.

8.3 Summary

8.3.1 Performance management

There was variability amongst prime providers in whether performance management differed for the PG9 group compared with other groups in the Work Programme and this was likely to have led to differences in performance by prime provider. Some performance managed the PG9 group separately. This might be expected to boost performance for the group, although some other prime providers believed this would not be effective, due to the size of the group. Conversely, some prime providers (especially if subject to a PiP) focused performance management on the three payment groups covered by DWP performance targets, paying less attention to other payment groups, including PG9.

8.3.2 Outcome-related funding

Outcome-related funding appeared to have a differential impact on some providers' support for PG9 claimants. However, whether this led to greater or less support for this group varied between providers. Some providers did not vary provision in respect of outcome-related funding; others focused on the higher payments for PG9 claimants' outcomes and encouraged greater support for PG9 claimants; and others believed that these higher payments were unlikely to compensate for the lower expected outcomes of this group and did not provide as much support. Moreover, even where support was not affected by payment group, the practice of limiting some external payments (e.g. for training) to those where a job was a guaranteed outcome would result in the PG9 claimant group receiving, on average, less support (because fewer receive job offers). Moreover, the relatively small size of PG9 meant that provision specific to this group could be relatively expensive (not benefiting from economies of scale).

The longer period to gain an outcome payment (26 weeks in employment, compared with 13 weeks for some other payment groups) was seen as perverse for a group where sustained employment was more difficult. Given the low expectations of outcomes for the group, there was a belief amongst providers that outcomes related to distance travelled towards employment would be appropriate.

Appendix A

Survey questionnaire

Day One Participant Survey

Questionnaire Main

Can I speak to...?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

1 Speaking to named respondent (PROCEED)

2 Named contact not available (SMS see below)

3 Respondent moved - have new details - COLLECT DETAILS

4 Respondent moved - no contact details – THANK AND CLOSE

5 Wrong number - THANK AND CLOSE

IF SMS: INTERVIEWER NOTE IF YOU ARE QUESTIONED ABOUT WHY YOU WANT TO SPEAK TO NAMED CONTACT, SAY

My name is <yourname> and I am calling from GfK NOP, the independent research organisation. We would like to speak to <NAME> regarding a survey about employment.

Would I be able to speak to him/ her, please?

IF NO: When would be the best time to call back?

IF YES: PROCEED

SMS options:

Refusal outright, Refusal due to bad experience on the Work Programme, Not available during fieldwork, Language difficulties, Respondent back in prison

If refusal due to bad experience on the Work Programme:

We are interested in people's experiences with the Work Programme, whether they were good or bad.

Good morning/afternoon, my name is ... calling from GfK NOP, on behalf of The Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Justice. We are an independent research agency, and have been asked to speak to a range of people who have taken part in the Work Programme. We need to hear about any problems people experienced on the Work Programme as well as where it has helped them to find and stay in work.

Is now a good time to do the survey? Depending on your answers, the interview should take no more than 20 minutes.

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ADD IF NECESSARY

The Work Programme involves being referred by your Jobcentre to another organisation or organisations for more help to find a job.

We would like to speak to you regardless of whether you are now working, claiming benefit or doing something else.

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY

Participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and will not affect any benefits or tax credits you are claiming, now or in the future.

The information that you provide will be used for statistical and research purposes only. It will be held in the strictest confidence and will be stored securely until the end of the research project when it will be deleted.

Completing the survey will not affect the way you are dealt with by DWP, Jobcentre Plus or any other organisations involved in delivering the Work Programme.

The survey is to help DWP find out about your views about the support you have received through the Work Programme.

Your name has been selected from Jobcentre Plus records of people recently referred to the Work Programme.

The interview will be conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

If you would like to ensure the research is genuine we can email you a letter from DWP which explains the purpose of the survey and how we selected you to take part.

Contact at GfK NOP is Tim Buchanan on 0207 890 9786.

If absolutely necessary, the DWP project manager is Tim Conway on 0114 294 8478 but **refer to GfK NOP contacts first.**

A Confirmation of referral to Work Programme

A1 First of all, can you confirm that you were referred by Jobcentre Plus to the Work Programme sometime around (Month and Year from administrative record)?

SINGLE CODE. DO NOT READ OUT.

Yes – referred to Work Programme sometime around (Month and Year indicated by administrative record) – PROCEED to A2

Yes – referred to Work Programme but not sure it was in (Month and Year indicated by administrative record) – PROCEED to A2

Not referred to Work Programme – PROCEED to A2

ADD IF NECESSARY: The Work Programme involves being referred by your Jobcentre to another organisation or organisations for more help to find a job.

For the moment, it does not matter whether you are in work, claiming benefits or doing something else.

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A2 We are interviewing people who are in all sorts of circumstances, including some with criminal records. We understand that you have finished a sentence some time between March 2012 and March 2013. If this is correct, could you confirm the month you finished your sentence, please?

CODE MONTH and YEAR. DO NOT READ OUT.

DATE

If claims not released from prison, proceed to A3.

A2a Is it correct that you were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance when you were first released from prison on (use DATE from answer to A2)?

Yes – claimed JSA

No – did not claim at all

No – claimed ESA

Don't remember

A3 According to our information you were referred to an organisation called (Name of prime provider from sample). Excluding this organisation and Jobcentre Plus, have you been in contact with, or received support from, any other organisations for help in finding a job since you were referred to the Work Programme?

Have never been referred to WP provider

Yes, one other organisation

Yes, more than one other organisation

No, only (Name of prime provider from sample)

Don't know/can't remember

If insist NO referral to WP, no contact with WP provider, no JSA claim, no release from prison (IF CODE 2-4 AT A2a, or IF CODE 1 or 5 at A3) – CLOSE

Otherwise - PROCEED

B Work history prior to referral to WP

INTERVIEWER: Before we talk about the Work Programme itself, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your work history before you were referred to the programme.

ASK ALL

B1 Can I just ask, how long before serving your prison sentence had it been since you were last in paid employment?

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DO NOT READ OUT – SINGLE CODE

(Never been in paid work) – GO TO B2

Less than one month before you started your sentence

At least one month, but less than three months before you started your sentence

At least three months, but less than six months before you started your sentence

At least six months, but less than nine months before you started your sentence

At least nine months, but less than twelve months before you started your sentence

At least one year, but less than two years before you started your sentence

At least two years, but less than five years before you started your sentence

At least five years but less than ten years before you started your sentence

More than ten years before you started your sentence

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/Can't remember – GO TO B3

**ASK ALL EXCEPT THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN IN PAID WORK OR DON'T KNOW/
CAN'T REMEMBER (Codes 1 or 11 B1)**

B2 And why did this job come to an end?

DO NOT READ OUT – MULTICODE OK

Had to start prison sentence

Left for another job (NB: one that didn't actually happen)

Made Redundant

Dismissed/sacked

Left because I did not like it/resigned

Temporary job ended

The company closed

Personal health reasons (got ill/injured and had to leave)

Caring for other person

Transport issues / difficulties getting to work.

Other reason (TYPE IN)

Don't know

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ASK ALL

B3 And thinking about your situation now, what are the main difficulties you face in finding work?

DO NOT READ OUT – MULTICODE OK.

Family or caring commitments

Health issues/disabilities limit kind of work can do

The time involved in getting to interviews or a workplace

The cost involved in getting to interviews or a workplace

Lack of vacancies for jobs interested in

Lack of jobs in local area

Too much competition for jobs

Lack of jobs for people with respondent's health issues/ disabilities

Lack of understanding from employers about people with health conditions or disabilities or employing people with disabilities

Not having right skills for jobs interested in

Lack of work experience

Drug or alcohol problems

Criminal record

Housing problems

Other (specify)

No real difficulties

C Referral from Jobcentre Plus

INTERVIEWER: Thanks. I am now going to ask you a few questions about the way you were referred to the Work Programme and the information you were given before you started.

ASK ALL

C1 Other than the meeting with the Jobcentre Plus adviser to apply for your benefits, did you attend a Work Programme information session before you were released?

Yes

No

Don't know

IF YES (CODE 1 AT C1). OTHERS GO TO C3

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C2 How useful did you find the information session in helping you understand what types of support you could receive on the Work Programme?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Very useful

Fairly useful

Not very useful

Not at all useful

(Not sure/can't remember)

IF DID NOT ATTEND SESSION (CODE 2 OR 3 AT C1). OTHERS GO TO C4

C3 From the information provided by your Jobcentre Plus adviser, did you understand what types of support you could receive on the Work Programme?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes – understood completely

Yes – understood to some extent

No – didn't understand at all

(Not sure/can't remember)

ASK ALL

C4 Roughly how long did it take between agreeing with Jobcentre Plus that you wanted to take part in the Work Programme and actually starting?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Less than a week

At least 1 but less than 2 weeks

At least 2 but less than 3 weeks

At least 3 but less than 4 weeks

4 weeks or more

(Don't know/can't remember)

C5 From the information provided by your Jobcentre Plus adviser before you were referred, to what extent do you feel that:

You understood why you were being referred to the Work Programme?

You understood when and where you needed to go to be able to start the Work Programme?

You understood what would happen if you failed to attend?

Understood completely

Understood to some extent

Didn't understand at all

(Not sure/don't know/can't remember)

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C6 How did your Work Programme provider (organisation name from admin records), get in touch with you initially?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Telephone/ Mobile

Letter in the post

E-mail

A meeting at the Jobcentre Plus office

Other (specify)

D Level of support received

Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your views on the level of support you have received from organisations under the Work Programme. For the next set of questions, we are not interested in any support you have received from Jobcentre Plus.

ASK ALL

D1 So to what extent do you feel that:

the advisers you met helped you to feel comfortable discussing the problems and difficulties you faced in finding work?

The advisers had an understanding of the implications of your criminal record when making recommendations for support?

Completely

To some extent

Not at all

Not sure/DK

D2 And thinking about the contacts or meetings you have had with organisations under the Work Programme, excluding Jobcentre Plus, have these taken place:

MUTICODE OK. READ OUT.

In a group meeting with other people looking for work?

Face-to-face with an adviser?

By telephone

By text

By email

Using Skype or video call

In some other format (please specify)?

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/can't remember

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ASK ALL

D3 Since starting the Work Programme, on average how frequently have you had meetings or interviews with a personal adviser (excluding any meetings with Jobcentre Plus)?

This INCLUDES any discussions you have had over the telephone.

less frequently than every 2 months

about every 2 months

about every 6 weeks

monthly

fortnightly

weekly

more frequently than weekly

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/can't remember

D4 Which of the following statements applies to these meetings or interviews?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

You always or almost always saw or spoke with the same adviser – GO TO D5a

You saw or spoke with the same adviser sometimes – GO TO D5b

Or you saw or spoke with a different adviser each time – GO TO D5c

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/can't remember

IF 1 AT D4

D5a And would you say that always, or almost always seeing or speaking with the same personal adviser was..?

Very helpful

Helpful

Not very helpful

Not helpful at all

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

IF 2 AT D4

D5b And would you say that seeing or speaking with the same personal adviser sometimes was..?

Very helpful

Helpful

Not very helpful

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Not helpful at all

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

IF 3 AT D4

D5c And would you say that seeing or speaking with a different personal adviser each time was...?

Very helpful

Helpful

Not very helpful

Not helpful at all

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

E Nature of support received

INTERVIEWER: I would now like to find out about the different types of services you have received under the Work Programme, and how useful they have been in helping you to find or move closer to getting paid work. We are not interested in any support you have received from Jobcentre Plus.

I am going to read out a list of possible types of support you may or may not have received through the Work Programme...

INTERVIEWER: We are interested in things they actually have received to date. If some things are being discussed or are in the process of being arranged we do not need to record them in this survey.

ASK ALL

E1 Have you received any of the following:

STATEMENTS ROTATED

An assessment of your skills

Drawing up an action plan

Help with writing a CV, job applications or interview skills

A referral to a careers adviser

A place on a training course at a local college or other training provider

A session on motivation or confidence

Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language

A work experience placement or voluntary work

Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for work (e.g. travel expenses or childcare costs)

Support or advice for setting up your own business or becoming self-employed

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Financial advice of some sort

Advice or support relating to your health or a disability you may have – **GO TO E1b**

Help or advice in relation to looking after children or adults

Help with any drug or alcohol problems that you may have – **GO TO E1c**

Help with housing issues – **GO TO E1d**

Help or advice related to having a criminal record – **GO TO E1a**

Any other type of assessment, support, training or advice (please specify)

None of these

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

IF RECEIVED ADVICE ON HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD (CODE 16 AT E1)

E1a You said you had received Advice related to having a criminal record of some sort"... Can I just check whether this was:

MULTICODE

advice/ support on engaging with other organisations after your release (NOMS, Probation Service)?

advice on which jobs were accessible to you despite your criminal record?

advice on issues around disclosure to employers?

advice on how to deal with questions about your criminal record in interviews?

Something else

Don't know/Can't remember

IF RECEIVED HEALTH ADVICE (CODE 12 AT E1)

E1b You said you had received "Advice or support relating to your health or a disability you may have"... Can I just check whether this was:

MULTICODE

Advice on health service providers who may be able to help you with an illness or disability?

Advice to help you find work that is compatible with any health condition or disability that you may have?

Something else

Don't know/Can't remember

IF RECEIVED DRUG/ALCOHOL ADVICE (CODE 14 AT E1)

E1c You said you had received "Help with any drug or alcohol problems that you may have"... Can I just check whether this was:

MULTICODE

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Help with alcohol related problems?

Help with a drug problem?

Something else

Don't know/Can't remember

IF RECEIVED HOUSING ADVICE (CODE 15 AT E1)

E1d You said you had received "Advice or support relating to housing"... Can I just check whether this was:

MULTICODE

Advice on housing providers who may be able to help deal with any housing problems?

Advice to help you find an appropriate accommodation?

Something else

Don't know/Can't remember

ASK FOR EACH TYPE OF SUPPORT MENTIONED AT E1

E3 And how useful was ... in helping you to find work or moving you closer to getting paid work?

READ OUT EACH TYPE OF SERVICE TAKEN UP

Very useful

Fairly useful

Not very useful

Not at all useful

(Don't know)

IF RECEIVED ANY SUPPORT (CODE 1-16 AT E1)

E3a And which of these activities or types of support were you told you HAD to do?

IF NECESSARY: Which were compulsory rather than voluntary?

DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE TO PRE-CODES. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

(LIST ALL CODED AT E1)

None of these

Don't know/can't remember

ASK IF OFFERED A PLACE ON A TRAINING COURSE AT A LOCAL COLLEGE OR OTHER TRAINING PROVIDER (CODE 5 AT E1). OTHERS GO TO SECTION F

E4 And can I just check, the training course that you mentioned, was that..

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

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Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Training

Security Industry Authority (SIA) Training

HGV and Forklift Truck Training

Training for another form of occupational certification or licence (please specify)

Other training designed to lead to a full, a part or a unit of a formally recognised qualification

Something else (please specify)

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

F Views on support received

Now, I'd like to ask you about your views on the support you have received through the Work Programme.

ASK ALL

F1 Thinking about all the organisations that you have been in contact with through the Work Programme, excluding Jobcentre Plus, to what extent do you think that the support you received was matched to your personal needs and circumstances. Was it?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Very well matched

Fairly well matched

Not very well matched

Not well matched at all

(DO NOT READ OUT) Not sure/don't know

F2 And to what extent did you feel under pressure at any time to take part in activities that may not have been suited to your needs and circumstances..?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

To a great extent

To some extent

To a limited extent

Not at all

(DO NOT READ OUT) Not sure/don't know

ASK ALL

F3 Overall, how useful have you found the support you have received through the Work Programme in addressing the difficulties you have mentioned in finding work or moving closer to getting paid work?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

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Very useful

Fairly useful

Not very useful

Not useful at all

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

F4 Do you feel you have received enough support through the Work Programme to help you find work?

Yes

No

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

ASK IF HAVE NOT RECEIVED ENOUGH SUPPORT (CODE 2 AT F4).

F5 What more could have been offered to help you find work/find work more quickly?

PROBE FULLY

WRITE IN

Nothing

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

G Work outcomes and impact

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about your current work status and any jobs you have had since starting on the Work Programme.

G1i Can I just ask, are you currently in paid work or self-employment?

READ OUT

Yes

No

ASK IF CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK OR SELF-EMPLOYMENT (CODE 1 AT G1i)

G1ii And are you currently...?

Self employed

Working full time for an employer in a paid role – 30 hours or more per week

Working part time for an employer in a paid role – less than 30 hours per week

ASK IF NOT CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK OR SELF-EMPLOYMENT (CODE 2 AT G1i)

G1iii And are you currently...?

MULTI CODE

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Retired and/or claiming a pension/pension credit

In full time training or education – 16 hours or more per week

In part time education or training – less than 16 hours per week

Working for an employer in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship and not claiming benefit

Working for an employer in a voluntary unpaid role or internship whilst claiming benefit

None of the above

ASK IF EMPLOYED (CODES 2-3 AT G1). OTHERS GO TO G2

G1a And are you currently working for more than one employer?

Yes

No

ASK IF NOT CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN A PAID ROLE/SELF-EMPLOYED (CODES 2 AT G1i). OTHERS GO TO G3A

G2 And since your referral to the Work Programme, have you at any time been..?

READ OUT. ALLOW MULTI-CODE.

Self employed

Working full time for an employer in a paid role – 30 hours or more per week

Working part time for an employer in a paid role – less than 30 hours per week

Working for an employer in a voluntary unpaid role or internship

None of the above

ASK IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN A PAID ROLE/SELF-EMPLOYED (CODE 1 AT G1i). OTHERS GO TO G4

G3a And when did this job /self-employment start..?

ADD IF NECESSARY: If participant has more than one job, focus on their main job (the job they work most hours in).

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Less than two weeks ago

At least two weeks, but less than one month ago

At least one month, but less than two months ago

At least two months, but less than three months ago

At least three months, but less than six months ago

Six months ago or longer

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

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ASK IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN A PAID ROLE OR HAVE BEEN SINCE REFERRAL TO WP (CODES 1 AT G1i OR CODES 2-3 AT G2). OTHERS GO TO G12

G4 And is (was) this job..?

IF NECESSARY: IF MORE THAN ONE EMPLOYER CURRENTLY, FOCUS ON MAIN JOB. IF NOT CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN A PAID ROLE BUT HAVE BEEN SINCE REFERRAL TO WORK PROGRAMME, FOCUS ON MOST RECENT PAID ROLE.

READ OUT – SINGLE CODE

On a permanent or open-ended contract

On a fixed-term contract lasting 12 months or longer

On a fixed-term contract lasting less than 12 months

On a temporary or casual basis

On some other basis (Please specify)

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

(DO NOT READ OUT) Refused

G6 And what is (was) your job title and your main duties or responsibilities?

IF NECESSARY: IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN MORE THAN ONE JOB, FOCUS ON MAIN JOB. IF NOT CURRENTLY IN WORK, FOCUS ON MOST RECENT JOB.

PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS.

G7 And in this job, how many hours would you say that you typically worked per week ..?

ENTER NUMBER OF HOURS

Don't know/Can't remember

G11 Approximately how much time have you spent in work since your referral to the Work Programme? Please include only paid work and self-employment, including your current work if you are employed. Would you say it was..?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Less than two weeks

At least two weeks but less than one month

At least one month but less than two months

At least two months but less than three months

At least three months but less than six months

Six months or longer.

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

CHECK THAT CODE G11 >= G3a

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ASK IF NOT CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK/SELF-EMPLOYMENT BUT HAVE BEEN SINCE REFERRAL TO WORK PROGRAMME (CODES 1-3 AT G2). OTHERS GO TO G13

G12 And why did you leave your most recent job

DO NOT READ OUT – MUTICODE OK

Contract ended/temporary work

Sacked/dismissed

Made redundant

Went into training/education

Wasn't earning enough

No promotion prospects

Child care commitments

Health reasons

The company closed down

Transport issues/difficulties getting to work

Job was not suitable in some other way (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Refused

ASK IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN A PAID ROLE/SELF-EMPLOYED OR HAVE BEEN SINCE REFERRAL TO WP (CODES 1-3 AT G1 OR CODES 1-3 AT G2). OTHERS GO TO G15

G13 To what extent do you feel your current/most recent job is/was well matched with your experience, skills and interests?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Very well matched

Fairly well matched

Not well matched

Not at all well matched

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

ASK IF DISAGREE WORK WAS A GOOD MATCH (CODE 3-4 AT G13). OTHERS GO TO G15

G14 Are any of the following reasons why you decided to take your current/most recent job?

READ OUT. MULTICODE OK.

There were few jobs available that matched your experience, skills or interest

You wanted to move into work as soon as possible

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You felt under pressure from Jobcentre Plus to take this job

You felt under pressure from your Work Programme provider to take this job

You hoped it would lead to another job that better matches your skills, experience and interest

It suited my childcare or other caring responsibilities

(DO NOT READ OUT) Some other reason (please specify)

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

G15 Thinking about your current/most recent job, would you say that the support you received through the Work Programme

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Played a big part in helping you get the job

Played a small part in helping you get the job

Played no role in helping you get the job

Don't know

ASK IF NOT WORKED SINCE REFERRAL TO WP (CODE 5 AT G2). OTHERS GO TO H1

G16 And do you feel that the support you received through the Work Programme has made you ...?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

A lot more likely to find work

A little more likely to find work

Had no impact on your likelihood to find work

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

H In-work support and progression

Now, I'd like to ask you about any training, development or support you have received whilst in work since your referral to the Work Programme.

**ASK IF CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK OR SELF EMPLOYED (CODES 1-3 AT G1).
OTHERS GO TO H2**

H1 Do you think that..

the job that you are currently doing offers opportunities for promotion or for substantially increasing your responsibilities

(IF EMPLOYED) your employer will offer you training that would help you get a promotion or more responsibilities

the job that you are currently doing offers opportunities to increase your hourly or monthly pay

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Yes

No

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

ASK IF CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK OR SELF-EMPLOYED OR HAVE BEEN SINCE REFERRAL TO WP (CODES 1-3 AT G1 OR CODES 1-3 AT G2). OTHERS GO TO I1

H2 Not including any Jobcentre Plus staff, did you have any contact with any Work Programme personal advisers AFTER you started work?

Yes

No

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

ASK IF CONTACTED BY A PERSONAL ADVISER ONCE IN WORK (CODE 1 AT H2). OTHERS GO TO H12

H3 How many times did you have contact with a personal adviser once you started work? Was it ..?

READ OUT – SINGLE CODE

Once

Twice

Three or four times

Five or more times

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

H6 In what way(s) did the contact you received after you had started work help you stay in work?

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Help keep you motivated

Help negotiate flexible working arrangements with your employer

Help advocate on your behalf with your employer

Help the employer understand some of the difficulties you faced and support you better at work

Help you to secure training opportunities with the employer

Helped you identify and obtain opportunities for progression with your employer.

Helped you increase the number of hours you work.

Helped you increase your income.

Help you to manage a health condition in the context of work.

Other (please specify)

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Made no difference at all

Don't know

ASK IF HAD CONTACT WITH A PERSONAL ADVISER AFTER STARTING WORK (CODE 1 AT H2). OTHERS GO TO H12.

H7 Was there any additional support that you would have wanted to help you stay in work?

Yes

No

IF YES (CODE 1) AT H7

H7a What additional support would you have liked that you did not receive?

DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

An assessment of your skills

Drawing up an action plan

Help with writing a CV, job applications or interview skills

A referral to a careers adviser

A place on a training course at a local college or other training provider

A session on motivation or confidence

Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language

A work experience placement or voluntary work

Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for work (e.g. travel expenses or childcare costs)

Support or advice for setting up your own business or becoming self-employed

Financial advice of some sort

Advice or support relating to your health or a disability you may have

Help or advice in relation to looking after children or adults

Help with any drug or alcohol problems that you may have

Help with housing issues

Help or advice related to having a criminal record

Any other type of assessment, support, training or advice (please specify)

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

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ASK IF HAD CONTACT WITH A PERSONAL ADVISER AFTER STARTING WORK (CODE 1 AT H2). OTHERS GO TO H12.

H9 And to what extent, if at all, did you feel under any pressure from an adviser to stay in work?

To a great extent

To some extent

Not sure

To a limited extent

Not at all

ASK IF HAVE BEEN IN PAID WORK SINCE REFERRAL TO WP (CODES 1-3 AT G1 and 1-3 AT G2). OTHERS GO TO I1

H12 Whilst in your current/most recent paid job/self-employment did you do/have you done any of the following..?

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Attended a training course off-site

Attended training courses at the place where you work/have worked

Attended seminars or conferences aimed at developing knowledge and skills

(if employed) Undertaken any other learning or training funded or supported by your employer

(DO NOT READ OUT) None of the above

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

ASK IF TRAINED (CODE 1-4 AT H12). OTHERS GO TO I1.

H13 And has any of this training been designed to lead to a formal, recognised qualification, or part or a unit of a recognised qualification..?

Yes – a formal, recognised qualification

Yes – part or a unit of a recognised qualification

(DO NOT READ OUT) Other (specify)

No – neither

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

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I Mandation

Now I'd like to ask you about any benefit sanctions you may have had since starting the Work Programme.

ASK ALL

I1 Did any of your Work Programme advisers tell you that you had to do something and you could be at risk of losing all or part of your benefit if you did not do it?

ADD IF NECESSARY: Your provider should have handed or posted a Mandatory Activity Notification to you.

Yes

No

Don't know/can't remember

I2 Was all or part of your benefit ever stopped because of something you failed to do that your Work Programme provider asked you to do?

SINGLE CODE

Yes, my benefit was then stopped

Yes, part of my benefit was then deducted

No

Don't know

**ASK BENEFIT WAS ACTUALLY STOPPED OR PART DEDUCTED (CODE 1-2 AT I2).
OTHERS GO TO J1.**

I3 And, what did you understand the reason was for your benefit being stopped or part of it deducted. Was it because you..?

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Failed to start the Work Programme

Failed to attend your Work Programme referral interview

Failed to attend an information session

Failed to attend an interview/interviews with your personal adviser

Failed to attend a skills assessment

Failed to attend or start a course or other programme of support

Other (please specify)

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/ can't remember

I4 Have you had to apply for a hardship payment as a result of your benefit being stopped/part of your benefit being deducted?

SINGLE CODE

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Yes

No

Don't know

J Attitudes and beliefs about work/looking for work

Now, I'd just like to ask you a few questions about how confident you currently feel about looking for jobs in the future.

ASK ALL

J1 **(If currently not in paid employment or self-employment)** So thinking about looking for jobs and working, are you confident that?

(if currently employed in a paid role or self-employed) So thinking about looking for jobs and working in the future, are you confident that..?

ROTATE

Employers will want to offer you an interview

You can cope with rejections and knock-backs

You can learn new skills or re-train for a different job

Very confident

Fairly confident

Not very confident

Not at all confident

(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / not sure

K Demographics

ASK ALL

This is the final section and I'd just like to ask you a few details about yourself for classification purposes.

K1 Other than in a professional capacity, do you look after or give special help to anyone who is sick, disabled or elderly?

ADD IF NECESSARY: The person or people you look after could be a relative, partner, child or friend, and it doesn't matter if you live with them or not.

Yes

No

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IF YES AT K1.

K2 Does the care you provide limit the kind of paid work you can do in terms of your availability to do work or the type of work you can do?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Yes – availability to work

Yes – types of work can do

No

Don't know

ASK ALL

K3 What is the highest academic or vocational qualifications you have completed before starting the Work Programme?

Degree or postgraduate degree (level 4 or above)

HNC/ HND (level 4)

BTEC

City and Guilds

RSA/OCR

GNVQ

NVQ

A level

AS level

GCSE

GCE – O level

CSE

Other (**SPECIFY - DOES NOT HAVE TO BE AN ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION**)

No qualifications

Don't know

ASK IF K3 = 13

K4 What is the subject of this qualification?

WRITE IN THE 'OTHER' QUALIFICATION SUBJECT. PROBE IF NECESSARY:

WRITE IN

PROBE: What is the level of your qualification?

WRITE IN

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ASK ALL

K5 Can I just check, have you served as a regular member of the armed forces in the last 3 years?

Yes

No

Don't know

ASK ALL

K6 Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 6 months or more?

Yes

No

Don't know

Refused

IF YES (CODE 1 AT K6). OTHERS GO TO K9

K6a Which of these is your main health problem/disability?

Arms, hands

Legs or feet

Back or neck

Difficulty in seeing

Difficulty in hearing

Speech impediment

Skin conditions, allergies

Chest, breathing problems

Heart, blood pressure, circulation

Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion

Diabetes

Depression, bad nerves

Epilepsy

Learning Difficulties

Mental illness, phobia, panics

Progressive illness n.e.c.

Other problems/ disabilities

No answer

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K7 Does your condition or illness\do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?

Yes, a lot

Yes, a little

No, not at all

Don't know

K8 Does/do your condition(s) or illness(es) make it difficult for you to find work?

Yes

No

Don't know

ASK ALL

K9 To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

READ OUT

White

Mixed

Asian

Black

Gypsy/ Traveller

Other...

Don't Know

Refused

ASK ALL

K10 Is English your first language?

Yes

No

Don't know

Refused

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K11 Which of these best describes the accommodation you are living in at the moment?

READ OUT AND CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES

Rented privately

Rented from a council or local authority

Rented from a Housing Association

Owned outright

Being bought on a mortgage/bank loan

Shared ownership where pay part rent and part mortgage
living with friends/relatives

Living in a hostel

Other (specify)

Don't know

Refused

K12 And may I just check, are you currently living with someone in this household as a couple?

Yes

No

Same sex couple (not Civil Partners)

Does not apply

No answer

K13 What best describes your legal martial status?

READ OUT AND CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES

Single, that is never married

Married/ Civil Partnership living with spouse/ partner

Married/ Civil Partnership separated from spouse/ partner

Divorced/ Civil Partnership now dissolved

Widowed/ Surviving Civil Partner whose partner has since died

K14 And how many dependent children under the age of 19 do you have?

Write in: Number

K15 Could you please confirm for how long you were in prison before you were released in (use date from section A)?

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Up to 6 months

More than 6 months but less than 12 months

More than 12 months but less than 4 years

More than 4 years

K16 When you were sentenced at that time, was this in relation to a violent crime?

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

K17 Was your most recent sentence related to gang related crime?

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

M LINK

Finally, would it be okay if the answers you have given today were combined with information held by DWP about your benefit, employment and tax records? If you agree, we will pass an anonymous version of the information you have given us today to DWP, along with a reference number so they can link it to the data they already hold about you. This will help them understand whether or not the Work Programme helps people into work.

The information will be sent securely and will only be used for research and statistical purposes. Your information will be kept completely confidential and your dealings with DWP will not be affected in any way.

Yes

No

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY

Linking survey answers to other records creates a fuller picture of people's work history, benefits and needs.

This is to help researchers and policymakers to be better informed in their work to improve the services provided through both Jobcentre Plus and other DWP funded services.

Names and addresses are never included and no individual can be identified from the research.

Your personal details will not be passed to anyone else outside the research team and the Department for Work and Pensions.

The information will not be used to work out whether anyone is claiming benefits or tax credits they should not be.

Any current or future claims for benefits or tax credits will not be affected.

END

Appendix B

Technical annex

Summary

This appendix contains the data gathered as part of the participant survey. The first chapter covers analysis included in the main report, where presenting large and complex tables would have interfered with the narrative and readability, or examples where results were statistically significant although had to be treated with caution due to small base sizes.

The second section provides a descriptive analysis of all survey question items, using univariate analysis.

The survey was designed and analysed by the Institute for Employment Studies. Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) scripting, piloting and fieldwork – including opt-out processes – were led by GfK NOP.

Tables not included in the text

This section collates the tables from the survey of participants that were mentioned in the main report, but were not included there to facilitate readability or because they had very small bases and were, therefore, to be interpreted with considerable caution despite delivering statistically significant results.

The bases of the tables are generally unweighted, however, the values in the tables (counts and percentages) are generally weighted. The differences in base counts were minimal as the weighting addressed some small oversampling issues of gender, ethnicity and age compared to the overall sample population. The base count for the sample population achieved did not change due to the weighting and remained at N=1,013.

The following conventions have been applied when representing data in the tables:

* Less than 0.5 per cent

0 No observations

[] Numbers in square brackets are frequencies based on fewer than 50 observations

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100 per cent.

Statistical significance was tested in the cross tabulations with significance established at the standard 0.05 confidence level.

B.1 Demographic breakdown

Table 10.1 Demographic breakdown of the claimant sample

	Count (weighted)	Count (unweighted)
Gender		
Male	925	952
Female	88	61
Age		
<25	237	348
>25	776	665
Sentence length		
Less than 12 months	585	606
More than 12 months	428	407
Region		
Scotland	55	58
Rest of Great Britain (GB)	958	955
Disability		
Yes	258	238
No	743	764
Prefer not to say	12	12
Ethnicity		
White	781	798
Black or Black British	74	57
Asian or Asian British	60	50
Mixed	44	54
Gypsy/Traveller	9	10
Other	25	27
Unknown or refused	20	16
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

B.2 Chapter 3: Pre-release engagement

Table 3.3a Usefulness of information sessions and differences by region

Usefulness	Total Count	Region¹	
		Scotland Count	Rest of GB Count
Useful	205	[13]	192
Not useful	31	[7]	24
Not sure	41	[2]	39
<i>Base</i>	303	<i>[22]</i>	<i>281</i>

Base: Those who attended an information session.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3.3c Understanding of Work Programme support available by those who did not attend an information session – total and by region

Understanding of support available	Total Count	Region¹	
		Scotland Count	Rest of GB Count
Yes – completely understood	246	[18]	228
Yes – understood to some extent	245	[15]	230
No – didn't understand at all	203	[3]	199
Not sure/can't remember	32	[0]	32
<i>Base</i>	710	<i>[33]</i>	<i>677</i>

Base: Those who did not attend an information session.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

B.3 Chapter 5: Pre-work support

Table 5.1a Feeling comfortable discussing problems and difficulties in finding work by prior employment experience and time in prison

Completely Previous employment experience and time in prison ¹	Extent of comfort discussing problems				Base (unweighted)
	To some extent	Not at all	Not sure/ don't know		
	Count (weighted)	Count (weighted)	Count (weighted)	Count (weighted)	
Never been in work and in prison for less than 12 months	[30]	[13]	[16]	[2]	[48]
Never been in work and in prison for more than 12 months	27	29	4	3	58
Previously been in work and in prison for less than 12 months	229	143	84	16	469
Previously been in work and in prison for more than 12 months	164	80	47	14	332
Total					907

Base: All respondents (111 missing).

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: See Table B1 in Section B.6 for a more detailed information on employment prior to the sentence.

Table 5.1b Usefulness of work experience placement or voluntary work and differences by age

Type of support	Usefulness	Age ¹		
		Total Count (weighted)	Younger than 25 Count (weighted)	25 and older Count (weighted)
Work experience placement or voluntary work	Useful	67	[23]	44
	Not useful	21	[12]	9
	Not sure/can't remember	4	[0]	4
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>		96	<i>[24]</i>	72

Base: Those who received this kind of support.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

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Table 5.1c Usefulness of financial support to help cover cost associated with looking for work and differences by age

Type of support	Usefulness	Total %	Age ¹	
			Younger than 25 %	25 and older %
Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for work	Useful	81.3	73.6	84.9
	Not useful	15.5	20.5	13.2
	Not sure/can't remember	3.2	5.9	1.9
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>		351	75	276

Base: Those who received this kind of support.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.1d Usefulness of advice and support relating to health and disability issues and differences by gender

Type of support	Usefulness	Total Count	Gender ¹	
			Male Count	Female Count
Advice and support relating to health and disability issues	Useful	88	81	[7]
	Not useful	14	9	[4]
	Not sure/can't remember	3	2	[0]
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>		105	90	[15]

Base: Those who received this kind of support.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.3a Continuity of adviser contact

Continuity of contact	%
Always or almost always saw or spoke with the same adviser	70.9
Saw or spoke with the same adviser sometimes	16.4
Saw or spoke with a different adviser each time	8.6
Not sure/can't remember	4.2
<i>Base</i>	1,013

Base: All respondents.

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Table 5.7a Perceived sufficiency of support received to find work

Perceived sufficiency of support received	%
Have received sufficient support to help find work	53.5
Have not received sufficient support to help find work	43.1
Don't know	3.4
<i>Base</i>	1,013

Base: All respondents.

Table 5.7b Perceived role of the Work Programme in finding work for those currently in employment

Perceived role of Work Programme provider	%
Played a big part in securing job	23.5
Played a small part in securing job	17.4
Played no role in securing job	57.2
Don't know	2.0
<i>Base</i>	368

Base: Those respondents currently in work.

Table 5.7c Perceived increase in likelihood to find work through support received as part of the Work Programme

Perceived increase in likelihood to find work	%
A lot more likely to find work	24.8
A little more likely to find work	32.7
Had no impact on likelihood to find work	39.9
Don't know	2.7
<i>Base</i>	598

Base: Those currently not in employment and who had not started employment since their referral to the Work Programme.

Table 5.7d Perceived pressure to participate in activities perceived as unsuitable to personal needs

Extent of perceived pressure	%
To a great extent	12.5
To some extent	18.8
To a limited extent	13.6
Not at all	52.0
Not sure/can't remember	3.1
<i>Base</i>	1,013

Base: All respondents.

B.4 Chapter 6: Mandation and sanctions

Table 6.1a Mandation to attend support and advice activities and differences by gender

Support category Type of support	Total Multiple responses Count	Gender ¹	
		Male Multiple responses Count	Female Multiple responses Count
Skills assessment and action planning			
Assessment of skills	93	85	8
Action plan	108	96	12
Careers and CV advice			
Help with CV, job applications, interviews	214	199	14
Referral to a careers adviser	52	45	7
Basic skills, training, work placements			
Training course at college or other training provider	45	40	5
Session on motivation and confidence	35	30	5
Basic skills (maths, reading, writing, English)	26	22	2
Work experience placement/voluntary work	21	18	2
Financial advice and business start-up			
Help to cover cost of looking for work (e.g. travel expenses)	58	50	7
Support and advice to start a business/self-employment	19	18	1
Other financial advice	14	14	1
Health, care and housing			
Advice and support regarding health or disability	12	10	2
Help and advice in relation to looking after children or adults	6	6	1
Help with drug or alcohol problems	16	15	1
Help with housing issues	14	10	4
Advice on dealing with criminal record and other advice			
Help and advice on dealing with a criminal record	58	49	9
Don't know/can't remember	101	97	5
None of these	435	405	29
<i>Base</i>	872	792	80

Base: All who have received some support from the Work Programme.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6.1b Mandation to attend support and advice activities by labour market proximity

Support category	Labour market proximity ¹			
	Total	Never been in work, less than 12 months in prison	Never been in work, more than 12 months in prison	Previously been in work, less than 12 months in prison
Type of support	Multiple responses Count (weighted)	Multiple responses Count (weighted)	Multiple responses Count (weighted)	Multiple responses Count (weighted)
Skills assessment and action planning				
Assessment of skills	85	[8]	[4]	41
Action plan	101	[7]	[7]	52
Careers and CV advice				
Help with CV, job applications, interviews	195	[15]	[14]	93
Referral to a careers adviser	50	[5]	[3]	26
Basic skills, training, work placements	40	[4]	[2]	16
Training course at college or other training provider	33	[5]	[1]	16
Session on motivation and confidence	24	[4]	[0]	12
Work experience placement/voluntary work	19	[4]	[2]	7
Financial advice and business start-up				
Help to cover cost of looking for work (e.g. travel expenses)	50	[8]	[2]	23
Support and advice to start a business/self-employment	18	[2]	[1]	9
Other financial advice	14	[0]	[1]	7
Health, care and housing				
Advice and support regarding health or disability	11	[2]	[3]	4
Help and advice in relation to looking after children or adults	6	[2]	[1]	1
Help with drug or alcohol problems	15	[2]	[0]	6
Help with housing issues	13	[4]	[0]	6

Continued

Table 6.1b Continued

Support category	Labour market proximity ¹					
	Total	Never been in work, less than 12 months in prison	Never been in work, more than 12 months in prison	Previously been in work, less than 12 months in prison	Previously been in work, more than 12 months in prison	
	Multiple responses Count (weighted)	Multiple responses Count (weighted)	Multiple responses Count (weighted)	Multiple responses Count (weighted)	Multiple responses Count (weighted)	Multiple responses Count (weighted)
Type of support						
Advice on dealing with criminal record and other advice						
Help and advice on dealing with a criminal record	55	[8]	[4]	24	20	
Don't know/can't remember	84	[5]	[2]	52	25	
None of these	389	[25]	[33]	193	139	
Base (unweighted)	786	[40]	[49]	409	288	

Base: All who received some support from the Work Programme, multiple response.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: See Table B1 in Section B.6 for a more detailed information on employment prior to the sentence.

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Table 6.2a Understanding of sanctions if they failed to attend their first meeting with the Work Programme provider

Understanding of sanctioning of failing to attend first meeting	%
Understood completely	80.8
Understood to some extent	12.2
Didn't understand at all	5.5
Not sure/can't remember	1.6
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

Table 6.2b Awareness of having to comply with activities and actions at risk of sanction

Awareness of having to comply at risk of sanction	%
Was aware had to comply at risk of sanction	73.4
Was not aware had to comply at risk of sanction	24.9
Not sure/can't remember	1.7
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

Table 6.2c Incidence of sanctioning and differences by age

Incidence of sanction	Total %	Age ¹	
		Younger than 25 %	25 and older %
Yes, all of my benefit was stopped	22.9	31.0	18.6
Yes, part of my benefit was stopped	5.1	5.6	4.9
No	70.6	61.2	75.5
Don't know	1.4	2.2	1.0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>665</i>

Base: All respondents.

¹ Significant at the 0.05 level.

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Table 6.2d Reasons for being sanctioned

Reasons for being sanctioned	Multiple responses %
Failed to start the Work Programme	15.6
Failed to attend Work Programme referral interview	24.0
Failed to attend an information session	18.5
Failed to attend an interview/interviews with personal adviser	42.3
Failed to attend a skills assessment	3.7
Failed to attend or start a course or other programme of support	6.2
Other	27.3
Not sure/can't remember	5.5
<i>Base</i>	259

Base: Those whose benefit had been stopped or part deducted, multiple response.

B.5 Chapter 7: In-work support

Table 7.2a Contact with a Work Programme adviser after starting work

Contact with Work Programme adviser	%
Yes	51.8
No	47.6
Not sure/can't remember	0.6
<i>Base</i>	368

Base: All those who have started employment since joining the Work Programme.

Table 7.2b Frequency of adviser contact

Frequency of adviser contact	%
Once	16.8
Twice	17.1
Three or four times	30.8
Five or more times	32.2
Not sure/can't remember	3.1
<i>Base</i>	191

Base: All those who had contact with their Work Programme personal adviser after they started employment.

Descriptive analysis

The following sections provide descriptive analyses of each of the questions contained in the survey. The unweighted bases are given for each whilst the values in the table are weighted to adjust for a slight oversampling by age, ethnicity and gender compared to the overall sample population. In some cases the percentages may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding. The following conventions have been applied when representing data in the tables:

* Less than 0.5 per cent

0 No observations

[] Numbers in square brackets are frequencies based on fewer than 50 observations

Section A of the survey questionnaire included a general introduction and some screening questions. The remainder follows the survey questionnaire.

B.6 Section B: Work history prior to referral

B1 Can I just ask, how long before starting your sentence had it been since you were last in paid employment?

	%
Never been in paid work	12.4
Less than one month before you started your sentence	15.9
At least one month, but less than three months before you started your sentence	5.2
At least three months, but less than six months before you started your sentence	7.5
At least six months, but less than nine months before you started your sentence	4.5
At least nine months, but less than twelve months before you started your sentence	2.4
At least one year, but less than two years before you started your sentence	11.0
At least two years, but less than five years before you started your sentence	15.6
At least five years but less than ten years before you started your sentence	9.6
More than ten years before you started your sentence	4.8
Don't know/can't remember	10.9
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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B2 And why did this job come to an end?

	%
Had to start prison sentence	34.4
Left for another job (NB: One that didn't actually happen)	*
Made redundant	6.1
Dismissed/sacked	9.2
Left because I did not like it/resigned	5.5
Temporary job ended	15.6
The company closed	4.8
Personal health reasons (got ill/injured and had to leave)	5.8
Caring for other person	2.7
Transport issues/difficulties getting to work	1.5
Arrested/court appearance	*
Contract work/contract ended	1.5
Criminal record	*
Drugs/drug abuse/ alcohol	0.9
Lack of work/no more work/work dried up	2.0
Moved/moved house/moved away	2.1
Self employed	0.7
Pregnancy/became pregnant/had a baby	0.9
Others	10.0
None/nothing	0
Don't know/not stated	3.1
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>801</i>

Base: All except those who have never been in paid work or don't know/can't remember in B1.

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B3 And thinking about your situation now, what are the main difficulties you face in finding work?

	Multiple responses %
Family or caring commitments	0.8
Health issues/disabilities limit kind of work can do	7.4
The time involved in getting to interviews or a workplace	1.2
The cost involved in getting to interviews or a workplace	2.2
Lack of vacancies for jobs interested in	4.3
Lack of jobs in local area	11.3
Too much competition for jobs	1.6
Lack of jobs for people with respondent's health issues/disabilities	1.9
Lack of understanding from employers about people with health conditions or disabilities or employing people with disabilities	0.5
Not having right skills for jobs interested in	6.3
Lack of work experience	6.8
Drug or alcohol problems	2.3
Criminal record	44.5
Housing problems	1.6
Age	1.2
Lack of confidence/confidence in interviews	1.4
No driving licence/need a driving licence	1.7
No jobs/finding a job/the recession	1.1
No qualifications/lack of qualifications	2.7
No response/reply to job application/s	1.0
Reading and writing/dyslexia	0.7
Transport/lack of transport/getting to work	2.0
CSCS card	1.0
Financial support/funding/lack of cash	0.9
Training/lack of training	*
Other	9.6
None/nothing	0.8
Don't know/not stated	*
No real difficulties	17.7
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

B.7 Section C: Referral from Jobcentre Plus

C1 Other than the meeting with the Jobcentre Plus adviser to apply for your benefits, did you attend a Work Programme information session before you were released?

	%
Yes	28.5
No	62.5
Don't know	9.0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

C2 How useful did you find the information session in helping you understand what types of support you could receive on the Work Programme?

	%
Very useful	34.8
Fairly useful	36.2
Not very useful	10.8
Not at all useful	14.2
Not sure/can't remember	4.0
<i>Base</i>	<i>303</i>

Base: All who attended a Work Programme information session prior to release.

C3 From the information provided by your Jobcentre Plus adviser, did you understand what types of support you could receive on the Work Programme?

	%
Yes – understood completely	33.9
Yes – understood to some extent	33.8
No – didn't understand at all	27.9
Not sure/can't remember	4.4
<i>Base</i>	<i>710</i>

Base: All who did not attend a Work Programme information session prior to release or do not know from C1.

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C4 Roughly how long did it take between agreeing with Jobcentre Plus that you wanted to take part in the Work Programme and actually starting?

	%
Less than a week	20.0
At least 1 but less than 2 weeks	22.5
At least 2 but less than 3 weeks	19.2
At least 3 but less than 4 weeks	8.9
4 weeks or more	16.3
Don't know/can't remember	13.1
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

C5 From the information provided by your Jobcentre Plus adviser, to what extent do you feel that ...

	Understood completely %	Understood to some extent %	Did not understand at all %	Not sure/ don't know/ can't remember %	Base
You understood why you were being referred to the Work Programme?	54.2	26.9	15.4	3.5	1,013
You understood when and where you needed to go to be able to start the Work Programme?	74.7	15.8	7.6	2.0	1,013
You understood what would happen if you failed to attend?	80.8	12.2	5.5	1.6	1,013

Base: All respondents.

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C6 How did your Work Programme provider (who has been working with you to help you find employment) get in touch with you initially?

	%
Telephone/mobile	34.7
Letter in the post	50.1
E-mail	1.2
A meeting at the Jobcentre Plus office	8.0
They didn't/no contact	*
I approached them/went to see them/I had to contact them	1.4
In prison	0.5
Work programme office/meeting at the Work Programme office	0.5
Others	2.0
None/nothing	0
Don't know/not stated	1.0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

B.8 Section D: Level of support received

D1 To what extent do you feel that

	Completely %	To some extent %	Not at all %	Not sure/ don't know %	<i>Base</i>
The advisers you met helped you feel comfortable discussing the problems and difficulties you faced in finding work	49.5	29.0	17.2	4.3	<i>1,013</i>
The advisers had an understanding of the implications of your criminal record when making recommendations for support	48.0	27.0	17.9	7.2	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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D2 And thinking about the contacts or meetings you have had with organisations under the Work Programme, excluding Jobcentre Plus, have these taken place:

Multiple responses	%
In a group meeting with other people looking for work?	40.8
Face to face with an adviser?	89.9
By telephone	48.4
By text	23.1
By email	22.1
Using Skype or video call	0.6
Letter/by post	5.3
Others	*
None/no contact/no meeting	*
Don't know/can't remember/not stated	3.5
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

D3 Since starting the Work Programme, on average how frequently have you had meetings or interviews with a personal adviser (excluding any meetings with Jobcentre Plus)?

	%
Less frequently than every 2 months	8.1
About every 2 months	4.0
About every 6 weeks	2.2
Monthly	20.9
Fortnightly	33.3
Weekly	20.2
More frequently than weekly	3.7
Don't know/can't remember	7.6
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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D4 Which of the following statements applies to these meetings or interviews?

	%
You always or almost always saw or spoke with the same adviser	70.9
You saw or spoke with the same adviser sometimes	16.4
You saw or spoke with a different adviser each time	8.6
Don't know/can't remember	4.2
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

D5 And would you say that ...

	Very helpful %	Helpful %	Not very helpful %	Not helpful at all %	Not sure/ Don't know %	<i>Base</i>
Helpfulness of continuity						
D5a: Always, or almost always seeing or speaking with the same personal adviser was ...?	48.8	37.7	5.5	6.9	1.1	721
D5b: Seeing or speaking with the same personal adviser sometimes was ...?	21.7	48.3	46.8	10.7	2.5	166
D5c: Seeing or speaking with a different personal adviser each time was ...?	5.9	26.8	26.1	36.8	4.4	85

Base: D5a: All who always or almost always spoke to the same adviser.

D5b All who saw or spoke to the same adviser sometimes.

D5c All who saw or spoke with a different adviser each time.

B.9 Section E: Nature of support received

E1 Have you received any of the following ...

	Multiple responses
	%
An assessment of your skills	43.4
Drawing up an action plan	48.9
Help with writing a CV, job applications or interview skills	62.3
A referral to a careers adviser	26.5
A place on a training course at a local college or other training provider	19.5
A session on motivation or confidence	16.0
Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language	11.2
A work experience placement or voluntary work	9.1
Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for work (e.g. travel expenses or childcare costs)	33.7
Support or advice for setting up your own business or becoming self-employed	14.9
Financial advice of some sort	16.6
Advice or support relating to your health or a disability you may have	10.1
Help or advice in relation to looking after children or adults	3.9
Help with any drug or alcohol problems that you may have	9.3
Help with housing issues	10.8
Help or advice related to having a criminal record	29.2
Any other type of assessment, support, training or advice (please specify)	3.7
None of these	14.3
Don't know	*
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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E1a You said you had received 'Advice related to having a criminal record of some sort' ... Can I just check whether this was:

	Multiple responses %
Advice/support on engaging with other organisations after your release (NOMS, Probation Service)?	44.4
Advice on which jobs were accessible to you despite your criminal record?	62.5
Advice on issues around disclosure to employers?	74.2
Advice on how to deal with questions about your criminal record in interviews?	69.3
Something else	11.4
Don't know/can't remember	3.3
<i>Base</i>	<i>302</i>

Base: All who have received help or advice related to having a criminal record.

E1b You said you had received 'Advice or support relating to your health or a disability you may have' ... Can I just check whether this was ...

	Multiple responses %
Advice on health service providers who may be able to help you with an illness or disability?	37.8
Advice to help you find work that is compatible with any health condition or disability that you may have?	59.5
Something else	25.5
Don't know/can't remember	5.3
<i>Base</i>	<i>105</i>

Base: All those who have received advice and support relating to their health or a disability they may have.

E1c You said you had received 'Help with any drug or alcohol problems that you may have' ... Can I just check whether this was ...

	Multiple responses %
Help with alcohol-related problems?	60.8
Help with a drug problem?	54.0
Something else	5.4
Don't know/can't remember	4.1
<i>Base</i>	<i>91</i>

Base: All those who have received help with any drug or alcohol problems that they may have.

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E1d You said you had received ‘Advice or support relating to housing’ ... Was this ... ?

	Multiple responses %
Advice on housing providers who may be able to help deal with any housing problems?	61.9
Advice to help you find appropriate accommodation?	50.5
Something else	21.3
Don't know/can't remember	7.8
<i>Base</i>	119

Base: All those who have received help with housing issues.

E3 How useful were the following forms of advice in helping you find work or in moving you closer to getting paid work?

Type of support	Very useful %	Fairly useful %	Not very useful %	Not at all useful %	Do not know %	Base
An assessment of your skills	32.9	42.0	12.9	9.9	2.4	447
Drawing up an action plan	35.0	39.7	11.7	12.2	1.4	507
Help with writing a CV, job applications or interview skills	53.5	28.5	11.0	5.1	1.9	636
A referral to a careers adviser	45.0	34.5	12.4	6.1	2.0	270
A place on a training course at a local college or other training provider	45.6	31.3	8.4	10.3	4.3	200
A session on motivation or confidence	55.1	32.6	9.3	2.1	1.0	180
Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language	53.1	25.7	9.4	9.0	2.8	120
A work experience placement or voluntary work	38.7	34.6	8.6	13.7	4.4	96
Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for work	54.7	26.6	8.4	7.1	3.2	351
Support or advice for setting up your own business or becoming self-employed	46.1	30.0	9.5	8.1	6.4	160
Financial advice of some sort	45.8	29.4	11.6	11.6	1.7	176
Advice or support relating to your health or a disability you may have	45.7	39.7	3.7	8.5	2.4	105
Help or advice in relation to looking after children or adults	-	-	-	-	-	[35]
Help with any drug or alcohol problems that you may have	53.1	28.5	6.4	9.0	3.0	91
Help with housing issues	55.1	23.2	5.0	10.3	6.3	119
Help or advice related to having a criminal record	53.7	33.4	6.4	3.2	3.1	302
Other	-	-	-	-	-	[42]

Base: All those who have received that specific type of support.

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E3a And which of these activities or types of support were you told you HAD to do? Which were compulsory rather than voluntary?

	Multiple responses
	%
An assessment of your skills	10.8
Drawing up an action plan	12.5
Help with writing a CV, job applications or interview skills	24.7
A referral to a careers adviser	6.1
A place on a training course at a local college or other training provider	5.2
A session on motivation or confidence	4.0
Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language	3.0
A work experience placement or voluntary work	2.4
Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for work (e.g. travel expenses or childcare costs)	6.7
Support or advice for setting up your own business or becoming self-employed	2.2
Financial advice of some sort	1.7
Advice or support relating to your health or a disability you may have	1.4
Help or advice in relation to looking after children or adults	0.7
Help with any drug or alcohol problems that you may have	1.9
Help with housing issues	1.6
Help or advice related to having a criminal record	6.7
None of these	50.2
Don't know	11.5
Not stated	*
<i>Base</i>	872

Base: All who have received some support from the Work Programme.

E4 And can I just check, the training course that you mentioned, was that

	%
Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) training	35.6
Security Industry Authority (SIA) training	2.4
HGV and forklift truck training	12.1
Training for another form of occupational certification or licence (please specify)	4.2
Other training designed to lead to a full, a part or a unit of a formally recognised qualification	13.9
IT/ICT course/training/computers	2.5
Others	22.0
None/nothing	-
Don't know	8.8
<i>Base</i>	200

Base: All who have received a place on a training course at a local college or other training provider.

B.10 Section F: Views on support received

F1 Thinking about all the organisations that you have been in contact with through the Work Programme, excluding Jobcentre Plus, to what extent do you think that the support you received was matched to your personal needs and circumstances

	%
Very well matched	20.9
Fairly well matched	34.8
Not very well matched	16.0
Not well matched at all	25.7
Not sure/can't remember	2.5
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

F2 And to what extent did you feel under pressure at any time to take part in activities that may not have been suited to your needs and circumstances?

	%
To a great extent	12.5
To some extent	18.7
To a limited extent	13.6
Not at all	52.0
Not sure/can't remember	3.1
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

F3 How useful have you found the support you have received through the Work Programme in addressing the difficulties you have mentioned in finding work or moving closer to getting paid work?

	%
Very useful	27.0
Fairly useful	32.2
Not very useful	15.3
Not useful at all	22.7
Not sure/can't remember	2.9
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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F4 Do you feel you have received enough support through the Work Programme to help you find work?

	%
Yes	53.4
No	43.1
Not sure/can't remember	3.5
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

F5 What more could have been offered to help you find work/find work more quickly?

	Multiple responses %
Advice/more advice/they didn't give me any advice	1.1
Apprenticeship/more apprenticeships	*
Be realistic/not make promises they don't/can't keep/tell the truth about what they can do to help	2.9
Communication/better communication	1.3
Contact/more contact/stay in contact with me/get in contact with me more	4.0
Financial support/funding	4.5
Funding/financial support for courses/was refused funding for courses	3.6
Help find suitable jobs/jobs that I'm interested in/jobs that I could do/not just any job	7.0
Help me look for work/more helpful looking for jobs/help me get a job	7.3
Help with CV writing/I don't have a CV	3.1
Help/more help with reading and writing	1.6
Help/more help/better support (unspecified)	2.7
Help/support with self-employment/help get me into self-employment	1.8
Information/more information	1.1
Meeting people's needs/listen to people's needs/listen to me/be treated as an individual	4.7
More appointments/more frequent appointments/more meetings/sessions/see you more often	4.8
More jobs/more variety of jobs/more vacancies/more opportunities/send me to more interviews	2.6
More organised/more organisation in the office/it's chaotic	1.0
More than sitting at computers/just sitting at computer looking for jobs	*
More time/offered me more time/spend more time with you	2.1
More understanding of health issues/taking into account my illness/can't work because of ill health	1.4
Not put me under pressure/feels like harassment/less pushy/leave me alone	1.0

Continued

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F5 Continued

	Multiple responses %
One-to-one sessions/one-to-one meetings with advisers/more one-to-one help/support	2.7
Seeing the same adviser/stop keep changing advisers	1.4
Support for people in my age group/help people my age	0.5
There are no jobs out there/there are no jobs where I live	*
Training/provide/offer training/more training courses/finding/putting you on courses	12.5
Understand your situation/more understanding my situation	2.5
Understanding people with a criminal record/something in place/an adviser for people with a criminal record	7.2
Work placements/being put on a work placement scheme	2.2
Links with/contact/more involvement with employers	0.8
Contacts/links with/work with other agencies/external companies	0.7
Help with travel/travel expenses	2.1
Qualified/competent staff/better advisers/a change of adviser	2.2
Computer skills/help with computers/internet awareness	1.9
Others	25.1
Don't know	11.5
No answer/not stated	0.6
None/nothing/I've done everything myself/didn't need their support/got my own job	5.6
They don't do anything/they don't help/advisers don't know what they're doing/pointless/a waste of time/money	10.0
<i>Base</i>	<i>425</i>

B.11 Section G: Work outcomes and impact

G1i Can I just ask, are you currently in paid work or self-employment?

	%
Yes	25.5
No	74.5
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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G1ii And are you currently...?

	%
Self employed	27.6
Working full time for an employer in a paid role – 30 hours or more per week	50.8
Working part time for an employer in a paid role – less than 30 hours per week	21.6
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	253

Base: All currently in paid work or self-employment.

G1iii And are you currently...?

	%
Retired and/or claiming a pension/pension credit	*
In full-time training or education – 16 hours or more per week	2.1
In part-time education or training – less than 16 hours per week	4.4
Working for an employer in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship and not claiming benefit	1.0
Working for an employer in a voluntary unpaid role or internship whilst claiming benefit	3.9
None of the above	89.1
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	760

Base: All not currently in paid work or self-employed.

G1a And are you currently working for more than one employer?

	%
Yes	8.0
No	91.9
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	182

Base: All currently employed.

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G2 And since your referral to the Work Programme, have you at any time been ...?

	%
Self employed	3.5
Working full time for an employer in a paid role – 30 hours or more per week	9.3
Working part time for an employer in a paid role – less than 30 hours per week	4.6
Working for an employer in a voluntary unpaid role or internship	6.3
None of the above	78.9
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>760</i>

Base: All not currently in paid work or self-employed.

G3a And when did this job /self-employment start ...?

	%
Less than two weeks ago	10.3
At least two weeks, but less than one month ago	8.5
At least one month, but less than two months ago	6.7
At least two months, but less than three months ago	9.5
At least three months, but less than six months ago	24.8
6 months ago or longer	40.3
Don't know	0
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>253</i>

Base: All currently in paid work or self-employed.

G4 And is (was) this job ...?

	%
On a permanent or open-ended contract	39.3
On a fixed-term contract lasting 12 months or longer	7.5
On a fixed-term contract lasting less than 12 months	6.3
On a temporary or casual basis	36.1
Others	5.1
Don't know	4.6
Refused	0
None/nothing/no contract	0.9
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>280</i>

Base: All in paid work since referral to the Work Programme.

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G7 **And in this job, how many hours would you say that you typically worked per week ...?**

	%
6 or less	12.4
17-30	15.9
32-40	44.5
41+	19.9
Don't know/can't remember	7.4
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>280</i>

Base: All in paid work since referral to the Work Programme.

G11 **Approximately how much time have you spent in work since your referral to the Work Programme?**

	%
Less than two weeks	9.3
At least two weeks but less than one month	7.6
At least one month but less than two months	10.1
At least two months but less than three months	7.8
At least three months but less than six months	26.5
Six months or longer	35.1
Don't know	3.5
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>280</i>

Base: All in paid work since referral to the Work Programme.

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G12 **And why did you leave your most recent job ...?**

	%
Contract ended/temporary work	50.9
Made redundant	11.5
Wasn't earning enough	4.0
No promotion prospects	0
Childcare commitments	2.8
Health reasons	0
The company closed down	0.5
Transport issues/difficulties getting to work	4.7
Job was not suitable in some other way (please specify)	1.8
No work/no more work	2.4
Others	6.1
Refused	3.3
None/nothing	16.3
Don't know/not stated	0.6
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>115</i>

Base: All not currently in paid work or self-employed but have been since their referral to the Work Programme.

G13 **To what extent do you feel your current/most recent job is/was well matched with your experience, skills and interests?**

	%
Very well matched	52.2
Fairly well matched	26.5
Not very well matched	7.9
Not well matched at all	11.9
Not sure/don't know	1.4
Not stated	.0
<i>Base</i>	<i>368</i>

Base: All in paid work or self-employed since referral to the Work Programme.

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G14 Are any of the following reasons why you decided to take your current/ most recent job?

	Multiple responses %
There were few jobs available that matched your experience, skills or interest	45.6
You wanted to move into work as soon as possible	85.6
You felt under pressure from Jobcentre Plus to take this job	20.4
You felt under pressure from your Work Programme provider to take this job	15.1
You hoped it would lead to another job that better matches your skills, experience and interest	50.4
It suited my childcare or other caring responsibilities	24.2
Some other reason (please specify)	5.7
Don't know	0
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>67</i>

Base: All who said the work was not well-matched with their experience, skills and interests.

G15 Thinking about your current/most recent job, would you say that the support you received through the Work Programme ...

	%
Played a big part in helping you get the job	23.5
Played a small part in helping you get the job	17.4
Played no role in helping you get the job	57.2
Don't know	2.0
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>368</i>

Base: All in paid work or self-employed since referral to the Work Programme.

G16 And do you feel that the support you received through the Work Programme has made you ...?

	%
A lot more likely to find work	24.8
A little more likely to find work	32.7
Had no impact on your likelihood to find work	39.9
Don't know	2.7
<i>Base</i>	<i>598</i>

Base: All who have not worked since referral to the Work Programme.

B.12 Section H: In-work support and progression

H1a Do you think that the job that you are currently doing offers opportunities for promotion or for substantially increasing your responsibilities

	%
Yes	67.9
No	26.3
Don't know	5.8
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	253

Base: All currently in paid work or self employment.

H1b Do you think that your employer will offer you training that would help you get a promotion or more responsibilities

	%
Yes	65.7
No	26.2
Don't know	8.1
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	182

Base: All currently in paid work.

H1c Do you think that the job that you are currently doing offers opportunities to increase your hourly or monthly pay

	%
Yes	75.9
No	21.2
Don't know	2.9
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	253

Base: All currently in paid work or self employment.

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H2 Not including any Jobcentre Plus staff, did you have any contact with any Work Programme personal advisers AFTER you started work?

	%
Yes	51.8
No	47.6
Don't know	0.6
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	368

Base: All in paid work or self-employed since referral to the Work Programme.

H3 How many times did you have contact with a personal adviser once you started work? Was it ...?

	%
Once	16.8
Twice	17.1
Three or four times	30.8
Five or more times	32.2
Don't know	3.1
<i>Base</i>	191

Base: All who had contact with any Work Programme personal advisers **after** they started work.

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H6 In what way(s) did the contact you received after you had started work help you stay in work?

	Multiple responses %
Help keep you motivated	44.6
Help negotiate flexible working arrangements with your employer	14.5
Help advocate on your behalf with your employer	13.2
Help the employer understand some of the difficulties you faced and support you better at work	18.3
Help you to secure training opportunities with the employer	13.1
Helped you identify and obtain opportunities for progression with your employer	12.3
Helped you increase the number of hours you work	9.4
Helped you increase your income	13.0
Help you to manage a health condition in the context of work	7.1
Other (please specify)	8.1
Made no difference at all	36.2
Don't know	5.9
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>191</i>

Base: All who had contact with any Work Programme personal advisers **after** they started work.

H7 Was there any additional support that you would have wanted to help you stay in work?

	%
Yes	11.3
No	88.7
Total	100.0
<i>Base</i>	<i>191</i>

Base: All who had contact with any Work Programme personal advisers **after** they started work.

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H7a What additional support would you have liked that you did not receive?

	Multiple responses Count (weighted)
An assessment of your skills	[0]
Drawing up an action plan	[0]
Help with writing a CV, job applications or interview skills	[1]
A referral to a careers adviser	[0]
A place on a training course at a local college or other training provider	[4]
A session on motivation or confidence	[0]
Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language	[0]
A work experience placement or voluntary work	[0]
Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for work (e.g. travel expenses or childcare costs)	[4]
Support or advice for setting up your own business or becoming self-employed	[1]
Financial advice of some sort	[2]
Advice or support relating to your health or a disability you may have	[1]
Help or advice in relation to looking after children or adults	[0]
Help with any drug or alcohol problems that you may have	[0]
Help with housing issues	[2]
Help or advice related to having a criminal record	[0]
Any other type of assessment, support, training or advice (please specify)	[8]
Don't know	[1]
Not stated	[0]
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	<i>[23]</i>

Base: All who would have liked additional support to help them stay in work

H9 And to what extent, if at all, did you feel under any pressure from an adviser to stay in work?

	%
To a great extent	2.4
To some extent	7.1
Not sure	7.6
To a limited extent	4.1
Not at all	78.8
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>191</i>

Base: All who had contact with any Work Programme personal advisers **after** they started work.

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H12 Whilst in your current/most recent paid job/self-employment did you do/ have you done any of the following ...?

	Multiple responses
	%
Attended a training course off-site	10.9
Attended training courses at the place where you work/have worked	19.0
Attended seminars or conferences aimed at developing knowledge and skills	8.5
Undertaken any other learning or training funded or supported by your employer	1.2
None of the above	71.7
Don't know	*
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>368</i>

Base: All in paid work or self-employed since referral to the Work Programme.

H13 And has any of this training been designed to lead to a formal, recognised qualification, or part or a unit of a recognised qualification ...?

	%
Yes – a formal, recognised qualification	33.5
Yes – part or a unit of a recognised qualification	12.5
Other (specify)	1.7
No – neither	47.8
Don't know	4.4
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>103</i>

Base: All who attended a training course.

B.13 Section I: Mandation

I1 Did any of your Work Programme advisers tell you that you had to do something and you could be at risk of losing all or part of your benefit if you did not do it?

	%
Yes	73.4
No	24.9
Don't know/can't remember	1.7
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

I2 Was all or part of your benefit ever stopped because of something you failed to do that your Work Programme provider asked you to do?

	%
Yes, my benefit was then stopped	22.9
Yes, part of my benefit was then deducted	5.1
No	70.6
Don't know	1.4
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

I3 And, what did you understand the reason was for your benefit being stopped or part of it deducted. Was it because you

	Multiple responses %
Failed to start the Work Programme	15.6
Failed to attend your Work Programme referral interview	24.0
Failed to attend an information session	18.5
Failed to attend an interview/interviews with your personal adviser	42.3
Failed to attend a skills assessment	3.7
Failed to attend or start a course or other programme of support	6.2
Other (please specify)	27.3
Don't know/can't remember	5.5
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>259</i>

Base: All whose benefit was stopped or part deducted.

I4 Have you had to apply for a hardship payment as a result of your benefit being stopped/part of your benefit being deducted?

	%
Yes	55.6
No	43.6
Don't know	0.8
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	259

Base: All whose benefit was stopped or part deducted.

B.14 Section J: Attitudes and beliefs about working/looking for work

J1a So thinking about looking for jobs and working (in the future), are you confident that – Employers will want to offer you an interview

	%
Very confident	33.5
Fairly confident	37.3
Not very confident	17.8
Not at all confident	9.8
Don't know/not sure	1.5
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	1,013

Base: All respondents.

J1b So thinking about looking for jobs and working (in the future), are you confident that – You can cope with rejections and knock-backs

	%
Very confident	56.2
Fairly confident	30.5
Not very confident	6.6
Not at all confident	4.7
Don't know/not sure	2.0
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	1,013

Base: All respondents.

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J1c **So thinking about looking for jobs and working (in the future), are you confident that – You can learn new skills or re-train for a different job**

	%
Very confident	62.7
Fairly confident	29.1
Not very confident	4.3
Not at all confident	2.9
Don't know/not sure	1.1
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

B.15 Section K: Demographics

K1 **Other than in a professional capacity, do you look after or give special help to anyone who is sick, disabled or elderly?**

	%
Yes	10.2
No	89.8
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

K2 **Does the care you provide limit the kind of paid work you can do in terms of your availability to do work or the type of work you can do?**

	%
Yes – availability to work	18.8
Yes – types of work can do	12.5
No	73.8
Don't know	2.2
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>115</i>

Base: All carers.

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K3 What is the highest academic or vocational qualifications you have completed before starting the Work Programme?

	%
Degree or postgraduate degree (level 4 or above)	3.1
HNC/HND (level 4)	1.7
BTEC	2.7
City and Guilds	6.7
RSA/OCR	0.6
GNVQ	1.5
NVQ	26.2
A level	4.0
AS level	*
GCSE	14.4
GCE – O level	1.2
CSE	*
Diploma	1.9
Level 1 (all mentions)	1.5
Level 2 (all mentions)	2.3
Level 3 (all mentions)	*
Level 4 (all mentions)	*
Others	6.1
No qualifications	20.0
None/nothing 24	0
Don't know	5.6
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

K5 Can I just check, have you served as a regular member of the armed forces in the last 3 years?

	%
Yes	0.9
No	98.8
Don't know	*
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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K6 Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 6 months or more?

	%
Yes	23.5
No	75.4
Don't know	0.9
Refused	*
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

K6a Which of these is your main health problem/disability?

	%
Arms, hands	3.5
Legs or feet	7.7
Back or neck	5.4
Difficulty in seeing	*
Difficulty in hearing	0.7
Speech impediment	0
Skin conditions, allergies	0.5
Chest, breathing problems	4.4
Heart, blood pressure, circulation	2.6
Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion	3.6
Diabetes	4.0
Depression, bad nerves	23.7
Epilepsy	2.8
Learning difficulties	3.4
Mental illness, phobia, panics	19.1
Progressive illness n.e.c.	0.6
Other problems/disabilities	14.5
No answer	3.4
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>258</i>

Base: All with any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last six months or more.

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K7 Does your condition or illness/do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?

	%
Yes, a lot	37.9
Yes, a little	32.9
No, not at all	24.2
Don't know	5.0
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>258</i>

Base: All with any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last six months or more.

K8 Does/do your condition(s) or illness(es) make it difficult for you to find work?

	%
Yes	61.7
No	35.8
Don't know	2.5
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>258</i>

Base: All with any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last six months or more.

K9 To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

	%
White	78.8
Mixed	5.4
Asian	5.0
Black	5.7
Gypsy/Traveller	1.0
Other	2.6
Don't know	0.5
Refused	1.1
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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K10 Is English your first language?

	%
Yes	94.2
No	5.6
Don't know	*
Refused	0
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

K11 Which of these best describes the accommodation you are living in at the moment?

	%
Rented privately	22.7
Rented from a council or local authority	19.0
Rented from a housing association	7.2
Owned outright	2.6
Being bought on a mortgage/bank loan	2.6
Shared ownership where pay part rent and part mortgage	*
Living with friends/relatives	38.0
Living in a hostel	3.5
Homeless/living in the street	1.2
Supported housing/supported accommodation	*
Others	1.8
Don't know/not stated	*
None/nothing	0
Refused	*
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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K12 And may I just check, are you currently living with someone in this household as a couple?

	%
Yes	15.5
No	83.9
Same-sex couple (not civil partners)	0
Does not apply	*
No answer	*
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

K13 What best describes your legal marital status?

	%
Single, that is, never married	84.3
Married/civil partnership living with spouse/partner	6.1
Married/civil partnership separated from spouse/ partner	3.2
Divorced/civil partnership now dissolved	5.8
Widowed/surviving civil partner whose partner has since died	0.6
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

K14 And how many dependent children under the age of 19 do you have?

	%
None	67.1
1	17.0
2	8.7
3	3.3
4	3.0
5+	0.9
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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K15 Could you please confirm for how long you were in prison before you were released?

	%
Up to 6 months	40.7
More than 6 months but less than 12 months	19.1
More than 12 months but less than 4 years	33.1
More than 4 years	7.1
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

K16 When you were sentenced at that time, was this in relation to a violent crime?

	%
Yes	40.6
No	55.3
Prefer not to answer	4.2
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

K17 Was this sentence because of gang-related activities?

	%
Yes	6.1
No	90.9
Prefer not to answer	3.0
Not stated	0
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,013</i>

Base: All respondents.

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