



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme

National roll-out evaluation

April 2018

Research Report No 954

A report of research carried out by Kantar Public on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

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Summary

This report presents key findings from an evaluation of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme across nine Jobcentre Plus district areas in England.

The research involved 108 in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders across the nine areas, including:

- Jobcentre Plus schools advisers;
- key local partners including the Careers and Enterprise Company;
- careers leads from both participating and non-participating schools;
- students receiving support; and
- employers connected to the programme.

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Summary | 3 |
| Acknowledgements | 6 |
| The Authors | 7 |
| List of abbreviations..... | 8 |
| Executive summary | 9 |
| 1 Introduction | 11 |
| 1.1 Background to the research | 11 |
| 1.2 Aims of the research | 12 |
| 1.3 Overview of the research methodology..... | 12 |
| 2 Overview of programme implementation..... | 15 |
| 2.1 Common factors across districts | 15 |
| 2.2 Variation across districts..... | 16 |
| 3 Demand for the programme | 18 |
| 3.1 Levels of demand | 18 |
| 3.2 Drivers of demand | 18 |
| 3.3 Initial inhibitors of demand..... | 20 |
| 3.4 Future inhibitors of growth..... | 21 |
| 4 Engaging with schools..... | 23 |
| 4.1 Approaches to introducing the programme | 23 |
| 4.2 Support made available to schools | 24 |
| 5 Partnership working..... | 27 |
| 5.1 The overall partner landscape..... | 27 |
| 5.2 Emerging partnership models | 28 |
| 5.3 Facilitators for effective partnership working | 30 |
| 6 Employer involvement..... | 32 |
| 6.1 Working with employers | 32 |
| 6.2 Employer activities | 32 |

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 7 | Experiences of programme delivery | 34 |
| 7.1 | Jobcentre Plus staff experiences | 34 |
| 7.2 | Participating school lead experiences | 35 |
| 7.3 | Student experiences..... | 36 |
| 7.4 | Employer experiences..... | 37 |
| 7.5 | Non-participating school lead experiences..... | 38 |
| 8 | Conclusions and key learnings for national roll-out..... | 39 |
| 8.1 | Learnings for growth of the programme | 39 |
| 8.2 | Learnings for delivery of the programme..... | 40 |
| | Appendix A: School Lead (Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1..... | 41 |
| | Appendix B: Jobcentre Plus Advisor (Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1 | 51 |
| | Appendix C: CEC / Other Partner (Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1 | 61 |
| | Appendix D: School Lead (Non-Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1..... | 69 |
| | Appendix E: Jobcentre Plus Advisor (Non-Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1 | 78 |
| | Appendix F: CEC / Other Partner (Non-Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1..... | 88 |
| | Appendix G:Employer Topic Guide v1 | 96 |
| | Appendix H: Student Topic Guide v1..... | 103 |
| | Appendix I: Non-participating Schools Topic Guide v1 | 109 |

List of figures

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|----|
| Figure 5.1 | Emerging partnership models | 27 |
|------------|-----------------------------------|----|

List of tables

| | | |
|-----------|---|----|
| Table 1.1 | Overview of research conducted within each district | 13 |
|-----------|---|----|

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|---|
| CEC | Careers and Enterprise Company |
| CEIAG | Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance |
| CV | Curriculum vitae |
| DWP | Department for Work and Pensions |
| LEP | Local Enterprise Partnerships |
| NEET | Not in education, employment or training |
| NCS | National Careers Service |
| PRU | Pupil Referrals Unit |
| SfS | Support for Schools |

Executive summary

This summary outlines key findings from an evaluation of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme across nine case study districts and builds on a previous evaluation of the programme pathfinder¹. The research involved 108 in-depth interviews/focus group discussions with a range of stakeholders, including Jobcentre Plus advisers, key local partners (with a focus on representatives from the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), careers leads from both participating and non-participating schools, students receiving support and employers connected to the programme.

Key findings

Overview of programme implementation (Section 2)

Overall, it was clear that the Support for Schools programme has been well-received by schools and other stakeholders. It was seen to take a flexible, school-led approach to provision that has allowed a range of different schools to fill gaps in their provision relating to post-school pathways. This was seen to differentiate the programme from other national providers. The programme was seen as positive in engaging with students from a wide range of schools. Feedback was particularly valued where more tailored support was delivered to students at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training).

Demand for the programme (Section 3)

Demand for the programme has been led by the flexibility of the offer; the perceived expertise of Jobcentre Plus schools advisers in relation to local labour market opportunities and links to local employers; the credibility of Jobcentre Plus schools advisers among students; the programme's focus on non-academic pathways and the fact that it was available for free. Although demand for the programme could initially be slow to build in districts, as the programme became more established (for example, in districts involved since the pathfinder stage) factors driving demand seemed to outweigh inhibitors, raising questions regarding how the programme will continue to meet demand as awareness grows.

Engaging with schools (section 4)

Jobcentre Plus advisors used a variety of approaches to engage with schools, including face-to-face networking, direct contact and partner referrals. Once networks had been established, word of mouth became an important source of referrals. Support was led by school needs and covered a wide range of activities including: skills workshops; local labour market information; employer visits to schools; work experience placements; and links to apprenticeship or traineeship opportunities. Support fell into broad categories: more general support that was delivered to larger groups of students of varying abilities, which was appreciated by schools as it helped to meet their needs but was not considered as effective for student outcomes; and more targeted support that was focused on smaller groups of students and could take place over several sessions, which was more limited in reach but was perceived to have a greater effect. This latter form of provision was also felt to provide the greatest differentiation from support already available from other national providers.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-jobcentre-plus-support-for-schools-programme-pathfinder-evaluation

Partnership working (Section 5)

Stakeholders typically saw the overall landscape for careers provision to schools as a crowded space, which could be overwhelming for all of those operating in the area. A number of different models of partnership working emerged across the research, including those that were more collaborative and those that were more neutral or antagonistic. Overall, organisations seemed to work more effectively together where there was an organisation taking responsibility for coordinating provision, where there was a clear differentiation between providers in terms of role, and where organisations were actively combining resources.

Employer involvement (Section 6)

The extent of employer involvement varied somewhat across case study districts depending on the extent to which Jobcentre Plus schools advisers had pre-existing links with local businesses. The most common employer activities were school visits and the provision of limited work placements. More occasionally, school advisers were able to offer work placements that were more integrated with training or work skill courses, or direct links to apprenticeship or traineeship opportunities, which were seen to be more effective interventions.

Experiences of programme delivery (Section 7)

Jobcentre Plus schools advisers were largely positive about their involvement in the programme, but felt they could work more effectively if provided with greater resources or training opportunities. School leads participating in the programme were also positive about the support received, especially those working with students at risk of becoming NEET, for whom they felt the programme provided a service not available elsewhere. Students themselves typically spoke positively about the programme, particularly those who had received more targeted support. Employers were generally positive about involvement as they saw it as a chance to meet their own community outreach goals.

Recommendations (Section 8)

Given the success of the programme, demand is likely to continue to grow as word of mouth builds and schools are able to plan support into their activities. There will therefore be a need to either increase resources or target resources on more specific groups. At the moment the programme seems to be most differentiated from other provision among students at risk of becoming NEET and concentrating the programme more clearly on this group is likely to have the greatest effectiveness. This will also help to more clearly define the programme for partners, which is likely to aid effective coordination of provision.

A variety of learnings also emerges relating to delivery. The programme should maintain its flexible and consultative approach which is highly valued by schools. At the same time, it should aim to create more effective means of sharing best practice across districts in order to increase efficiency and drive effective working. The programme should also aim to develop a bank of marketing materials to help communicate and raise the status of the programme among partners. Finally, additional classroom training would help to build the confidence of Jobcentre Plus schools advisers and further raise the quality of delivery.

1 Introduction

This report outlines findings from an evaluation of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme across nine case study areas in total: four that were involved in the programme pathfinder and five that joined for the national roll-out.

1.1 Background to the research

Youth unemployment statistics show that 16–24-year-olds are disproportionately more likely to be unemployed than the general population². Tackling barriers to work before young people leave education will help reduce unemployment and economic inactivity, with associated individual and societal benefits³. A range of initiatives exist to address this issue, including local interventions and national interventions through the National Careers Service (NCS), CEC⁴ and now Jobcentre Plus through the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme.

Plans for Jobcentre Plus advisers to work within schools were announced in the 2015 Summer Budget, with the aim of contributing towards the delivery of high quality and impartial careers advice to help schools engage young people (aged 12-18) identified as being at risk of becoming NEET or who face potential disadvantage in the labour market (for example, due to their ethnicity or to a health/disability issue). Provision was to be carried out at the request of schools, linked to local labour markets and designed to complement existing provision. Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme was trialled in ten pathfinder districts between February and July 2016. An evaluation of the pathfinder carried out by Kantar Public on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) found that the programme had been well received by schools and other stakeholders. These stakeholders valued the flexible and tailored approach of the programme, as well as the skills, experience and employer networks provided by Jobcentre Plus⁵.

In November 2016, the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme rolled-out nationally across England. The aims of the programme replicated that of the pathfinder – to facilitate more effective transitions from school into work, training or further study, by providing students with information on vocational routes into employment, including traineeships and

² For example from May to July 2017, the UK unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 11.9% compared with 4.3% for the national average during the same period. Source: UK Labour Market Report (September 2017), Office of National Statistics. www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/september2017

³ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/305327/briefing-paper-oecd-report-england_skills_beyond-schools.pdf

⁴ CEC is an organisation set up to reduce the youth unemployment rate by helping young people prepare for employment. The CEC works with Enterprise Adviser volunteers from local businesses, who are supported by a full-time Enterprise Coordinator in their local area. Enterprise Coordinators are in turn employed by Local Enterprise Partnerships which are formed of local organisations working together to lead economic growth and job creation within a local area.

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-jobcentre-plus-support-for-schools-programme-pathfinder-evaluation

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

apprenticeships, accessing work experience, the local labour market and soft skills that employers expect (such as team working, punctuality, etc.)⁶.

DWP commissioned Kantar Public to conduct a qualitative evaluation of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme. This research progressed across two phases: an initial phase evaluating the pathfinder, for which findings were published in December 2016, and a second phase evaluating the national roll-out, which is covered in this report.

Support for Schools: Management Information (as of October 2017)

At the time of writing, the latest MI information held by DWP shows that:

- 1,674 schools have officially been contacted by the programme;
- 1,282 schools have agreed to participate

945 schools have already received activity

1.2 Aims of the research

The overarching aim of this evaluation was to build on the findings of the pathfinder evaluation to inform the continuing design, delivery and operation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme across the country.

Specific objectives for this stage of the evaluation were to:

- map how the programme is being implemented for the national roll-out, including approaches used to introduce the programme and key interventions being used across different regions;
- explore levels and drivers of demand for support offered through the programme, and the best use of resources to meet this demand;
- understand perceptions of what drives effective partnership working between Jobcentre Plus, intermediaries, schools and employers in order to provide guidance on future collaborative models;
- identify what successful outcomes and best practice look like from the perspective of stakeholders, and opportunities for improving the management of programme delivery; and
- provide strategic advice to feed into successful future implementation of the programme.

1.3 Overview of the research methodology

Like the pathfinder stage, this evaluation utilised a qualitative case study approach, focusing on four of the original ten pathfinder districts and a further five districts that launched the programme for the national roll-out. This case-study approach drew on the perspectives of a range of parties involved in the programme to generate a depth of insight into how the programme was being delivered and the perceived value of the support provided.

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/news/jobcentre-plus-support-rolled-out-to-schools

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

Each case study involved interviews with a mix of stakeholders: Jobcentre Plus advisers, representatives from partner organisations (including the CEC and a range of others)⁷, careers leads from both participating and non-participating schools⁸, and employers involved with the programme. Focus group discussions were also held with students who had received support from the programme.

In total, 108 interviews/focus-group discussions were conducted across the nine districts (see Table 1.1).

Please note that for reporting purposes, districts have been randomly assigned an anonymous identifier (as Districts A-I) from this point onwards, in order to preserve participant confidentiality.

Table 1.1 Overview of research conducted within each district

| | Jobcentre Plus adviser | CEC/ other partner | Participating school lead | Student (focus-groups) | Employer | Non-participating school lead | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|-------|
| Birmingham and Solihull* | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 14 |
| Devon, Cornwall and Somerset | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 11 |
| Durham and Tees Valley* | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 16 |
| Essex* | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 12 |
| Greater Manchester | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| Merseyside* | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| Midland Shires | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 11 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| South London | 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 12 |
| TOTAL | 30 | 12 | 29 | 18 | 14 | 5 | 108 |

* Pathfinder districts.

Participants were recruited through the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme's coordinator contacts in each district, which were provided by DWP. Student focus-group discussions and interviews with participating school leads took place face-to-face in school; all other interviews were conducted over the telephone. Each session lasted between 30-60 minutes, with tailored discussion guides used for each interviewee and for pathfinder/roll-out districts (see Appendices).

⁷ Of a total of 12 interviews with staff from partner organisations, we talked to six Careers Enterprise Coordinators and six representatives from a range of other organisations including NCS, local authority staff and national/local providers.

⁸ Due to their relative lack of engagement with the programme, it proved challenging to engage non-participating school leads and we were only able to achieve coverage in five out of the nine districts (see [Section 7.5](#))

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

Following the completion of the case study fieldwork, researchers conducted multi-stage, iterative analysis – beginning with individual-level analysis conducted by each researcher using a standardised analysis framework, followed by a whole-team research debrief to draw out findings against the research objectives. During the analytical debrief session researchers explored initial hypotheses that emerged from the case studies they had conducted, as well as questioning, interrogating and further developing these findings in light of the contributions of other researchers. This also involved a consideration of the findings of the pathfinder evaluation. Key themes were identified and explored in greater detail, informing a second wave of analysis using the completed analysis framework.

2 Overview of programme implementation

The programme was received positively by schools who felt it offered something different to what was available elsewhere, driven by a number of overlapping commonalities in how it was implemented. Beyond these common factors, there was wide variation in the particular way that the programme was being delivered across districts, driven by a range of contextual factors and reflecting the current early stage of programme development.

2.1 Common factors across districts

Across districts the programme had generally been well received by schools and students, who felt that it met a need and had had a positive effect on outcomes for students. This positive reception seems to have been driven by a number of overlapping commonalities in how the programme was being implemented across districts at this early stage, which as a whole differentiated the offer from what was felt to be available elsewhere.

The common factors were: the programme took a school-led approach; the programme filled gaps in school provision; and the programme took a focus on students with particular needs.

School-led approach: Across districts, schools were positive about the ‘consultative’ approach taken by the programme, which was seen to provide a point of difference from other national providers. As part of programme implementation, Jobcentre Plus advisers worked with schools career leads to design interventions that fitted in with their particular needs. Face-to-face meetings and follow-up contact via email with school career leads were used to design support programmes that took account of the amount of time available, the needs of students to whom the school wished to provide extra support, and the specific outcomes desired.

“It was fantastic really... the way that they took the time to understand what we needed and fit to our needs.”

(Participating school lead, District C)

Demand-led provision: The flexible approach offered by the programme, coupled with the fact that provision was available for free, helped to create a truly demand-led pattern of implementation across districts. As such, while Jobcentre Plus advisers used a variety of approaches to build their initial school networks (see [Section 4.1](#)), support was usually offered wherever it was requested. This meant that the programme was delivered across a range of schools with a mix of different student types, and was used by school career leads to fill gaps in their provision, providing support that was not felt to be available by other means.

“What the schools appreciate most is the bespoke nature of it. There’s quite a lot of relatively generic things that other providers can give, which work well, but when there’s something quite specific that’s needed, Jobcentre fits into that area perfectly.”

(Partner, District G)

Focus on students with particular needs: Although support was generally made available to all schools who requested it, across districts Jobcentre Plus advisers had made an effort to focus on targeting pupils at greatest risk of becoming NEET post-education, and this was where the programme activity was principally focused. This was also the area in which school leads and students were most positive about the effectiveness of the programme, with delivery and outcomes felt to be more effective than those delivered by other national careers providers.

“I was really surprised at how they were able to engage with our [PRU] students... the students genuinely seemed to engage, which we’ve not had with other providers, we’d started to give up on thinking anyone could help to be honest, so I was impressed.”

(Participating school lead, District I)

2.2 Variation across districts

Although the programme took a consultative approach, adapted to demand and to some extent focused on students with specific needs across districts, there was also a large amount of variation in the specific way that the programme was being rolled out in each area. This was to some extent a reflection of the early stages of the programme and the underlying flexibility offered to Jobcentre Plus advisers in how they chose to implement the programme, with each area developing its own ways of working within their understanding of the programme aims. Variation was also influenced by a range of contextual factors.

We identified five key drivers of difference in the way that the programme was implemented across districts: whether the district had been involved in the pathfinder or not; local management decisions taken in each district; the particular backgrounds of Jobcentre Plus staff involved; factors relating to the local district context; and the make-up of local partner networks in a district.

Pathfinder vs roll-out districts: Given the recent launch of the programme, there were considerable differences in implementation between districts that had been involved in the pathfinder and those that had joined since the national roll-out in November 2016. Although all districts were still at a relatively early stage of development, were still experiencing growth and were still developing their ways of working, this was much more pronounced in those districts that had not been involved in the pathfinder. National roll-out districts had been operational for around nine months at the time of the research and were generally still building their school, partner and employer networks, which took a considerable initial investment of time, with the actual delivery of support still at a comparatively early stage. By contrast, pathfinder districts were relatively more focused on delivering support and had eased off on actively developing networks.

“During the pathfinder it took us a while to get going, but now we’re at the stage where we are getting all the demand we can get, our focus is on really trying to keep up with demand.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District B)

Management decisions: Given the freedom offered to Jobcentre Plus advisers to shape the offer within their district, local management decisions could have a considerable impact on the particular shape of an offer within each district. For example, some districts had taken the decision to focus more directly on contacting schools with high proportions of students at risk of becoming NEET or specific types of schools, such as Pupil Referral Units

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

(PRUs), whereas others had built networks through contact with broader Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) networks, which could influence the levels of demand from different types of schools and therefore the patterns of support delivered. Local management decisions taken about how staff time was distributed could also impact on delivery. Although many case study areas were working with three full-time staff, others had arranged their resources differently. For example, one district, which had already established a steady supply of demand, had concentrated its staffing during term-time, allowing it to provide higher levels of support during that period. Others had a number of staff working part time, or had arranged to bring in additional support from other Jobcentre Plus staff to help cope during busy periods.

“Based on what we heard from the pathfinders, we took the decision to build demand slowly and focus on developing relationships with schools before engaging employers... I don’t know how other areas have gone about it.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District D)

Individual factors: The way that the programme was implemented in each district was also shaped by the background or experience of the Jobcentre Plus advisers involved. For example, some staff had previous experience of being involved with careers advice in schools, either on a voluntary basis or from a previous professional role, which could help when developing initial networks and provide some insight into the kind of support needed. Depending on their previous role and professional connections, advisers also had varying levels of pre-existing links to local employers, which could influence the extent to which they were able to drive employer involvement in the programme (see [Section 6.1](#)).

“I worked closely with employers in my previous role so I’m not worried about building up contacts there.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District I)

Local factors: Different districts presented different challenges in terms of delivery. Schools in some districts, particularly those that contained more rural areas, were perceived by careers leads within the schools to be relatively under-funded, who could feel that they struggled to offer the kind of careers guidance to students that was expected of them. The greater geographical spread in rural areas could also affect the way that support was delivered, with the increased time needed to travel between schools limiting the number of schools that could be visited each day. By contrast, in more urban districts there was perceived to be a much wider choice of careers provision available to schools. As such, there was a greater need for Jobcentre Plus advisers to both market their offer and coordinate with other local partners.

“Geography is a challenge... It becomes quite difficult to constantly engage in the area.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District H)

Local partner networks: There was a wide variety of different partner organisations in operation across districts, including national organisations such as CEC and NCS, national providers such as Prospects, Connexions and AimHigher, and also more local outfits and umbrella groups. The degree to which these organisations were communicating and coordinating their efforts varied widely across districts and to a large extent depended on the level to which local authorities or another lead organisation had created local networks of cooperation. This in turn affected the extent to which Jobcentre Plus advisers were able to effectively work with and alongside potential partners and the kind of collaborative relationships that developed in each district.

3 Demand for the programme

Demand for Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools was high and looked set to build across districts. Inhibitors of demand were present when advisers were first setting up the programme. These were likely to be improved by growing awareness, positive word of mouth and greater capacity for planning among schools as the programme becomes more established. Some pathfinder districts were already finding it challenging to meet demand, with programme capacity and the demand-led nature of the offer likely to inhibit future growth.

3.1 Levels of demand

Although there was significant demand for the programme across districts, the particular level of demand in each district did vary somewhat, particularly between pathfinder and non-pathfinder districts.

Pathfinder districts tended to feel that they were now reaching capacity and were in need of an increase in resources in order to meet growing demand. Most reported already having to make decisions about targeting resources due to the large and growing number of requests they were receiving from schools.

Due to the need to build networks and support offers from scratch, non-pathfinder districts were generally still able to comfortably meet demand in their area at the time of research. However, across districts demand was beginning to build as networks became established and awareness of the programme grew, with some advisers already concerned about demand for the coming year.

3.2 Drivers of demand

Once schools had become aware of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme, there was typically a high level of demand for support, with schools enthusiastic about the offer and keen to include it as part of their careers provision, either during the current term or as part of future plans. As well as those schools who had taken up the programme, the majority of the non-participating school leads that we engaged claimed that they were keen to make use of the support in the coming year.

As actual experiences of the offer were generally positive, schools that engaged with the programme were generally interested in drawing on it again in coming terms. There was also evidence that positive experiences of the programme were spreading through word of mouth between schools. As such, demand looks set to be self-sustaining and is likely to build over time. Demand for the programme was led by a series of six factors, which we outline below.

Jobcentre Plus's labour market expertise: A common theme across interviews was the value that schools felt they would be able to draw from Jobcentre Plus's local labour market expertise. The Jobcentre Plus brand was seen to carry significant weight in this area and schools valued the fact that Jobcentre Plus advisers were able to provide specific details about the types of vacancies available in the local area, and the specific skills that their students would need to develop. Schools often discussed incorporating this expertise as part of the support when advisers were working directly with students – for example, on work skills or CV development.

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

“I believe that it is somebody who is experienced in helping people find employment and will know the trends in the industry... have experience to know what mistakes people will make on CVs and in interviews and their job is to be up to date with their knowledge on a daily basis and so they know when things change, what employers are looking out for.”

(Participating school lead, District G)

Jobcentre Plus’s connection to employers: School careers leads also identified Jobcentre Plus’s network of employers as a key differentiator for Jobcentre Plus. Schools often expressed an interest in Jobcentre Plus putting them in contact with employers and potential providers of work experience, traineeships or apprenticeships. Although there was some variation across districts in the extent to which advisers were able to meet school expectations in this area, this was often a key initial driver of demand and in some areas Jobcentre Plus advisers were able to give examples of how they had used their employer connections in order to identify employers who were relevant to the interests of students within a school and subsequently arrange a workplace visit or work experience placement for students.

Jobcentre Plus’s ‘real world’ connections: Alongside their particular expertise with regards to the local labour market, schools also appreciated the fact that Jobcentre Plus and the programme are associated with the world outside of education. Advisers were therefore seen to be able to offer an alternative view to that of teachers, which was seen to be effective at engaging students, especially those who were struggling academically. Here, the association of Jobcentre Plus with welfare benefits was felt to offer them a particular relevance to students who came from workless families.

“If we tell them in school they think it is just us being teachers but when you have got someone coming in fresh from outside its more believable to them.”

(Participating school lead, District E)

Flexible offer: The open-natured and flexible approach of the programme was generally appreciated by schools. This was particularly motivating as it allowed schools to meet the needs of students with particular needs, such as those who had been identified as most at risk of becoming NEET post-education, who were not best served by more general careers advice. The flexibility of the school to deal with this kind of student was appreciated both within mainstream schools and in more specialist PRU institutions, as it was felt that this support was not easy to obtain from elsewhere. However, the flexibility of the programme also meant that schools could more generally use the programme to plug gaps in their provision.

“It’s a much more useful approach than a ‘one size fits all’ programme that doesn’t take account of needs of our students... it’s usually ‘we have this many students to engage with, boxes to tick, programmes to deliver’... so I’m pleasantly surprised they had time to put into this.”

(Participating school lead, District I)

Opportunity for free support: The fact that schools would not be charged for the support offered by Jobcentre Plus was inevitably a strong driver of initial demand, as it made it easier to take the risk of engaging with an unknown provider. Schools were often used to paying for careers guidance and were enthusiastic about any service that would be offered free of charge, especially some who claimed that they had recently had to make cuts in this area

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

due to limited budgets. Careers leads who raised this point explicitly sometimes did so in the context of tightening school budgets and the broader pressures on their school's resources.

"We just feel stretched... so we believe we should tap into any resources we can get."

(Participating school lead, District E)

Focus on non-academic pathways: Some school careers leads felt that existing post-16 provision at their school was focused primarily on encouraging students to move into academic routes, either further education or higher education. In these circumstances, careers leads welcomed any provision that could provide students with a clearer understanding of the alternative routes available, such as traineeships or apprenticeships. The Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme was widely perceived to be targeted at these kinds of students, and an effective way of introducing students to non-academic career options that teaching staff might have less awareness of, or confidence in explaining. Again, this was seen to be particularly effective at raising the aspirations of students who were less engaged with their academic work and at most risk of becoming NEET post-education.

3.3 Initial inhibitors of demand

Interviews with school leads in non-participating schools, and with Jobcentre Plus advisers and partners, revealed a series of inhibitors of initial demand to the programme. These could act as a limiter on the initial growth of demand and were therefore more of a factor in districts that had not taken part in the pathfinder. These factors were due to a lack of awareness, school capacity or misunderstandings about support rather than any explicit rejection of the programme, and had as such ceased to hold back demand in the pathfinder areas, where the programme was already more established. Looking ahead then, the same thing looks set to happen across the roll-out districts, which is likely to further boost demand.

In non-pathfinder districts where demand was generally still developing at the time of this research, there were four key factors inhibiting initial engagement with the programme, which, except for the role of CEC, mirrored inhibitors during the pathfinder stage: misunderstanding about the role of CEC; lack of programme awareness among schools; school calendar and capacity limitations; and a perceived lack of Jobcentre Plus expertise.

Misunderstanding of CEC role: Early on in the roll-out, non-pathfinder districts believed that they were prohibited from engaging with schools directly and were instead required to wait for referrals from CEC Coordinators. This perception slowed down early efforts to engage with schools as advisers instead focused on trying to develop relationships with CEC Enterprise Coordinators, who often did not see themselves in this facilitating role. In only one roll-out district did CEC staff play a significant role in introducing Jobcentre Plus schools advisers to schools and helping them to build networks.

When it became clear that Jobcentre Plus advisers were allowed to use alternative routes to connect with schools, all districts took more proactive approaches to developing their own networks and building demand.

"We were led to understand that we were a tool in their toolbox and they were one of the main players, but certainly that hasn't happened here."

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District I)

Lack of awareness: The most significant barrier to demand for the programme was that schools' awareness of the programme was still building at the time of the research, particularly in areas that were not part of the pathfinder. Many schools were simply still unaware of the programme's existence. In some instances this lack of awareness was an intentional result of the way in which the programme had been implemented and communicated, with connections to schools being targeted to specific types of schools or geographic areas, in order to purposefully manage demand while offers of support were still being developed. In some non-pathfinder districts, it was reported that this approach was being taken after talking to colleagues in pathfinder districts who had faced challenges meeting demand after taking a more open approach to reaching out to schools.

It seems likely that awareness issues will cease to act as an inhibitor on demand over time once the programme has had a chance to establish itself, especially given the generally positive experiences of the programme among participating schools and the way that demand tended to be driven by positive word of mouth in the pathfinder areas.

School capacity and planning: Some non-participating schools talked about how they had already planned their careers provision when they became aware of the programme, which only started to gain momentum towards the end of term in non-pathfinder districts. Some schools had already planned their careers provision months in advance and had no need for additional support this year.

The majority of non-participating schools expressed an interest in taking up support next term when they had the opportunity to build it into their overall plans for careers provision, so again this inhibitor on demand looks set to decrease in significance as the programme becomes more established.

"We would have taken up more provision but it was timing really... it was coming up to exams and we already had all that we needed."

(Participating school lead, District E)

Lack of expertise: Although not universal, a minority of Jobcentre Plus advisers mentioned that some schools that focused on students with particular needs, such as PRUs, had been challenging to engage with as school leads there had felt that the Jobcentre Plus would lack the expertise needed to deal with their students. In one other case, a careers lead in a more mainstream non-participating school reported that although he had been interested in the offer, he had been unable to understand what expertise Jobcentre Plus would be able to offer for his students.

Given the positive experiences of both mainstream and specialist schools taking part in the programme, this is also likely to become less of an issue as word of mouth about the programme continues to build.

3.4 Future inhibitors of growth

As the programme reaches steady state, current inhibitors of demand are likely to be ameliorated as advisers take a pro-active approach to creating contacts, awareness continues to rise and schools have a greater lead time to plan the programme into their offers. As such, looking ahead to the future, demand is likely to continue to grow and there will be a need to switch focus from building demand to managing demand in order to ensure sustainable growth.

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

With this in mind, we have identified two likely inhibitors to the future growth of the programme, which if not addressed are likely to create a situation in which the supply of support is unable to keep pace with demand: Jobcentre Plus capacity and the demand-led nature of the current offer

Jobcentre Plus capacity: In several pathfinder areas, Jobcentre Plus advisers were already sometimes unable to meet all of the requests that had been made to them. Although this was not yet the case in non-pathfinder districts, several were seeing significant increases in requests from schools and expected to encounter challenges meeting demand in the coming year. As the programme continues to establish itself across the country, the capacity of Jobcentre Plus staff to meet a growing demand is likely to be the biggest single inhibitor of growth

“We’re concerned about resources... If you want to make an impact that makes a difference with these types of kids then you have to work with schools throughout the year.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District H)

Demand-led offer: Across areas, although Jobcentre Plus advisers understood that the programme was focused on disadvantaged students or those most at risk of becoming NEET and were attempting to target these students when developing networks, the demand-led nature of the programme meant that they were also currently meeting requests from other, more mainstream schools. This ‘universal’ aspect of the offer means that demand is likely to grow across schools of all types and that Jobcentre Plus staff will be unlikely to provide support to all who request it. Some advisers felt that there may be a need to restrict support to students with particular needs in future in order to continue to meet demand and remain effective with current resources.

“Some of the better performing schools seem to be in a better position to ask for help so that’s a bit of a concern... but at the moment we don’t have the luxury of turning anyone down.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District B)

4 Engaging with schools

A variety of methods were used to build initial engagement with the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme among schools, each of which tended to drive word of mouth over time. Support was provided to schools on a flexible basis, with a wide variety of provision used across districts. However, support could be categorised into relatively 'broad' or 'targeted' offers – with the latter being seen to have greatest effectiveness across districts by school leads and students.

4.1 Approaches to introducing the programme

Demand for the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme tended to become self-sustaining as awareness grew, and had already reached this state in several pathfinder districts, which had therefore been able to scale back on active networking. However, in every district there was an initial need to engage with schools in order to create awareness and build interest in the programme. Across districts there were a variety of consistent channels used to approach schools and build initial engagement.

Marketing and outreach activities were generally focused on schools with a high proportion of students at risk of becoming NEET, identified either through direct networking, partner referrals or, more occasionally, through direct approaches to schools identified as high risk. However, programme advisors generally tried to meet the needs of any school that approached them for support, and as word of mouth about the programme grew, so could demand from schools from across a broad spectrum of different backgrounds. As such, while targeting was generally focused on schools with a high proportion of students at risk of becoming NEET, delivery was often more broad depending on which schools had heard of the programme and been pro-active about approaching advisors for support.

The four primary channels used to engage with schools were: face-to-face networking; direct approaches; partner referrals; and word of mouth.

Face-to-face networking: Face-to-face networking, via local CEIAG events or other existing networks, was generally seen as the most effective way of developing initial networks and engaging schools, and was used across case study areas. This method of engagement was seen to be particularly important during the early stages of programme development, as it personalised connections, allowed advisors to give a clear explanation of the programme and was more likely than other approaches to convert into actual activity. It also enabled Jobcentre Plus advisers to develop an understanding of the local landscape of provision and build connections with other local partners. This face-to-face approach was also generally employed after making initial connections with schools, to discuss their particular needs and design a programme of support to meet them.

“It’s only really once we got in front of the schools that interest began to build... it was a case of building those personal connections.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District F)

Direct approaches: Direct approaches were not used widely, and advisers understood that they were not supposed to approach schools directly as part of the programme. Many advisers also stated that they avoided widespread direct contact of schools in order to limit

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

and manage initial demand. However, in a minority of districts where it had not been possible to develop connections by face-to-face means due to the limited extent of local networks, advisers had successfully engaged directly with schools over the telephone. In these cases, direct telephone contact was seen to be an effective way of driving demand with the additional benefit that it allowed advisers to target schools with specific needs. Email had been used by some districts but had not converted into the same kind of success and was felt to be useful only as a way of making preliminary contact prior to a telephone contact.

“We hit a brick wall so we decided to contact schools directly... and it meant we could target those with high pupil premium... [it] was really effective.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District D)

Partner referrals: In some districts, local partners could play an important role in introducing Jobcentre Plus advisers to schools. This generally began to occur once the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme had started to become established and had already built relationships with local partners. In these cases, the programme was seen by local partners to offer a complementary offer to their own and was used to fill gaps in their provision among groups that they felt unable to service, such as specialist PRU schools or, more rarely, due to capacity issues or issues of geographical coverage. In one roll-out district, the local CEC Enterprise Coordinator also played a significant role in making initial introductions to schools to build their network.

Word of mouth: Once the programme had developed initial networks in a district using the above methods, then the need for active engagement with schools diminished, as the reputation of the programme and positive referrals between schools began to create its own demand. This was already common in pathfinder districts, which could now be beginning to feel oversubscribed, and was also beginning to occur in many of the roll-out districts.

“Now the word is out there we’re finding that schools are coming to us... I think it is something that people are quite attracted to because we are a bit different to other providers.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District F)

4.2 Support made available to schools

From the perspective of schools, one of the key strengths of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme was the flexibility that it offered to work with the specific needs of schools. Furthermore, the exact offer within each district was to some extent determined by the experience of Jobcentre Plus staff working in that area and the particular programmes of support that they designed and implemented. As such, across districts, there were a wide variety of different forms of support delivered, the most prevalent of which are outlined below.

Examples of support delivered through the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme:

- **Skills workshops** – direct advice from Jobcentre Plus staff to small groups of students about specific skills, such as CV development, interviewing, how to present your personal brand, and key employability skills (for example, team building, self-esteem). Sometimes these programmes were spread over several sessions and built towards either integrated work placements or mock interview sessions, which was generally considered to be a more effective approach by both Jobcentre Plus advisers and school leads.

- **Local labour market information** – discussions with staff and students about the breadth of local labour market opportunities, highlighting key local sectors and sectors with skills shortages within the local area. This included information about the different pathways into careers and range of environments in which young people could work.
- **Employer visits to schools** – employers visiting schools to lead sessions about skills, interviewing and career choices. In some schools this included work-based activities to demonstrate the skills and qualifications required, such as team building and problem solving.
- **Facilitating work experience placements** – Jobcentre Plus staff used their established employer networks to facilitate student placements with employers in specific industries of interest.
- **Taster days in industry** – opportunities to visit and observe employers or sector-specific training; for example, visiting a local college’s construction and motor vehicle department.
- **Apprenticeship advice and guidance** – workshops and sessions looking at apprenticeship pathways, with information and presentations from local providers.
- **Links to traineeship/apprenticeship opportunities** – direct links to opportunities for post-education development for specific students.
- **Careers fairs** – events with multiple employers attending in order to answer questions about their industries for students.
- **Assemblies** – delivering a presentation about skills/opportunities to a wider school assembly.
- **Financial management** – advice on budgeting and how to financially manage a salary.

While there was wide variation in the exact forms of support delivered across districts, support could be categorised as being either relatively ‘broad’ or ‘targeted’ – with each form of delivery received by schools in a different way.

Broad support: Broad support was generally delivered to larger groups of students of varying abilities, either in the classroom or occasionally at assemblies. Sessions were generally delivered on a one-off basis and were relatively short, taking place over the course of a class or, at most, an afternoon. The support offered was generally focused on developing work/employability skills, general CV development, outlining local labour market opportunities or discussing post-education pathways. When employers were involved, it was generally to visit schools to deliver pre-prepared activities or via careers fairs.

This form of support was widely appreciated by schools as it allowed them to cheaply fill gaps in their provision. Schools could also value the particular expertise of Jobcentre Plus advisers regarding the local labour market and their non-academic credentials. However, activities were not significantly different to that on offer from other national providers. This was notable particularly in the reactions from students, who could struggle to distinguish the support provided by the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme from other provision they had received.

Targeted support: More targeted support was generally delivered to smaller groups of students. Importantly, it was generally focused specifically on students identified as being at particular risk of becoming NEET following school, either within regular schools or in some districts at specialist institutions, such as PRUs. The support offered overlapped with that

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

offered elsewhere, with a focus on work skills, but provision was often spread over several sessions and incorporated more involved elements, such as mock interviews with Jobcentre Plus staff or industry taster days. Links to employers were also more targeted, including work placements that focused on the specific interests of students or, in a few cases, direct links to traineeships and apprenticeships for specific students.

While these activities were necessarily more limited in reach, they were felt to have a pronounced effect by the schools involved, who reported increases in discussions about post-education choices among students. They were also felt to be clearly differentiated from offers available from other providers, with Jobcentre Plus staff praised for their resilience and ability to engage with challenging students. Among students too, this kind of provision was seen to be most effective, with many able to recount specific gains that they felt they had experienced from taking part, such as increased confidence and concrete knowledge about how to prepare for or conduct themselves during an interview.

“It was good actually... I didn’t even think about looking up stuff online before the interview, even if I’m applying at [supermarket chain]... and things like looking them in the eye and shaking their hand... doing the mock interview actually made it real.”

(Student, District 1)

5 Partnership working

Across the case study districts, there were a broad range of different organisations working within the area of careers guidance and provision. The Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme in individual districts had formed a variety of different arrangements with local partners, with four models emerging, each varying in levels of coordination and collaboration. This points the way towards a number of facilitators to effective partnership working.

5.1 The overall partner landscape

In general, Jobcentre Plus advisers felt that they were stepping into a crowded and fairly complicated landscape of careers provision. Across stakeholder interviews, a recent influx of money into the sector was seen to have led to a proliferation of organisations providing careers guidance or support. For example, in most areas the local CEC presence had been established at around the same time as the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme, with a more or less prominent role for the Local Enterprise Partnership alongside this. In some areas the NCS was also playing an active role in offering advice to schools. Several national careers organisations were also providing careers support to students and schools within different districts, with Aim Higher, Connexions and Prospects all mentioned by school leads as sources of support. Alongside this, there was also a wide range of other more localised charities and organisations operating in different districts across the country.

For Jobcentre Plus advisers, who generally had little or no experience in the area of careers provision in schools, the presence of so many different organisations working in the area could initially be daunting given the need to build networks from scratch. Advisers were generally conscious that they did not wish to duplicate provision already on offer from other providers, but could find it challenging to understand what other organisations were doing and therefore how to avoid this. There was sometimes felt to be a need to spend time understanding what other organisations were doing before building up networks with schools. This could take time and was sometimes a challenge when other organisations were difficult to contact. Although advisers felt they were trying to target resources in a way that complemented rather than duplicated existing provision, the presence of so many providers operating in the same space could bring a political feel to networking, with other organisations showing varying degrees of willingness to cooperate across districts.

The landscape of provision could also be overwhelming for schools. Although some school leads had pre-existing relationships with other providers that they felt worked, others reported that they were aware of a number of different organisations that were operating in the area but did not understand the difference between their offers and as such did not know who to approach if they had a particular need.

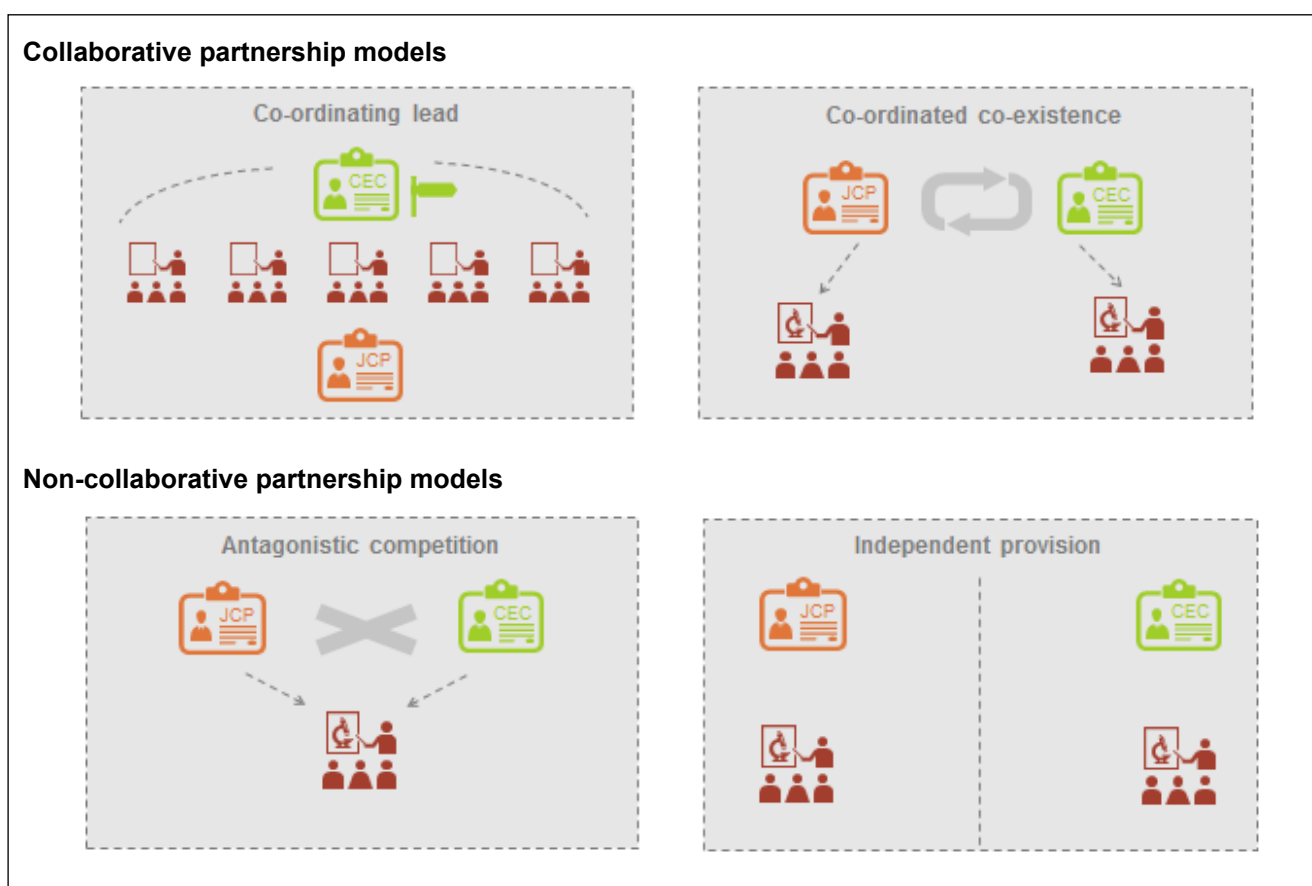
This proliferation of providers was most prevalent in urban areas but was present to an extent in the majority of districts. There were a minority of more rural districts that were characterised by a relative lack of provision, in which school leads also felt in most need of support, as they felt that they were lacking the funding to provide proper careers advice with their current resources.

5.2 Emerging partnership models

Across districts, Jobcentre Plus advisers were working with partners in a variety of different ways, which could be more or less cooperative depending on how local relationships had been developed. Across the research, a number of different models of partnership working emerged, providing lessons for future best practice in this area. Due to the number of potential partners in each district, Jobcentre Plus advisers in any given area could fall into one or more of these models, with different kinds of relationships with different partners.

In total we identified four models of partnership working. Two of these were based on positive and collaborative relationships between Jobcentre Plus advisers and other partners: coordinating lead or coordinated existence. The other two were based on either negative relationships or a lack of communication: antagonistic competition or independent provision.

Figure 5.1 Emerging partnership models



Coordinating lead: In a minority of districts, one or another organisation had begun to take a lead role in bringing together a range of organisations in order to coordinate provision across providers. In two pathfinder areas, this role had been played by the local CEC Enterprise Coordinator, who had facilitated a number of leads for Jobcentre Plus, although was by now playing less of an active role. Although this had not been replicated in roll-out areas, in one district the local CEC Enterprise Coordinator was mapping out needs at different schools across the district in order to play this role. In another, where the local CEC presence had only just been established, this coordinating role was being played on a more ad hoc basis by a representative associated with another organisation, although here too

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

they saw this role as eventually falling under the remit of CEC. In both of these cases, this coordination activity had only recently begun and was yet to significantly filter through to the way that Jobcentre Plus advisers were operating. However, given the success of CEC Enterprise Coordinators in signposting some districts during the pathfinder and the number of organisations operating independently in the careers space, it presents a potential model for effective future working that could help to provide a clearer differentiation across offers and ensure that schools are most effectively matched with the right provider for their needs.

“Our role is at a strategic level, to show the state of play in the borough... we’re mapping provision and the plan is for us to signpost services... but we initially couldn’t do this as we weren’t sure of the offer.”

(Partner, District I)

Coordinated co-existence: In most areas, Jobcentre Plus had established informal relationships with other providers working in the area, including local CEC Enterprise Coordinators, and were using these to somewhat coordinate provision. This was the most common model shaping relationships across districts, with Jobcentre Plus advisers describing how they had managed over time to develop friendly but somewhat ad-hoc relationships with their colleagues at other organisations. Depending on a number of local factors, including the responsiveness of other partners, the degree of potential overlap in work and the extent to which there was contact through networking events, such as local authority CEIAG events, organisations operating under this model were sharing information about which areas they were targeting. In some cases this literally meant focusing on different geographical areas. In others, where relationships were more positive, providers had also agreed to coordinate in terms of school need, with the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme seen as being of particular relevance to schools focused on NEETs, and providers were actively referencing organisations for each other. In the best cases this was felt to work well by stakeholders, but as a model it relied on individuals developing relationships on a case-by-case basis and did not provide for widespread coordination.

“If I’ve gone into a school and thought something useful could happen there with Jobcentre Plus, then I’ve gone back to them, so I think our partnership has been a sharing of information and providing those contacts where needed.”

(Partner, District C)

Antagonistic competition: In two districts, relationships between the local CEC presence and Jobcentre Plus advisers had become antagonistic. In these cases, CEC Enterprise Coordinators saw their role as facilitating direct provision to schools and therefore saw the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme to be working in direct competition with themselves. In both of these cases, friction had arisen from a misunderstanding about the role of Jobcentre Plus in providing careers information and advice to schools: in one case due to a general concern about why Jobcentre Plus was getting involved in an already crowded space; and in the other due to a belief that Jobcentre Plus advisers should be focused on providing links to local employers and not getting involved in visiting local schools themselves.

“It is very confusing really... their role should be to increase employer engagement and link young people with employers but from what I understand they will deliver whatever the school needs... they’re delivering things themselves when they should be leveraging their connections and that seems like a missed opportunity.”

(Partner, District F)

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

Independent provision: Although Jobcentre Plus advisers had generally tried to reach out to other providers operating in their districts, this had not always been possible and provision was still proceeding independently with no coordination. For example, this was the case in areas in which CEC provision had only recently been established. Although this way of working had not led to any major issues so far, it created the potential for future overlap of resources.

“If I’m being totally honest we’ve not really had that much contact with them [the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme]; quite hit and miss... it’s not been consistent.”

(Partner, District D)

5.3 Facilitators for effective partnership working

Looking across districts, when partnerships were working well they could act as an important source of school referrals, as partner organisations signposted schools that they felt fit within the remit of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme towards the programme. More broadly, effective coordination between partners could also help to minimise overlap in provision to ensure a more efficient use of resources across providers. From the perspective of schools, more coordinated provision is also likely to aid navigation of the various provider offers to help them more effectively meet their particular needs.

Across the research, three complementary factors emerged that seemed to drive effective coordination between partner organisations: an understood approach to coordination across organisations, ideally led by one or more lead partners; clear differentiation between offers; and a combined approach to using resources.

Coordinating organisations: In districts where partnerships were working well, organisations were working together to coordinate provision. At the moment this was generally happening on an informal basis between individual organisations and, although this was effective to a certain extent, it was resource intensive, as each relationship needed to be established separately, and did not provide a birds-eye view of provision to ensure effective coordination across all partners. In some areas an organisation had taken the lead in setting up a more comprehensive steering group, to ensure wider coordination of provision. Although yet to be fully established in any of our districts, this approach seems likely to help engender more effective and formal coordination. In order to make this happen, it requires agreement for one organisation to take on this lead role, which at the moment is played by CEC Enterprise Coordinators in some districts.

Clear differentiation: Related to the above, partnerships were seen to work best when each partner was understood to have clearly defined roles, to minimise overlap in provision and create a clearer offer for schools. In most districts the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme was understood to be focused on provision to students at particular risk of becoming NEET, who were not well served by other providers. However, in other districts the programme’s role was not clearly understood which could lead to antagonistic relationships. The role of CEC representatives could also be unclear and understood differently across districts, by both Jobcentre Plus advisers and CEC staff themselves, and it would help aid effective coordination for roles to be given greater clarity, with CEC Enterprise Coordinators, for example, more clearly playing a role of mapping out and signposting to provision.

Combining resources: Finally, partnerships worked best when there was effective sharing of information and resources between providers operating on the ground. In this way, when providers had agreed in advance about their particular areas of expertise, they were then able to share information on schools in need of support, signposting other organisations when they knew that other providers were able to meet provision, either due to geographical coverage, capacity or the ability to meet particular school or student needs. At the moment, this was happening mostly on an ad hoc basis but could be facilitated more effectively if more clearly differentiated roles and more formal channels of communication were established.

6 Employer involvement

There was employer involvement across the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme, although the extent of activity in each district varied depending on a number of factors, including the pre-existing links of individual advisers and how long the programme had been established. Employers were engaged in a number of different ways, which varied in terms of reach and perceived effectiveness on influencing student outcomes.

6.1 Working with employers

At the time of the research, all districts had some kind of involvement from employers and the majority of Jobcentre Plus advisers reported positive relationships with local employers involved in the programme. In almost all cases, relationships with employers had been developed by drawing on pre-existing employer networks and connections.

“We’ve been able to use [manager’s] links with local employers to set up those networks so I think we’re lucky there, that wasn’t a problem.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District H)

However, given the reliance on pre-existing networks, the level of employer involvement could vary somewhat across districts depending on the extent to which advisers had worked with employers in previous roles. In a number of districts, advisers had not previously had direct contact with employers and were instead reliant on the cooperation of the district’s Jobcentre plus Employer Advisers to provide links to employers. Although there were cases in which Employer Advisers had been able to facilitate links, as they were not directly involved with the programme this could create an added distance between employers and Jobcentre Plus advisers and this could mean that other tasks that could be more directly addressed, such as building school networks, were prioritised.

There were also generally lower levels of employer engagement in non-pathfinder districts. Jobcentre Plus advisers in some districts stated that they had prioritised building school networks before engaging with employers, in order to ensure that they could effectively match employers with the right schools for the support that they were able to provide. As the programme advances and school networks become more established, it seems likely that employer engagement will increase in these areas.

“I’m considering approaching employers regarding apprenticeships, but we have our hands full building our network with schools first.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District I)

6.2 Employer activities

Across districts, employers were involved in the programme in various ways. The majority of employers that were involved came from relatively large national or regional businesses and were engaging as part of ongoing community outreach and had pre-prepared programmes of activity or work placements that they were able to run through with groups of students. In other cases, employers worked more closely with Jobcentre Plus advisers or other local organisations to design activities that more closely fit with the needs of students, with these activities generally focused more specifically on students at risk of becoming NEET.

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

In total, we identified four broad forms of employer activities happening across case study districts, each of which varied in terms of their reach and reported effectiveness on improving student outcomes: school visits; work placements; work placements integrated into work skills courses; and links to traineeships/apprenticeships.

School visits: The most common form of employer engagement involved employer visits to schools, which were generally led by employers keen to engage with local schools and promote their industry. Programmes of activity were generally pre-prepared and focused at students of varying abilities. Although this kind of activity could be well received by schools keen to provide a broad range of experiences to students, there were few signs that it had much effect on student outcomes.

“We’re always looking for employers to come in... it helps if the students are able to get an idea of the different kind of jobs that are out there.”

(Participating school lead, District D)

Work placements: In some districts, employers were able to offer short-term access to work experience placements, generally over the course of one day, which offered students the opportunity to get out of school and experience life with an employer. These were highly valued by schools as they offered an opportunity for students to experience life outside of the classroom but were generally employer-led with little integration into wider careers education courses. In some cases, Jobcentre Plus advisers were able to use their pre-existing connections to match employers more directly with the specific industries that interested schools and pupils.

“We were looking for something around construction and they were able to help with that.”

(Participating school lead, District G)

Work placements integrated into work skill courses: In one case, Jobcentre Plus advisers were able to provide access to employers who were providing work placements that had been integrated into general work skill courses spread over the course of several sessions. Although more intensive and limited to smaller numbers of students, this kind of involvement seemed to be particularly effective, with the placement helping students put work skills into practice and the preceding course helping to contextualise the placement.

“I’ve felt more confident in looking for part-time jobs since having my work experience interview and work experience. So two days ago I emailed the library in the town to ask about a volunteering opportunity in the six-week holiday... before I might have thought about it but not gone through with it.”

(Student, District A)

Links to traineeships/apprenticeships: In a few districts, advisers had been able to facilitate links for specific students into traineeship programmes and, in rare cases, apprenticeships. This kind of referral could be perceived to have a strong effect on outcomes for the small number of students involved.

“She’s given me the chance to get a good job, an apprenticeship and a placement on NCS – she’s done really good for us.”

(Student, District B)

7 Experiences of programme delivery

Stakeholder experiences of the programme were generally positive. Jobcentre Plus advisers were happy to be involved in the programme but felt their contribution could be improved if they were provided with additional support in certain key areas. Schools leads valued the service, especially those focused on students at higher risk of becoming NEET post-education. It was amongst these students that the programme was also most positively received. Employers generally valued the chance to be involved and fulfil their own community outreach goals.

7.1 Jobcentre Plus staff experiences

As during the pathfinder stage, Jobcentre Plus advisers felt that the programme had been well received by both schools and employers, and that schools had benefited from the added value of receiving an additional free resource and new opportunities for careers education activities. In most districts, Jobcentre Plus advisers had collected feedback from schools and students about their own experience, with largely positive reports from both teachers and students regarding the activities delivered.

Jobcentre Plus advisers themselves were also positive about their role in the programme and appreciative of the chance to have a positive effect on the lives of students. However, across interviews they also identified a number of areas that they felt could be addressed in order to make them more effective in their roles.

Practical classroom training: Across districts, Jobcentre Plus advisers tended to take a relatively high level of involvement in the provision of support, working with schools and students to deliver work skills courses. As the majority had no previous teaching or classroom experience, this could be a relatively daunting experience, especially in cases where support was being provided to challenging students. Although advisers had worked with careers leads within the schools to manage their role in the classroom, many felt that they could have benefited from some initial training related to the practical aspects of presenting to students, including how to present to young people. For example, the specific challenges faced when working with young people as opposed to adults and specific watch-outs about being in a school, such as the relative inflexibility of class periods.

“If we had some sort of basic training it would have been useful... things like the protocol in schools, classroom plans... working in school is very different to working in the Jobcentre.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District F)

Greater sharing of best practice: Although advisers were generally positive about the freedom the programme offered them to build up an offer from scratch in their district and make their own mark on the kind of support being delivered, this could take a large initial investment of time and meant that some districts were relatively slow to begin activity. It could also mean that initial sessions were not always successful, as advisers learned through a process of trial and error. Given this, some advisers mentioned that it would be useful if there was a greater level of sharing between districts as to what had worked

previously or of particularly useful materials. Only a minority had made use of the shared drive, which was felt to be difficult to navigate at the time of the research, as it was organised by district, making it challenging to find material related to a specific subject or approach.

“I did speak with some of the leads from the pathfinders at the start but it was very informal... other places must be doing their own thing so it would be useful to share that.”

(Jobcentre Plus adviser, District I)

Resourcing: Across districts, Jobcentre Plus advisers felt that they were relatively under-resourced given the task that they were being asked to carry out, as they had not been supplied with their own computers to use for presentations in schools or access to professionally-printed materials to use in sessions with students. Several mentioned that this had also been fed back to them by school leads and felt that they would be able to present a more professional service if they were better resourced. In a few non-pathfinder districts there were also issues with under-staffing due to staff turnover during the programme, which could delay the development of effective school networks and delivery.

Marketing materials: Across districts, Jobcentre Plus advisers felt that they could benefit from a set of professionally-produced marketing materials to use with schools and potential partners. At the moment, the programme felt relatively under-developed in this respect compared to partner organisations, which could be seen as a barrier to the development of relationships or even to other organisations taking the programme seriously. At careers events, using the Jobcentre Plus brand alone could be seen as off-putting to some students. This lack of marketing materials was felt to be a particular issue at the start of the programme when there was a need to build-up networks from scratch.

7.2 Participating school lead experiences

Schools that had received support from the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme generally reported their experiences to have been positive. The programme was widely reported to have filled gaps in provision in a way that added value, particularly given the programme’s flexible and tailored approach. Advisers were felt to take the time to understand the particular needs of the school, through face-to-face meetings and follow-up communications, to ensure that the support offered was complementary to what else the school was already offering. Schools also felt that Jobcentre Plus advisers seemed responsive to feedback and open to adjusting their approach when things were not working so well.

Impressions of the programmes were particularly positive among school leads in PRUs or in regular schools where activity had focused on students at particular risk of becoming NEET post-education. In these cases, the programme was seen to have delivered a service that was superior to that delivered by other national providers in the past, due to their willingness to work around the needs of students. The programme was seen to be particularly effective among students with low attainment or from families with a background of joblessness, where it was seen to have worked well to help raise aspirations and present an alternative vision of life after school to that usually presented. The fact that Jobcentre Plus advisers came from a familiar organisation, which was nonetheless seen to represent a world outside of school and education, was also cited as a motivating influence on students. As such, the programme was seen to offer a distinct offer differentiated to that available elsewhere.

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

Although this evaluation was not exploring ‘hard’ impacts such as school attendance or future attainment, school leads were also generally positive about the effect of the programme on students, again especially among those schools where it had delivered to students with particular needs. Although it was often difficult for school leads to describe specific outcomes resulting from the programme, they generally reported that students had seemed more engaged with the training than that received from other training providers. Others reported that the training had stimulated conversations among students following the class about what they might like to do after leaving school.

“Some of the behaviours have improved because they are more focused... they’ve now got ambitions so ultimately you raise their ambitions, you raise their behaviour and ultimately you raise their results.”

(Participating school lead, District E)

While schools were generally positive about the programme, some consistent feedback emerged regarding where the programme could be made to better suit their needs. Many schools reported that, despite high levels of satisfaction with the programme, the actual materials used by Jobcentre Plus advisers were below the standard that they typically used in classes. Materials were distributed on printed sheets rather than in booklets, and it was felt that this made it less likely that students would engage with them, both during and after the class. Overall, school leads felt that support would be more effective if the quality of materials used to deliver them were improved.

While schools generally felt that Jobcentre Plus staff presented themselves in a professional manner, some reported that they were surprised that Jobcentre Plus advisers did not have their own IT equipment and had to make use of that provided by the school. This had sometimes caused issues when trying to set things up and had delayed presentations, which could have a knock-on effect on the way that support was received by students. Schools felt that Jobcentre Plus advisers would appear more professional if better equipped.

“The only thing I would say is that it would have been good if they had better materials... our kids are used to printed booklets and photocopied papers will just get lost in their bags.”

(Participating school lead, District I)

7.3 Student experiences

Student views of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme were somewhat more mixed than those of schools. Students that had received more targeted or intensive support generally had better recall of the programme and were able to associate it with Jobcentre Plus, which they generally knew and associated with the world of work and with welfare benefits. Some other students though had less recall of the programme and were less able to distinguish it from other careers guidance they had received at school.

Students that had received more targeted or intensive support were also generally positive about the support that they had received from the programme. These students compared the programme favourably to support that they had received from other careers providers and many were able to describe specific things that they felt they had gained from the programme; for example, better knowledge about how to approach employers, an increased knowledge about a specific field of work that interested them, or overall increased knowledge and confidence about what they might do following school.

“She gave me reassurance about going for a job interview... it’s a lot more laid back and friendly and I shouldn’t be as scared as I used to be about meeting new people.”

(Student, District B)

However, where provision was more general, students could be more muted about provision or unable to recount how it differed from other provision. In these cases they were not able to point towards any specific outcomes that they felt had come about as a result of taking part in the programme.

“It was boring, just like they were reading from a presentation word for word... there was no group work.”

(Student, District D)

7.4 Employer experiences

Although employers tended to have a lower level of engagement with the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme than school leads, they generally understood that it was about trying to raise student aspirations and provide some kind of support to think about life after education. They were generally positive about involvement, which they saw as a useful channel for their own corporate social responsibility or community outreach work. For representatives of larger businesses, from whom the majority of employer involvement came, engagement with schools was a core or peripheral part of their job role.

“My role involves community outreach so we often do this kind of thing with schools... we’re happy to be able to work with JCP like this.”

(Employer, District C)

Most employers had previously engaged with schools prior to the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme and already had materials prepared that they were able to use with students. There was generally fairly minimal contact between Jobcentre Plus advisers and employers, with advisers typically facilitating contact with schools and then allowing employers to set-up the specifics directly with school career leads. Most employers were happy with this approach.

However, there were also a number of employers who felt that they could benefit from a more involved role from Jobcentre Plus advisers. This tended to come from smaller employers who were involved in the programme, who felt that it would have been helpful to have some support developing a programme focused specifically on students at risk of becoming NEETs.

“It’s positive that we get in front of students to help them raise their aspirations but I felt that they [Jobcentre Plus] or the schools could have been more involved in what we were doing.”

(Employer, District E)

7.5 Non-participating school lead experiences

Although we were only able to engage a total of five careers leads from non-participating schools during the course of the research, these had all had some kind of face-to-face contact with Jobcentre Plus advisers about the programme and responses were fairly consistent.

None of the non-participating school leads had turned down provision for negative reasons and the majority expressed an interest in taking up support via the programme in the near future. The most common reason for not yet having done so was timetabling. Some of the schools became aware of the programme shortly before the exam period, when they felt that there was not enough time to prioritise scheduling in additional careers guidance sessions. Others had heard about the programme earlier but already had provision scheduled in for the year. All of these were interested in taking up the programme in the coming year.

“Everything they do offer would be great, it’s just down to us to juggle everything around so we can sort it out... they’ve told me what they offer and I know I can contact them. I don’t think there’s anything else they can do.”

(Non-participating school lead, District H)

One non-participating school lead had raised wider questions about the purpose of the programme, which he felt were unclear. This individual was already happy with the provision that they were receiving from another provider of careers advice and felt that they would be more likely to take up the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme if it had a more clearly defined offer.

8 Conclusions and key learnings for national roll-out

Based on the findings of this research, some clear direction emerges to feed into the development of the programme. A key priority will be managing demand as awareness grows, which is likely to require an increased targeting of resources. This will also help to create more mutually beneficial relationships with partners. Beyond this there are also a range of ways in which delivery of the programme could build on its current successes.

8.1 Learnings for growth of the programme

Across districts the programme has clearly been well received by schools. The flexible nature of the offer has allowed schools to access tailored support for free, which has helped them to fill gaps in their existing provision. The programme has also been able to supply links to local employers and provide knowledge about local labour market opportunities, all of which has helped to generate demand from across schools eager to bolster the range of experiences that they are able to offer their students as part of their preparation for post-education.

The programme has been particularly well received where it has been focused on students that are at greatest risk of becoming NEET. In cases where the programme has provided targeted provision to these students it has been seen to be especially effective, by both school leads and students themselves. The quality of the provision provided by the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme in this area is seen to have clearly differentiated the programme from other national providers.

Currently the programme is still at an early stage of development across all areas. Given the relatively open nature of programme delivery, it has taken some time for Jobcentre Plus advisers in each district to develop contacts with schools and other partners and, at the time of this research, non-pathfinder areas were still just settling into active delivery. However, given positive reactions, demand for the programme looks set to build as awareness spreads, word of mouth continues and schools are able to build support into their plans for the coming year. Pathfinder areas are already facing challenges to meet demand and the same looks set to occur across the country.

Given that there are only finite resources available, one major challenge for the programme as it develops will be managing demand. If the programme continues in its current form, with support led by demand and open to all schools, then this will require an increase in resources being put into the programme. If this is not an option then there will be a need to more effectively target the programme on specific groups.

The programme currently seems to be most effective among students that are at greatest risk of becoming NEET. In these situations, support appears to have been effective at helping students to build their confidence, develop aspirations and learn basic work skills, such as how to interact with prospective employers, how to develop a CV and how to present oneself at an interview. Importantly, the programme has also offered a focus on non-academic pathways that is currently felt to be under-represented within the educational environment and is felt to be a more realistic prospect for many of these students. Focusing

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

more clearly on these students is likely to be the most effective way of focusing resources to utilise the current strengths of the programmes as it grows. It will also provide a clear point of differentiation from other provision.

It will also be important to continue to develop mutually beneficial relationships with partners operating in the careers space as the programme develops. At the moment, many partners understand the programme to be focused on students at risk of becoming NEET, but given the demand-led nature of the programme and the fact that support is more widely provided, this is not always clear. Relationships would benefit if the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme's remit was more tightly defined, especially since a focus in this area is seen to be a unique offering that complements the goals that other organisations are aiming to achieve.

8.2 Learnings for delivery of the programme

As well as overall strategic direction for the programme, some more specific implications also emerged relating to delivery.

Retain consultative model: The programme should maintain its flexible and consultative approach, which is highly prized by schools and seen to offer clear differentiation from other providers. As the programme becomes more established and a bank of support materials are developed, then Jobcentre Plus advisers should be able to draw from this bank, but tailoring the exact set of material to the exact needs of the school and its students. This consultative model is also empowering for Jobcentre Plus advisers themselves and will allow them to continue to develop new and effective modes of delivery, including those developed in partnership with other local partners.

Facilitate sharing of best practice: While it is important for the programme to retain some flexibility in delivery, sharing of best practice between districts should continue to be facilitated in order to boost efficiency. The development of a bank of materials that had proven to be successful will ensure a higher level of support across districts and will act as a springboard for Jobcentre Plus advisers to continue to build on previous successes. This will also help materials appear more professional, as advisers will not need to develop them from scratch each time, which is likely to boost engagement among students.

Develop marketing materials: The programme would also benefit from a bank of marketing materials for use by Jobcentre Plus advisers. These would be useful when developing networks with schools although, as demand for the programme builds, this may not be a major priority. Looking to the future they would perhaps be most important as Jobcentre Plus advisers attempt to develop more fruitful relationships with partners, by helping to place the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme on the same standing as other providers acting in the area.

Practical classroom training for Jobcentre Plus advisers: Despite good appraisals of Jobcentre Plus adviser performances, both schools and Jobcentre Plus staff themselves felt that they would benefit from greater training in relation to the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme. Given the difference to the environments in which they were used to working, they felt that training specifically focused on how to deal with high-need children in a school environment would improve their confidence and the quality of the service they were able to offer.

Appendix A: School Lead (Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

In order to achieve the aims for this evaluation the research will need to:

- Understand the needs, motivations and expectations of schools and employers that participate in the programme
- Identify the barriers and facilitators to school and employer engagement in the programme, and to student engagement in specific activity
- Explore the experiences of students, teaching staff, senior leaders, JCP advisors, intermediaries and employers both in relation to the process for organising and coordinating support and the support itself
- Distinguish how the JCP support differentiates/adds value over and above support already available
- Identify what successful outcomes and best practice look like from the perspective of different stakeholders, examples of where this has been achieved, and opportunities for improving the management or delivery of the programme to support future implementation success
- Map the uptake of work experience opportunities being facilitated through the programme including the types of students, schools and employers involved
- Draw conclusions on those factors that can support uptake and effective delivery.

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of Kantar Public, an independent research agency
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording
- If the interviewee asks about Kantar undertaking government research during the pre-2017 election period ('purdah'), then explain that approval has been obtained from DWP Head of Social Research to continue with this research during this period.

1 Introduction (2 minutes)

Section aim: *To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer reassurances to minimise concerns and encourage an open and honest discussion, and offer participant a chance to ask questions before the interview starts.*

- **Thanks & introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar Public – reminder of previous research in July/August 2016, and check if participant was interviewed previously
- **Purpose & length of interview:** Undertaking research, on behalf of DWP, to evaluate the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools program, the general purpose of the interview and how their information will be used, the interview lasts up to 60 minutes
- **Specify timeframe:** Clarify (if necessary) that this stage of the research should be focused on the current state of implementation of the programme, not at the time of the Pathfinder – aside from highlighting any key changes
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, consent to record
- Any **questions/concerns** before starting?

-Start recording-

2 Background and Context (3 mins)

Section aim: *Establish the participants' role and remit, in order to build rapport and to inform understanding of their experience of the programme*

- **Day-to-day activities:** participant's roles and responsibilities at their school (capture current role and any secondary roles)
- **Professional background:** time in current role; previous roles
- **Specific involvement in provision of careers education**
 - how wider school careers education provision is staffed and provided
 - what their personal responsibilities are in relation to school's wider careers provision – do they have lead responsibility for careers provision in their school, or do they share this with others (if so, who); what proportion of their workload is dedicated to careers provision
- **Profile of their school:** what kind of families they work with; proportion of children at risk of becoming NEET

3 The context for Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (5 mins)

Section aim: *To understand school lead's perspective on the historical careers advice context within their school, in order to understand how Jobcentre Plus SfS offer has fitted in to this*

• **Careers education in their district:**

- Different sources of careers education in their district
- Which agencies are used to provide careers education in the school
- Any ethos/principles guiding the school's careers education policies (e.g. the Gatsby Benchmarks)
- Any unmet need for specific types of careers education.
- Overall summary of the 'need' for careers advice in their school

• **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**

- Their spontaneous understanding of Jobcentre Plus SfS
- Key elements of Jobcentre Plus SfS – 'what it is'
- Their understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus – 'what it is trying to do'
(Researcher Note: probe only as necessary – keep in mind section timing)
 - Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students
 - Providing advice on traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Facilitating work experience placements
 - Provide advice on local labour market
 - Improve students' 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
 - Enhance students' understanding of available options
 - Facilitate transition from school to work, training or further study
 - Upskill teachers on the local labour market and/or vocational routes into employment
 - Facilitate engagement between schools and employers
- **Any previous role for Jobcentre Plus in engaging with / supporting their school**

4 Process of engagement with Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the process that took place when the Jobcentre Plus SfS program was set-up – this section should be used flexibly and responsively to reflect the experiences of the interviewee – as far as possible, keep the discussion grounded through use of concrete examples*

- **Getting in contact with Jobcentre Plus**

- How they found out about Jobcentre Plus SfS
- How their schools engaged with Jobcentre Plus staff
 - Meetings
 - Emails
 - Calls
- Who drove these connections / made the initial approach
 - Jobcentre Plus staff
 - School staff
 - CEC
 - Other local partners
- How (if at all) pre-existing connections between Jobcentre Plus and schools shaped implementation

- **Demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus SfS:**

- How much demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus support there was in their school when they first became aware of the programme.
- How Jobcentre Plus SfS sits alongside existing careers advice provision
- What specific factors / needs drove demand for Jobcentre Plus ScS in their school
 - Need for labour market advice
 - Need for work experience brokering
 - Need for engagement with employers
 - Need for advice re: traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Need for specific types of support for particular groups of staff / students
(researcher note: please check which types of support – from probes above – were felt to meet particular groups' needs)
 - Other factors / needs

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- **Support options discussed:**

- What specific types of support they hoped to receive from Jobcentre Plus
 - Support for staff
 - Support for students
 - Support for specific groups
- What support was offered by Jobcentre Plus – how this aligned with expectations
 - Any concerns about gaps in support being offered
 - Other concerns / issues with support
- Outcome of discussions with Jobcentre Plus staff about potential options
- Any need for tailoring of support to their particular needs
- How partners would be involved
 - CEC
 - Other local partners (e.g. National Apprenticeship Service; National Career Service)

- **Their expectations of the impact of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools**

- What benefits/outcomes they expect it will have (if any)
 - Short term: 6 months' time
 - Longer term: A year's time / after students leave school

5 Experience of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools activities (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand experiences of Jobcentre Plus SfS since it has gone live – in order to draw out lessons about best practice*

• Jobcentre Plus support delivered

- What are the range of activities that have been delivered in their school
 - Receiving advice on routes into traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Work experience opportunities
 - Receiving advice on the local labour market
 - Receiving ‘soft skills’ training/guidance
 - In-school presentation
 - Other
- Who has participated in the activities
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Particular groups of students (e.g. low attainment, less engaged)
 - Involvement of CEC / LEP / other partners
 - Parents
- Why these activities were undertaken
 - Who proposed them / chose them
 - How participants were selected
- How these activities were delivered (e.g. group session, one to one, on-site/off-site)
 - Effectiveness of Jobcentre Plus staff in organising and delivering activities
 - Any challenges to delivering activity
 - Anything on organisation and delivery that’s gone particularly well, or not
 - Involvement of CEC / LEP / other partners

• Changes since the pathfinder stage of Jobcentre Plus SfS

- Check whether school received support in 2016
- Any differences in how support delivered since programme introduced
 - Whether these changes came about as a result of conversations between their school and Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- **Contacts with employers**

- How (if at all) employers have been involved in activities delivered in their school
 - Providing work experience placements
 - Involvement in presentations / workshop sessions
 - Other involvement
- How they engaged with employers
 - Phone call / face to face meetings
 - Role of Jobcentre Plus in facilitating this
- How far contact with employers has met expectations
 - Challenges of engaging with employers
 - Things that have gone well

- **Interviewee/staff experiences**

- How far support delivered met with demand / expectations
 - Any particularly successful aspects of the programme
 - Any disappointments / things that did not meet expectations
 - Any aspects of the programme that have not been delivered yet
 - Which support that has not yet been delivered they are most keen to see in future
- How the interventions 'fit' alongside existing school careers advice

- **Perception of students' experiences**

- How students responded to interventions delivered
 - Any particularly successful aspects of the programme
 - Any disappointments / things that did not meet expectations

6 Outcomes and impacts of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools activities (10 mins)

Section aim: *To understand impact of Jobcentre Plus SfS – in order to draw out examples and evidence of the outcomes of the programme*

• **Observed outcomes / benefits of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools**

- What (if any) outcomes/benefits have been observed so far
 - How have they measured these impacts
 - Any distinction between outcomes / benefits at pathfinder stage (if relevant) and from more recent activity
- How far (if at all) working with Jobcentre Plus has facilitated access to careers information advice and guidance
- How far (if at all) working with Jobcentre Plus has simplified the careers information advice and guidance landscape
- Overall effect of engaging with programme on their school and students
- Timescale of outcomes / benefits
 - How long it has taken / they expect it will take to achieve outcomes

• **Case studies / examples of impact**

- Probe for **specific examples** of how these outcomes/benefits have come about. For staff or for students?
 - (and/or examples of where challenges/barriers have prevented outcomes)
 - Any examples that highlight differences / progress between pathfinder activity and current activity

7 Concluding the interview (5 minutes)

Section aim: *Wind down the interview, provide the opportunity for participants to share anything they have yet to, capture any messages for DWP and/or other Schools, and express gratitude and complete remaining housekeeping tasks.*

- **Expectations of continued engagement with Jobcentre Plus**
 - Are they likely to continue receiving further support from Jobcentre Plus
 - Do they have existing plans for further engagement with Jobcentre Plus
 - Any expectations of how support from Jobcentre Plus is likely to change / evolve
- **Key lessons learned** in relation to the implementation of DWP SfS within their school
- **Suggestions for learning** for Jobcentre Plus that could apply in their school or other schools
- **Any changes in perceptions of Jobcentre Plus**
- **Any further comments or reflections?**
- **Thanks, and final housekeeping** (reminder of confidentiality and anonymity)

Appendix B: Jobcentre Plus Advisor (Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

In order to achieve the aims for this evaluation the research will need to:

- Understand the needs, motivations and expectations of schools and employers that participate in the programme
- Identify the barriers and facilitators to school and employer engagement in the programme, and to student engagement in specific activity
- Explore the experiences of students, teaching staff, senior leaders, JCP advisors, intermediaries and employers both in relation to the process for organising and coordinating support and the support itself
- Distinguish how the JCP support differentiates/adds value over and above support already available
- Identify what successful outcomes and best practice look like from the perspective of different stakeholders, examples of where this has been achieved, and opportunities for improving the management or delivery of the programme to support future implementation success
- Map the uptake of work experience opportunities being facilitated through the programme including the types of students, schools and employers involved
- Draw conclusions on those factors that can support uptake and effective delivery.

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- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording
- If the interviewee asks about Kantar undertaking government research during the pre-2017 election period ('purdah'), then explain that approval has been obtained from DWP Head of Social Research to continue with this research during this period.

1 Introduction (1 minute)

Section aim: *To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer reassurances to minimise concerns and encourage an open and honest discussion, and offer participant a chance to ask questions before the interview starts.*

- **Thanks & introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar Public – reminder of previous research in July/August 2016, and check if participant was interviewed previously
- **Purpose & length of interview:** Undertaking research, on behalf of DWP, to evaluate the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools program, the general purpose of the interview and how their information will be used, the interview lasts up to 60 minutes
- **Specify timeframe:** Clarify (if necessary) that this stage of the research should be focused on the current state of implementation of the programme, not at the time of the Pathfinder – aside from highlighting any key changes
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, consent to record
- Any **questions/concerns** before starting?

-Start recording-

2 Background and Context (2 mins)

Section aim: Establish the participants' role and remit, in order to build rapport and to inform understanding of their experience of the programme

- **Day-to-day activities:** participant's roles and responsibilities (capture current role and any secondary roles), previous roles – including any substantial changes since previous interview (if relevant)
- **Professional background:** time in current role; previous roles
 - **Nature of their current role:** do they only work as a Jobcentre Plus SfS Schools Advisor do they split their time as a Work Coach
- **Involvement in the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme:** their connection to the programme; the extent of their involvement
- **Jobcentre Plus's previous experience of engaging with / supporting schools in their district (if any):**
 - Any previous engagements between Jobcentre Plus and schools

3 District implementation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (10 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the specific way in which Jobcentre Plus SfS has been implemented within the local area*

- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**
 - Their spontaneous understanding of Jobcentre Plus SfS
 - Their understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus SfS programme
 - Any changes as a result of taking part in the Pathfinder process
 - Range of support they are offering in their district
(researcher note: only probe if needed – respond to participants' spontaneous explanation)
 - Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students
 - Providing advice on traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Facilitating work experience placements
 - Provide advice on local labour market
 - Improve students 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
 - Upskill teachers on the local labour market and/or vocational routes into employment
 - Facilitate engagement between schools and employers
 - Any particular activities they are focusing on providing in their district
 - Has pre-programme activity/engagement influenced types of activities focussed on?
- **Resource for Jobcentre Plus SfS in their district:**
 - Number of advisors involved in the programme in their district
 - How workload is currently split among staff (i.e. are all staff FTE, or are some part-time)
 - Where advisors are based
 - How much of the district (in geographical terms) they are able to service
 - District wide
 - Part coverage
 - How this changed or was adapted (if at all) based on the Pathfinder process
- **Training and support for Jobcentre Plus SfS staff:**
 - Experiences of training provided as part of the national rollout of Jobcentre Plus SfS
 - Usefulness of guidance materials provided
 - Line management structures for Jobcentre Plus SfS staff in their district
 - Provision of training to staff locally in order to deliver Jobcentre Plus SfS
 - What this training involved
 - Why this training was require
 - Key aspects of the programme that required additional training
 - Any learnings from the Pathfinder process that were incorporated

4 Engaging with schools (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the process that took place when discussing Jobcentre Plus Sfs with schools – this section should be used flexibly and responsively to reflect the experiences of the interviewee – as far as possible, **keep the discussion grounded through use of concrete examples***

• Making contact with schools

- What activity does district undertake to promote the programme
- Range of approaches used to engage schools
- How the Jobcentre Plus staff engaged with schools
 - Meetings
 - Emails
 - Calls
- How schools have been selected for involvement
- Who drove these connections / made the initial approach
 - Who have been the key point(s) of contact within schools
 - Involvement of CEC
 - Involvement of other local partners
- Types of schools that have been approached for involvement in the programme
 - Demographics of students
- How (if at all) pre-existing connections between Jobcentre Plus and schools shaped approach to engaging schools
- How Pathfinder activities have informed these processes

• Demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus Sfs:

- How much demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus support
 - From schools
 - From CEC/LEP
- How demand has changed (increased/decreased) since Pathfinder activity
 - Whether Pathfinder activity has directly influenced level of demand
- What specific factors / needs have driven demand by schools for Jobcentre Plus ScS in their area (*for each of these, need to understand which needs apply for which audiences: staff / students (any types? e.g. lower sets) / particular year groups / particular types of schools*)
 - Need for labour market advice
 - Need for work experience brokering
 - Need for employer engagement
 - Need for advice re: traineeships and Apprenticeships

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- Other, such as advice on CV, interview techniques, etc
- Need for certain groups (students/staff)
- Disengagement/disinterest from schools experienced
 - What factors have driven disengagement / disinterest
- Any perceived differences between those schools who are interested in engaging with Jobcentre Plus and those who are not
- **Support options discussed with schools:**
 - What specific types of support schools wanted to receive from Jobcentre Plus
 - Support for staff
 - Support for students
 - Support for specific groups
 - How this aligned with Jobcentre Plus's expectations / ability to provide support
 - Any demands that it was not possible to meet
 - How conversations/connections with schools informed the implementation of activities
 - How much tailoring has been needed across different schools when delivering interventions
 - How Pathfinder activity has informed discussions about support options
- **Implications of demand and resourcing:**
 - Ability of Jobcentre Plus resource to meet demand from schools / others
 - How demand has affected activities delivered
 - How resource has been deployed / prioritised in order to meet demand
 - Where demand has not been met, the reasons for this
 - Lack of resource
 - Geographical limitations (e.g. only have staff coverage in certain areas)
 - Staff capability

5 Working with partners (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand how Jobcentre Plus SfS staff have worked alongside partners from CEC and employers in order to deliver the programme*

- **Working alongside Careers & Enterprise Company / Local Enterprise Partnership/ other local partners**
 - When/if CEC and Jobcentre Plus started coordinating
 - How this coordination has worked
 - Who the primary contact at CEC has been
 - Channels of communication (e.g. f2f meeting vs. telephone)
 - What both parties wanted/expected from each other
 - Successful aspects of this coordination
 - Any challenges or areas for improvement
 - Any other local partners (e.g. local authority, Local Enterprise Partnership) involved
 - How these relationships have developed as a result of / subsequent to Pathfinder
- **Engaging with employers**
 - How employers were involved in the programme
 - Interest of employers in being involved in the programme
 - Approaches used to secure employer involvement
 - What support employers have provided
 - Challenges to involvement, challenges getting employers to provide support wanted
 - Any learnings from the Pathfinder experiences – and application of these

6 Outcomes and impacts of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools activities (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand experiences of Jobcentre Plus SfS since it has gone live – in order to draw out lessons about best practice – this section should be used flexibly and responsively to reflect the experiences of the interviewee – as far as possible, **keep the discussion grounded through use of concrete examples***

- **Activities that have been undertaken as part of the programme**

- What are the range of activities they have undertaken (for each of these, need to understand which audiences have been engaged: staff / students / particular year groups/particular types of schools/particular types of students)

- Providing advice on routes into traineeships and Apprenticeships
- Sourcing and advising on work experience opportunities
- Providing advice on the local labour market
- Providing 'soft skills' training/guidance
- In-school presentation, advice sessions
- Facilitating engagement with employers
- Other

- Why these activities were undertaken

- Who proposed them / chose them

- How these activities were delivered

- Group sessions, one to ones etc
- Any challenges to delivery
- How well did you feel prepared/fully trained?
- Any training needs for staff that emerged
- Anything that's gone particularly well, not well
- Any learnings from the Pathfinder process and application of these

- **Working with schools/students**

- How schools/students responded to interventions delivered. Successes?

- Any particular challenges to working with schools/ students

- **Observed outcomes / benefits of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools**

- What (if any) outcomes/benefits have been observed so far

- How have they measured these impacts
- Any distinction between outcomes / benefits at pathfinder stage (if relevant) and from more recent activity

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- How far (if at all) working with Jobcentre Plus has facilitated access to careers information advice and guidance
- How far (if at all) working with Jobcentre Plus has simplified the careers information advice and guidance landscape
- Overall effect of engaging with programme on their school and students
- Timescale of outcomes / benefits
 - How long it has taken / they expect it will take to achieve outcomes

7 Concluding the interview (2 minutes)

Section aim: *Wind down the interview, provide the opportunity for participants to share anything they have yet to, capture any messages for DWP and/or other Districts, and express gratitude and complete remaining housekeeping tasks.*

- Summary of programme successes and areas for improvement
- **Key lessons learned** in relation to the implementation of DWP SfS within their District
- **Suggestions for learning** that could apply to other districts
- Any **further comments or reflections?**
- **Thanks, and final housekeeping** (reminder of confidentiality and anonymity)

Appendix C: CEC / Other Partner (Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

In order to achieve the aims for this evaluation the research will need to:

- Understand the needs, motivations and expectations of schools and employers that participate in the programme
- Identify the barriers and facilitators to school and employer engagement in the programme, and to student engagement in specific activity
- Explore the experiences of students, teaching staff, senior leaders, JCP advisors, intermediaries and employers both in relation to the process for organising and coordinating support and the support itself
- Distinguish how the JCP support differentiates/adds value over and above support already available
- Identify what successful outcomes and best practice look like from the perspective of different stakeholders, examples of where this has been achieved, and opportunities for improving the management or delivery of the programme to support future implementation success
- Map the uptake of work experience opportunities being facilitated through the programme including the types of students, schools and employers involved
- Draw conclusions on those factors that can support uptake and effective delivery.

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of Kantar Public, an independent research agency
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording
- If the interviewee asks about Kantar undertaking government research during the pre-2017 election period ('purdah'), then explain that approval has been obtained from DWP Head of Social Research to continue with this research during this period.

1 Introduction (2 minutes)

Section aim: *To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer reassurances to minimise concerns and encourage an open and honest discussion, and offer participant a chance to ask questions before the interview starts.*

- **Thanks & introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar Public – reminder of previous research in July/August 2016, and check if participant was interviewed previously
- **Purpose & length of interview:** Undertaking research, on behalf of DWP, to evaluate the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools program, the general purpose of the interview and how their information will be used, the interview lasts up to 45 minutes
- **Specify timeframe:** Clarify (if necessary) that this stage of the research should be focused on the current state of implementation of the programme, not at the time of the Pathfinder – aside from highlighting any key changes
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, consent to record
- Any **questions/concerns** before starting?

-Start recording-

2 Background and Context (3 mins)

Section aim: *Establish the participants' role and remit, in order to build rapport and to inform understanding of their experience of the programme*

- **Day-to-day activities:** participant's roles and responsibilities (capture current role and any secondary roles e.g. coordinator or advisor), previous roles
- **Background to their organisation:**
 - How many staff involved in careers education work (e.g. for CEC, coordinators and advisors)
 - Where their organisation operates (e.g. regional vs. national)
 - Any other important background to their organisation
- **Professional background:** time in current role; previous roles
- **Involvement in the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme:** their connection to the programme; the extent of their involvement

3 Careers Education Landscape – The context for Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the historical careers advice context within their district, in order to understand what differentiates the Jobcentre Plus SfS offer.*

- **Careers advice in their district:**
 - Different sources of careers advice in their district
 - Which agencies/teams 'lead' on careers advice
- Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:
 - Their spontaneous understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus
 - Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students
 - Providing advice on traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Facilitating work experience placements
 - Provide advice on local labour market
 - Improve students 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
- **How Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools sits within CEC local careers education landscape:**
 - What Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools offers that is new
 - How Jobcentre Plus SfS sits alongside existing careers advice provision

4 Collaborating with Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (10 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the process that took place when the Jobcentre Plus SfS program was set-up – this section should be used flexibly and responsively to reflect the experiences of the interviewee – as far as possible, **keep the discussion grounded through use of concrete examples***

- **Getting in contact with Jobcentre Plus**

- Who drove connections between Jobcentre Plus and their organisation / made the initial approach
 - Jobcentre Plus staff
 - Their staff
 - Other local bodies
- What both parties wanted/expected from each other
 - Nature of initial interest from both parties
- How (if at all) their existing work as an organisation affected engagement/involvement with Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools
 - How Jobcentre Plus has linked into / adapted based on their activities/procedures

- **Engagement with Jobcentre Plus SfS:**

- How much interest in engaging with Jobcentre Plus SfS there was when the programme began in their district
 - From their organisation
 - From schools
 - From employers
- What specific factors / needs have driven engagement with Jobcentre Plus SfS in their area
 - Need for labour market advice
 - Need for work experience brokering
 - Need for advice re: traineeships and Apprenticeships

- **Changes since the pathfinder stage of Jobcentre Plus SfS**

- Check whether they were involved in pathfinder stage of programme in 2016
- Any differences in how support delivered since programme introduced
 - Whether these changes came about as a result of conversations between CEC and Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- **Their initial involvement in supporting Jobcentre Plus SfS** – *allow participant to describe the process and be responsive to their indication of key steps when following up on specifics*
 - How initial approach was determined / decided
 - Key steps taken initially to support the program
 - Selection of schools
 - Liaising with schools / referring schools to Jobcentre Plus
 - Guiding / determining types of support Jobcentre Plus should offer
 - Other support for Jobcentre Plus staff
 - What resources used
 - Timeframe of involvement
- **Ongoing involvement**
 - Steps to provide on-going support to the program
 - Selection of schools
 - Liaising with schools / referring schools to Jobcentre Plus
 - Guiding / determining types of support Jobcentre Plus should offer
 - Other support for Jobcentre Plus staff
 - What resources used
 - Timeframe of involvement

5 Experience of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools activities (10 mins)

Section aim: *To understand experiences of Jobcentre Plus SfS since it has gone live – in order to draw out lessons about best practice*

- **Activities that their organisation has been involved in as part of the programme**
 - What involvement (if any) they've had in activities undertaken by Jobcentre Plus
 - Jobcentre Plus providing advice on routes into traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Jobcentre Plus sourcing and advising on work experience opportunities
 - Jobcentre Plus providing advice on the local labour market
 - Jobcentre Plus providing 'soft skills' training/guidance
 - Jobcentre Plus in-school presentation
 - Other
 - How these Jobcentre Plus SfS were delivered
 - Group sessions, one to ones etc
 - Any challenges to delivery
 - Anything that's gone particularly well, not well
- **Perceptions of schools/students reception of Jobcentre Plus SfS**
 - (If they have any knowledge of this) How schools/students have responded to interventions delivered
 - Their views on whether the children involved in activities have been 'the right ones' (i.e. those at greatest risk of becoming NEET)
- **How effectively Jobcentre Plus SfS has worked alongside their organisation**
 - How far Jobcentre Plus SfS has fitted into the 'gaps' identified prior to programme implementation
 - Their perceptions of how effective collaboration has been with Jobcentre Plus
 - What facilitated/prevented cooperation between them and Jobcentre Plus
 - Any challenges / areas for improvement
 - Anything that has worked particularly well
 - Overall effect of engaging with programme on their organisation

6 Concluding the interview (5 minutes)

Section aim: *Wind down the interview, provide the opportunity for participants to share anything they have yet to, capture any messages for DWP and/or other Districts, and express gratitude and complete remaining housekeeping tasks.*

- **Key lessons learned** in relation to the implementation of DWP SfS within their District
- **Suggestions for learning** that could apply to other districts
- **Any further comments or reflections?**
- **Thanks, and final housekeeping** (reminder of confidentiality and anonymity)

Appendix D: School Lead (Non-Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

In order to achieve the aims for this evaluation the research will need to:

- Understand the needs, motivations and expectations of schools and employers that participate in the programme
- Identify the barriers and facilitators to school and employer engagement in the programme, and to student engagement in specific activity
- Explore the experiences of students, teaching staff, senior leaders, JCP advisors, intermediaries and employers both in relation to the process for organising and coordinating support and the support itself
- Distinguish how the JCP support differentiates/adds value over and above support already available
- Identify what successful outcomes and best practice look like from the perspective of different stakeholders, examples of where this has been achieved, and opportunities for improving the management or delivery of the programme to support future implementation success
- Map the uptake of work experience opportunities being facilitated through the programme including the types of students, schools and employers involved
- Draw conclusions on those factors that can support uptake and effective delivery.

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of Kantar Public, an independent research agency
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording
- If the interviewee asks about Kantar undertaking government research during the pre-2017 election period ('purdah'), then explain that approval has been obtained from DWP Head of Social Research to continue with this research during this period.

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

1 Introduction (2 minutes)

Section aim: *To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer reassurances to minimise concerns and encourage an open and honest discussion, and offer participant a chance to ask questions before the interview starts.*

- **Thanks & introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar Public
- **Purpose & length of interview:** Undertaking research, on behalf of DWP, to evaluate the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools program, the general purpose of the interview and how their information will be used, the interview lasts up to 45 minutes
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, consent to record
- Any **questions/concerns** before starting?

-Start recording-

2 Background and Context (3 mins)

Section aim: *Establish the participants' role and remit, in order to build rapport and to inform understanding of their experience of the programme*

- **Day-to-day activities:** participant's roles and responsibilities at their school (capture current role and any secondary roles)
- **Professional background:** time in current role; previous roles
- **Specific involvement in provision of careers education**
 - how wider school careers education provision is staffed and provided
 - what their personal responsibilities are in relation to school's wider careers provision – do they have lead responsibility for careers provision in their school, or do they share this with others (if so, who); what proportion of their workload is dedicated to careers provision
- **Profile of their school:** what kind of families they work with; proportion of children at risk of becoming NEET

3 The context for Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (5 mins)

Section aim: *To understand school lead's perspective on the historical careers advice context within their school, in order to understand how Jobcentre Plus SfS offer has fitted in to this*

- **Careers education in their district:**
 - Different sources of careers education in their district
 - Which agencies are used to provide careers education in the school
 - Any ethos/principles guiding the school's careers education policies (e.g. Gatsby Benchmarks)
 - Any unmet need for specific types of careers education.
 - Overall summary of the 'need' for careers advice in their school
- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**
 - Their spontaneous understanding of Jobcentre Plus SfS
 - Key elements of Jobcentre Plus SfS – 'what it is'
 - Their understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus – 'what it is trying to do'
(Researcher Note: probe only as necessary – keep in mind section timing)
 - Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students
 - Providing advice on traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Facilitating work experience placements
 - Provide advice on local labour market
 - Improve students' 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
 - Enhance students' understanding of available options
 - Facilitate transition from school to work, training or further study
 - Upskill teachers on the local labour market and/or vocational routes into employment
 - Facilitate engagement between schools and employers
 - Any previous role for Jobcentre Plus in engaging with / supporting their school

4 Process of engagement with Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the process that took place when the Jobcentre Plus SfS program was set-up – this section should be used flexibly and responsively to reflect the experiences of the interviewee – as far as possible, keep the discussion grounded through use of concrete examples*

- **Getting in contact with Jobcentre Plus**

- How they found out about Jobcentre Plus SfS
- How their schools engaged with Jobcentre Plus staff
 - Meetings
 - Emails
 - Calls
- Who drove these connections / made the initial approach
 - Jobcentre Plus staff
 - School staff
 - CEC
 - Other local partners
- How (if at all) pre-existing connections between Jobcentre Plus and schools shaped implementation

- **Demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus SfS:**

- How much demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus support there was in their school when they first became aware of the programme.
- How Jobcentre Plus SfS sits alongside existing careers advice provision
- What specific factors / needs drove demand for Jobcentre Plus ScS in their school
 - Need for labour market advice
 - Need for work experience brokering
 - Need for engagement with employers
 - Need for advice re: traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Need for specific types of support for particular groups of staff / students
(researcher note: please check which types of support – from probes above – were felt to meet particular groups' needs)
 - Other factors / needs

- **Support options discussed:**

- What specific types of support they hoped to receive from Jobcentre Plus
 - Support for staff
 - Support for students
 - Support for specific groups

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- What support was offered by Jobcentre Plus – how this aligned with expectations
 - Any concerns about gaps in support being offered
 - Other concerns / issues with support
- Outcome of discussions with Jobcentre Plus staff about potential options
- Any need for tailoring of support to their particular needs
- How partners would be involved
 - CEC
 - Other local partners (e.g. National Apprenticeship Service; National Career Service)
- **Their expectations of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools**
 - What benefits/outcomes they expect it will have (if any)
 - Short term: 6 months' time
 - Longer term: A year's time / after students leave school

5 Experience of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools activities (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand experiences of Jobcentre Plus SfS since it has gone live – in order to draw out lessons about best practice*

• Jobcentre Plus support delivered

- What are the range of activities that have been delivered in their school
 - Receiving advice on routes into traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Work experience opportunities
 - Receiving advice on the local labour market
 - Receiving ‘soft skills’ training/guidance
 - In-school presentation
 - Other
- Who has participated in the activities
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Particular groups of students (e.g. low attainment, less engaged)
 - Involvement of CEC / LEP / other partners
 - Parents
- Why these activities were undertaken
 - Who proposed them / chose them
 - How participants were selected
- How these activities were delivered (e.g. group session, one to one, on-site/off-site)
 - Effectiveness of Jobcentre Plus staff in organising and delivering activities
 - Any challenges to delivering activity
 - Anything on organisation and delivery that’s gone particularly well, or not
 - Involvement of CEC / LEP / other partners

• Contacts with employers

- How (if at all) employers have been involved in activities delivered in their school
 - Providing work experience placements
 - Involvement in presentations / workshop sessions
 - Other involvement
- How they engaged with employers
 - Phone call / face to face meetings
 - Role of Jobcentre Plus in facilitating this

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- How far contact with employers has met expectations
 - Challenges of engaging with employers
 - Things that have gone well
- **Interviewee/staff experiences**
 - How far support delivered met with demand / expectations
 - Any particularly successful aspects of the programme
 - Any disappointments / things that did not meet expectations
 - Any aspects of the programme that have not been delivered yet
 - Which support that has not yet been delivered they are most keen to see in future
 - How the interventions ‘fit’ alongside existing school careers advice
- **Perception of students’ experiences**
 - How students responded to interventions delivered
 - Any particularly successful aspects of the programme
 - Any disappointments / things that did not meet expectations
- **Observed outcomes / benefits of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools so far**
 - What (if any) outcomes/benefits have been observed so far
 - How far (if at all) working with Jobcentre Plus has facilitated access to careers information advice and guidance
 - How far (if at all) working with Jobcentre Plus has simplified the careers information advice and guidance landscape
 - Probe for **specific examples** of how these outcomes/benefits have come about DN. For staff or for students?
 - (and/or examples of where challenges/barriers have prevented outcomes)
 - Overall effect of engaging with programme on their school and students

6 Concluding the interview (5 minutes)

- **Section aim:** *Wind down the interview, provide the opportunity for participants to share anything they have yet to, capture any messages for DWP and/or other Schools, and express gratitude and complete remaining housekeeping tasks.*
- **Expectations of continued engagement with Jobcentre Plus**
 - Are they likely to continue receiving further support from Jobcentre Plus
 - Do they have existing plans for further engagement with Jobcentre Plus
 - Any expectations of how support from Jobcentre Plus is likely to change / evolve
- **Key lessons learned** in relation to the implementation of DWP SfS within their school
- **Suggestions for learning** for Jobcentre Plus that could apply in their school or other schools
- Any **changes in perceptions of Jobcentre Plus**
- Any **further comments or reflections?**
- **Thanks, and final housekeeping** (reminder of confidentiality and anonymity)

Appendix E: Jobcentre Plus Advisor (Non-Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

In order to achieve the aims for this evaluation the research will need to:

- Understand the needs, motivations and expectations of schools and employers that participate in the programme
- Identify the barriers and facilitators to school and employer engagement in the programme, and to student engagement in specific activity
- Explore the experiences of students, teaching staff, senior leaders, JCP advisors, intermediaries and employers both in relation to the process for organising and coordinating support and the support itself
- Distinguish how the JCP support differentiates/adds value over and above support already available
- Identify what successful outcomes and best practice look like from the perspective of different stakeholders, examples of where this has been achieved, and opportunities for improving the management or delivery of the programme to support future implementation success
- Map the uptake of work experience opportunities being facilitated through the programme including the types of students, schools and employers involved
- Draw conclusions on those factors that can support uptake and effective delivery.

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of Kantar Public, an independent research agency
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording
- If the interviewee asks about Kantar undertaking government research during the pre-2017 election period ('purdah'), then explain that approval has been obtained from DWP Head of Social Research to continue with this research during this period.

1 Introduction (1 minute)

Section aim: *To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer reassurances to minimise concerns and encourage an open and honest discussion, and offer participant a chance to ask questions before the interview starts.*

- **Thanks & introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar Public
- **Purpose & length of interview:** Undertaking research, on behalf of DWP, to evaluate the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools program, the general purpose of the interview and how their information will be used, the interview lasts up to 60 minutes
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, consent to record
- Any **questions/concerns** before starting?

-Start recording-

2 Background and Context (2 mins)

Section aim: *Establish the participants' role and remit, in order to build rapport and to inform understanding of their experience of the programme*

- **Day-to-day activities:** participant's roles and responsibilities (capture current role and any secondary roles), previous roles
- **Professional background:** time in current role; previous roles
 - Nature of their current role: do they only work as a Jobcentre Plus SfS Schools Advisor do they split their time as a Work Coach
- **Involvement in the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme:** their connection to the programme; the extent of their involvement
- **Jobcentre Plus's previous experience of engaging with / supporting schools in their district (if any):**
 - Any previous engagements between Jobcentre Plus and schools

3 District implementation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (10 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the specific way in which Jobcentre Plus SfS has been implemented within the local area*

- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**
 - Their spontaneous understanding of Jobcentre Plus SfS
 - Their understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus SfS programme
 - Range of support they are offering in their district
(researcher note: only probe if needed – respond to participants' spontaneous explanation)
 - Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students
 - Providing advice on traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Facilitating work experience placements
 - Provide advice on local labour market
 - Improve students 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
 - Upskill teachers on the local labour market and/or vocational routes into employment
 - Facilitate engagement between schools and employers
 - Any particular activities they have focused on providing in their district
 - Has pre-programme activity/engagement influenced types of activities focussed on?
- **Resource for Jobcentre Plus SfS in their district:**
 - Number of advisors involved in the programme in their district
 - How workload is split among staff (i.e. are all staff FTE, or are some part-time)
 - Where advisors are based
 - How much of the district (in geographical terms) they are able to service
 - District wide
 - Part coverage
- **Training and support for Jobcentre Plus SfS staff:**
 - Experiences of training provided as part of the national rollout of Jobcentre Plus SfS
 - Usefulness of guidance materials provided
 - Line management structures for Jobcentre Plus SfS staff in their district
 - Provision of training to staff locally in order to deliver Jobcentre Plus SfS
 - What this training involved
 - Why this training was required
 - Key aspects of the programme that required additional training

4 Engaging with schools (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the process that took place when discussing Jobcentre Plus SfS with schools – this section should be used flexibly and responsively to reflect the experiences of the interviewee – as far as possible, **keep the discussion grounded through use of concrete examples***

- **Making contact with schools**

- What activity does district undertake to promote the programme
- Range of approaches used to engage schools
- How the Jobcentre Plus staff engaged with schools
 - Meetings
 - Emails
 - Calls
- How schools have been selected for involvement
- Who drove these connections / made the initial approach
 - Who have been the key point(s) of contact within schools
 - Involvement of CEC
 - Involvement of other local partners
- Types of schools that have been approached for involvement in the programme
 - Demographics of students)
- How (if at all) pre-existing connections between Jobcentre Plus and schools shaped approach to engaging schools

- **Demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus SfS:**

- How much demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus support
 - From schools
 - From CEC/LEP
- What specific factors / needs have driven demand by schools for Jobcentre Plus ScS in their area (*for each of these, need to understand which needs apply for which audiences: staff / students (any types? e.g. lower sets) / particular year groups / particular types of schools*)
 - Need for labour market advice
 - Need for work experience brokering
 - Need for employer engagement
 - Need for advice re: traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Other, such as advice on CV, interview techniques, etc
 - Need for certain groups (students/staff)

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- Disengagement/disinterest from schools experienced
 - What factors have driven disengagement / disinterest
- Any perceived differences between those schools who are interested in engaging with Jobcentre Plus and those who are not
- **Support options discussed with schools:**
 - What specific types of support schools wanted to receive from Jobcentre Plus
 - Support for staff
 - Support for students
 - Support for specific groups
 - How this aligned with Jobcentre Plus's expectations / ability to provide support
 - Any demands that it was not possible to meet
 - How conversations/connections with schools informed the implementation of activities

How much tailoring has been needed across different schools when delivering interventions
- **Implications of demand and resourcing:**
 - Ability of Jobcentre Plus resource to meet demand from schools / others
 - How demand has affected activities delivered
 - How resource has been deployed / prioritised in order to meet demand
 - Where demand has not been met, the reasons for this
 - Lack of resource
 - Geographical limitations (e.g. only have staff coverage in certain areas)
 - Staff capability

5 Working with partners (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand how Jobcentre Plus SfS staff have worked alongside partners from CEC and employers in order to deliver the programme*

- **Working alongside Careers & Enterprise Company / Local Enterprise Partnership/ other local partners**
 - When/if CEC and Jobcentre Plus started coordinating
 - How this coordination has worked
 - Who the primary contact at CEC has been
 - Channels of communication (e.g. f2f meeting vs. telephone)
 - What both parties wanted/expected from each other
 - Successful aspects of this coordination
 - Any challenges or areas for improvement
 - Any other local partners (e.g. local authority, Local Enterprise Partnership) involved
- **Engaging with employers**
 - How employers were involved in the programme
 - Interest of employers in being involved in the programme
 - Approaches used to secure employer involvement
 - What support employers have provided
 - Challenges to involvement, challenges getting employers to provide support wanted.

6 Outcomes and impacts of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools activities (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand experiences of Jobcentre Plus SfS since it has gone live – in order to draw out lessons about best practice – this section should be used flexibly and responsively to reflect the experiences of the interviewee – as far as possible, **keep the discussion grounded through use of concrete examples***

- **Activities that have been undertaken as part of the programme**

- What are the range of activities they have undertaken (for each of these, need to understand which audiences have been engaged: staff / students / particular year groups/particular types of schools/particular types of students)
 - Providing advice on routes into traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Sourcing and advising on work experience opportunities
 - Providing advice on the local labour market
 - Providing ‘soft skills’ training/guidance
 - In-school presentation, advice sessions
 - Facilitating engagement with employers
 - Other
- Why these activities were undertaken
 - Who proposed them / chose them
- How these activities were delivered
 - Group sessions, one to ones etc
 - Any challenges to delivery
 - How well did you feel prepared/fully trained?
 - Any training needs for staff that emerged
 - Anything that’s gone particularly well, not well

- **Working with schools/students**

- How schools/students responded to interventions delivered. Successes?
- Any particular challenges to working with schools/ students

- **Observed outcomes / benefits of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools**

- What (if any) outcomes/benefits have been observed so far
 - How have they measured these impacts
 - Any distinction between outcomes / benefits at pathfinder stage (if relevant) and from more recent activity
- How far (if at all) working with Jobcentre Plus has facilitated access to careers information advice and guidance

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- How far (if at all) working with Jobcentre Plus has simplified the careers information advice and guidance landscape
- Overall effect of engaging with programme on their school and students
- Timescale of outcomes / benefits
 - How long it has taken / they expect it will take to achieve outcomes

7 Concluding the interview (2 minutes)

Section aim: *Wind down the interview, provide the opportunity for participants to share anything they have yet to, capture any messages for DWP and/or other Districts, and express gratitude and complete remaining housekeeping tasks.*

- Summary of programme successes and areas for improvement
- **Key lessons learned** in relation to the implementation of DWP SfS within their District
- **Suggestions for learning** that could apply to other districts
- Any **further comments or reflections?**
- **Thanks, and final housekeeping** (reminder of confidentiality and anonymity)

Appendix F: CEC / Other Partner (Non-Pathfinder) Topic Guide v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

In order to achieve the aims for this evaluation the research will need to:

- Understand the needs, motivations and expectations of schools and employers that participate in the programme
- Identify the barriers and facilitators to school and employer engagement in the programme, and to student engagement in specific activity
- Explore the experiences of students, teaching staff, senior leaders, JCP advisors, intermediaries and employers both in relation to the process for organising and coordinating support and the support itself
- Distinguish how the JCP support differentiates/adds value over and above support already available
- Identify what successful outcomes and best practice look like from the perspective of different stakeholders, examples of where this has been achieved, and opportunities for improving the management or delivery of the programme to support future implementation success
- Map the uptake of work experience opportunities being facilitated through the programme including the types of students, schools and employers involved
- Draw conclusions on those factors that can support uptake and effective delivery.

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of Kantar Public, an independent research agency
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording
- If the interviewee asks about Kantar undertaking government research during the pre-2017 election period ('purdah'), then explain that approval has been obtained from DWP Head of Social Research to continue with this research during this period.

1 Introduction (2 minutes)

Section aim: *To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer reassurances to minimise concerns and encourage an open and honest discussion, and offer participant a chance to ask questions before the interview starts.*

- **Thanks & introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar Public
- **Purpose & length of interview:** Undertaking research, on behalf of DWP, to evaluate the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools program, the general purpose of the interview and how their information will be used, the interview lasts up to 45 minutes
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, consent to record
- Any **questions/concerns** before starting?

-Start recording-

2 Background and Context (3 mins)

Section aim: *Establish the participants' role and remit, in order to build rapport and to inform understanding of their experience of the programme*

- **Day-to-day activities:** participant's roles and responsibilities (capture current role and any secondary roles e.g. coordinator or advisor), previous roles
- **Background to their organisation:**
 - How many staff involved in careers education work (e.g. for CEC, coordinators and advisors)
 - Where their organisation operates (e.g. regional vs. national)
 - Any other important background to their organisation
- **Professional background:** time in current role; previous roles
- **Involvement in the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme:** their connection to the programme; the extent of their involvement

3 Careers Education Landscape – The context for Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the historical careers advice context within their district, in order to understand what differentiates the Jobcentre Plus SfS offer.*

- **Careers advice in their district:**
 - Different sources of careers advice in their district
 - Which agencies/teams 'lead' on careers advice
- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**
 - Their spontaneous understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus
 - Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students
 - Providing advice on traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Facilitating work experience placements
 - Provide advice on local labour market
 - Improve students 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
- **How Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools sits within local careers education landscape:**
 - What Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools offers that is new
 - How Jobcentre Plus SfS sits alongside existing careers advice provision

4 Collaborating with Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (10 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the process that took place when the Jobcentre Plus SfS program was set-up – this section should be used flexibly and responsively to reflect the experiences of the interviewee – as far as possible, **keep the discussion grounded through use of concrete examples***

- **Getting in contact with Jobcentre Plus**

- Who drove connections between Jobcentre Plus and their organisation / made the initial approach
 - Jobcentre Plus staff
 - Their staff
 - Other local bodies
- What both parties wanted/expected from each other
 - Nature of initial interest from both parties
- How (if at all) their existing work as an organisation affected engagement/involvement with Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools
 - How (if at all) Jobcentre Plus has linked into / adapted based on their activities/ procedures

- **Engagement with Jobcentre Plus SfS:**

- How much interest in engaging with Jobcentre Plus SfS there was when the programme began in their district
 - From their organisation
 - From schools
 - From employers
- What specific factors / needs have driven engagement with Jobcentre Plus SfS in their area
 - Need for labour market advice
 - Need for work experience brokering
 - Need for advice re: traineeships and Apprenticeships

- **Their initial involvement in supporting Jobcentre Plus SfS** – *allow participant to describe the process and be responsive to their indication of key steps when following up on specifics*

- How initial approach was determined / decided
- Key steps taken initially to support the program
 - Selection of schools
 - Liaising with schools / referring schools to Jobcentre Plus
 - Guiding / determining types of support Jobcentre Plus should offer
 - Other support for Jobcentre Plus staff

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- What resources used
- Timeframe of involvement
- **Ongoing involvement**
 - Steps to provide on-going support to the program
 - Selection of schools
 - Liaising with schools / referring schools to Jobcentre Plus
 - Guiding / determining types of support Jobcentre Plus should offer
 - Other support for Jobcentre Plus staff
 - What resources used
 - Timeframe of involvement

5 Experience of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools activities (10 mins)

Section aim: *To understand experiences of Jobcentre Plus SfS since it has gone live – in order to draw out lessons about best practice*

- **Activities that their organisation has been involved in as part of the programme**
 - What involvement (if any) they've had in activities undertaken by Jobcentre Plus
 - Jobcentre Plus providing advice on routes into traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Jobcentre Plus sourcing and advising on work experience opportunities
 - Jobcentre Plus providing advice on the local labour market
 - Jobcentre Plus providing 'soft skills' training/guidance
 - Jobcentre Plus in-school presentation
 - Other
 - How these Jobcentre Plus SfS were delivered
 - Group sessions, one to ones etc
 - Any challenges to delivery
 - Anything that's gone particularly well, not well
- **Perceptions of schools/students reception of Jobcentre Plus SfS**
 - (If they have any knowledge of this) How schools/students have responded to interventions delivered
 - Their views on whether the children involved in activities have been 'the right ones' (i.e. those at greatest risk of becoming NEET)
- **How effectively Jobcentre Plus SfS has worked alongside their organisation**
 - How far Jobcentre Plus SfS has fitted into the 'gaps' identified prior to programme implementation
 - Their perceptions of how effective collaboration has been with Jobcentre Plus
 - What facilitated/prevented cooperation between them and Jobcentre Plus
 - Any challenges / areas for improvement
 - Anything that has worked particularly well
 - Overall effect of engaging with programme on their organisation

6 Concluding the interview (5 minutes)

Section aim: *Wind down the interview, provide the opportunity for participants to share anything they have yet to, capture any messages for DWP and/or other Districts, and express gratitude and complete remaining housekeeping tasks.*

- **Key lessons learned** in relation to the implementation of DWP SfS within their District
- **Suggestions for learning** that could apply to other districts
- Any **further comments or reflections?**
- **Thanks, and final housekeeping** (reminder of confidentiality and anonymity)

Appendix G: Employer Topic Guide v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

In order to achieve the aims for this evaluation the research will need to:

- Understand the needs, motivations and expectations of schools and employers that participate in the programme
- Identify the barriers and facilitators to school and employer engagement in the programme, and to student engagement in specific activity
- Explore the experiences of students, teaching staff, senior leaders, JCP advisors, intermediaries and employers both in relation to the process for organising and coordinating support and the support itself
- Distinguish how the JCP support differentiates/adds value over and above support already available
- Identify what successful outcomes and best practice look like from the perspective of different stakeholders, examples of where this has been achieved, and opportunities for improving the management or delivery of the programme to support future implementation success
- Map the uptake of work experience opportunities being facilitated through the programme including the types of students, schools and employers involved
- Draw conclusions on those factors that can support uptake and effective delivery.

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of Kantar Public, an independent research agency
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording
- If the interviewee asks about Kantar undertaking government research during the pre-2017 election period ('purdah'), then explain that approval has been obtained from DWP Head of Social Research to continue with this research during this period.

1 Introduction (2 minutes)

Section aim: *To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer reassurances to minimise concerns and encourage an open and honest discussion, and offer participant a chance to ask questions before the interview starts.*

- **Thanks & introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar Public
- **Purpose & length of interview:** Undertaking research, on behalf of DWP, to evaluate the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools program, the general purpose of the interview and how their information will be used, the interview lasts up to 30 minutes
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, consent to record
- Any **questions/concerns** before starting?

-Start recording-

2 Background and Context (2 mins)

Section aim: *Establish the participants' role and remit, in order to build rapport and to inform understanding of their experience of the programme*

- **Day-to-day activities:** participant's roles and responsibilities at their organisation (capture current role and any secondary roles)
- **Employer background;** sector, size of organisation.
- **Professional background:** time in current role; previous roles
- **Involvement in the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme:** their connection to the programme; the extent of their involvement

3 Employers Involvement in Careers Education for Schools (15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand employer's perspective on the Jobcentre Plus SfS program, and any historical involvement of their company with careers advice, in order to understand how Jobcentre Plus SfS offer has fitted in to this*

- **Historic involvement of their organisation with career education in schools:**
 - Any previous role for their organisation in relation to careers education
 - Any challenges / barriers to delivering careers education
 - Providing work experience placements
 - Working with Jobcentre Plus to provide careers education
 - Working with schools to provide careers education
 - Any other involvement in providing careers education
- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**
 - Their spontaneous understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus
 - Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students
 - Providing advice on traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Facilitating work experience placements
 - Provide advice on local labour market
 - Improve students 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
- **Nature of their existing / historical relationship with Jobcentre Plus**
 - How their organisation originally became engaged with Jobcentre Plus
 - Why this happened
 - Which area(s) of Jobcentre Plus they deal with
 - What was provided as a result (e.g. any training provision)
 - Organisation's on-going involvement with Jobcentre Plus
- **Getting in contact with Jobcentre Plus**
 - How they found out about Jobcentre Plus SfS
 - How their organisation engaged with Jobcentre Plus staff
 - Meetings
 - Emails
 - Calls
 - Who drove these connections / made the initial approach
 - Jobcentre Plus staff
 - Staff from their organisation

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

- Why Jobcentre Plus approached their organisation
 - Their perception of Jobcentre Plus's rationale for approaching them
- How (if at all) pre-existing connections with Jobcentre Plus shaped implementation
- **Demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus SfS:**
 - How much demand from schools for employer support through Jobcentre Plus SfS there is
 - Types of support demanded
 - Where support demanded
 - How many schools
 - Different types of schools
 - Factors driving this demand / lack of demand
 - How interested their organisation is in working with Jobcentre Plus SfS
 - Reasons for wanting to provide support
 - Demand from schools for organisation's support (more widely than Jobcentre Plus SfS)
- **Support options discussed:**
 - What support options they discussed providing with Jobcentre Plus
 - Support for staff
 - Support for students
 - Support for specific groups
 - Rationale for discussing these support options
 - Which support options felt to be most appropriate for different audiences

4 Experience of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools activities (10 mins)

Section aim: *To understand experiences of Jobcentre Plus SfS since it has gone live – in order to draw out lessons about best practice*

- **Activities that have been undertaken as part of the programme**
 - What are the range of activities they have undertaken (*for each of these, need to understand which audiences have been engaged: staff / students / particular year groups/particular types of schools/particular types of students*)
 - Engaging directly with students in schools
 - Work experience opportunities
 - In-school presentation, advice sessions
 - Other
 - Who has participated in the activities
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Particular groups of students (e.g. low attainment, less engaged)
 - Involvement of CEC / LEP / other partners
 - Why these activities were undertaken
 - Who proposed them / chose them
 - How these activities were delivered
 - Group sessions, one to ones etc.
 - Any challenges to delivery
 - Anything that's gone particularly well, not well
 - Involvement of CEC/LEP/other local partners
 - Overall effect of programme on their organisation's engagement with schools
 - How far these activities required Jobcentre Plus involvement
 - Need for Jobcentre Plus support to gain access to schools
 - How far Jobcentre Plus has addressed / mitigated pre-existing barriers to their organisation providing careers education
 - Need for Jobcentre Plus suggestions about potential activities
- **Perception of staff and students' experiences**
 - How students responded to interventions delivered
 - Any particularly successful aspects of the programme
 - Any disappointments / things that did not meet expectations
 - Benefits/ impacts on students

5 Concluding the interview (3 minutes)

Section aim: *Wind down the interview, provide the opportunity for participants to share anything they have yet to, capture any messages for DWP and/or other Schools, and express gratitude and complete remaining housekeeping tasks.*

- **Overall satisfaction** with their role in the Jobcentre Plus SfS programme
- **Key lessons learned** in relation to the implementation of DWP SfS for their organisation
- **Suggestions for learning** for Jobcentre Plus that could apply for engaging other organisations in providing careers education
- Any **further comments or reflections?**
- **Thanks, and final housekeeping** (reminder of confidentiality and anonymity)

Appendix H:

Student Topic Guide v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

In order to achieve the aims for this evaluation the research will need to:

- Understand the needs, motivations and expectations of schools and employers that participate in the programme
- Identify the barriers and facilitators to school and employer engagement in the programme, and to student engagement in specific activity
- Explore the experiences of students, teaching staff, senior leaders, JCP advisors, intermediaries and employers both in relation to the process for organising and coordinating support and the support itself
- Distinguish how the JCP support differentiates/adds value over and above support already available
- Identify what successful outcomes and best practice look like from the perspective of different stakeholders, examples of where this has been achieved, and opportunities for improving the management or delivery of the programme to support future implementation success
- Map the uptake of work experience opportunities being facilitated through the programme including the types of students, schools and employers involved
- Draw conclusions on those factors that can support uptake and effective delivery.

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of Kantar Public, an independent research agency
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording
- If the interviewee asks about Kantar undertaking government research during the pre-2017 election period ('purdah'), then explain that approval has been obtained from DWP Head of Social Research to continue with this research during this period.

1 Introduction (1 minute)

Section aim: *To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer reassurances to minimise concerns and encourage an open and honest discussion, and offer participant a chance to ask questions before the interview starts.*

- **Thanks & introduction:** Show consent flow diagram. Kantar Public is an independent research agency. We are working on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions to explore the impact of Job Centre Plus Support for Schools. As part of this research we are visiting 9 schools across England to talk with students who have been involved.
- **Clarify terminology:** Make sure participants are aware of what we mean by Job Centre Plus Support for Schools – and reflect their language if they have another way of describing the support received
- **Length of interview:** The discussion lasts up to 30 minutes
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, consent to record
- Any **questions/concerns** before starting?

-Start recording-

2 Background and Context (2 mins)

Section aim: *Build rapport and to inform understanding of participant's interest in and involvement with the programme*

- [Students are attending the discussion in friendship pairs] Ask them to introduce one another by saying what they like most and what they like least about school, and what they enjoy doing in their spare time
- Briefly explore experiences working with Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools
 - What sort of activities have they done
 - What have they enjoyed
 - What have they not enjoyed
- Have they been involved in anything similar to this (i.e. other careers related support) before at school or outside of school

3 Understanding the support delivered (10-15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand the specific way in which Jobcentre Plus SfS was implemented in their school*

- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**
 - Why do they think their school has asked Jobcentre Plus to work with their school/class
 - Elaborate if needed: What do they think the overall aim of the project is?
 - Their views of Jobcentre Plus and its brand
- **Description of the specific support that they received:**
 - When Jobcentre Plus first got involved with their school
 - How many times they've worked with Jobcentre Plus
 - Just once
 - Multiple times
 - Participants to describe the experience of the Jobcentre Plus support in their own words (*researcher note: only probe if needed – respond to participants' spontaneous explanation*)
 - Receiving advice on traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Receiving information on career options
 - Facilitating work experience placements
 - Receiving advice on local job market
 - Training on skills such as teamworking etc.
 - Engagements with employers (e.g. site visits, insights into industrial sectors, etc)
- **Exploring perceptions of support received:**
 - (Spontaneous) Participants' perceptions of the support
 - Examples of things that worked well / were good about the support
 - Examples of things that worked less well about the support
 - How the support provided has fit in with other activities / careers guidance at their school

4 Outcomes / impacts of Jobcentre Plus SfS (10-15 mins)

Section aim: *To understand any changes or impacts that have resulted from the support provided by Jobcentre Plus*

- Thinking back to before you received any support from Jobcentre Plus, do you feel your involvement in the project has had any impact on you? Prompts if necessary:
 - Do you feel any different towards your school/education? Explore
 - Have you been doing any better or worse in any particular subjects? Explore
 - More aware of careers options? Explore
 - More likely to seek out work experience / apprenticeship? Explore
 - Has it had any influence on what you want to do in the future (e.g. in relation to work or education)?
 - Have noticed any difference with your confidence? Or in trying new things?
 - Any other changes they've noticed
- Are there particular things about the work with Jobcentre Plus that you feel have helped the work have an impact for you?
- If no impacts identified, explore why people don't think the project has had an impact and what could be changed so it had more of an impact

5 Concluding the interview (2 minutes)

Section aim: *Wind down the interview, provide the opportunity for participants to share anything they have yet to, capture any messages for DWP and/or other Districts, and express gratitude and complete remaining housekeeping tasks.*

- Summary of programme successes and areas for improvement
- **Suggestions for learning** that could apply to other schools
- Any **further comments or reflections?**
- **Thanks, and final housekeeping** (reminder of confidentiality and anonymity)

Appendix I:

Non-participating Schools Topic Guide v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

In order to achieve the aims for this evaluation the research will need to:

- Understand the needs, motivations and expectations of schools and employers that participate in the programme
- Identify the barriers and facilitators to school and employer engagement in the programme, and to student engagement in specific activity
- Explore the experiences of students, teaching staff, senior leaders, JCP advisors, intermediaries and employers both in relation to the process for organising and coordinating support and the support itself
- Distinguish how the JCP support differentiates/adds value over and above support already available
- Identify what successful outcomes and best practice look like from the perspective of different stakeholders, examples of where this has been achieved, and opportunities for improving the management or delivery of the programme to support future implementation success
- Map the uptake of work experience opportunities being facilitated through the programme including the types of students, schools and employers involved
- Draw conclusions on those factors that can support uptake and effective delivery.

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of Kantar Public, an independent research agency
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording
- If the interviewee asks about Kantar undertaking government research during the pre-2017 election period ('purdah'), then explain that approval has been obtained from DWP Head of Social Research to continue with this research during this period.

Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools: National roll-out evaluation

1 Introduction (2 minutes)

Section aim: *To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer reassurances to minimise concerns and encourage an open and honest discussion, and offer participant a chance to ask questions before the interview starts.*

- **Thanks & introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar Public
- **Purpose & length of interview:** Undertaking research, on behalf of DWP, to evaluate the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools program, the general purpose of the interview and how their information will be used, the interview lasts up to 30 minutes
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, consent to record
- Any **questions/concerns** before starting?

-Start recording-

2 Background and Context (3 mins)

Section aim: *Establish the participants' role and remit, in order to build rapport and to inform understanding of their experience of the programme*

- **Day-to-day activities:** participant's roles and responsibilities at their school (capture current role and any secondary roles)
- **Professional background:** time in current role; previous roles
- **Specific involvement in provision of careers education**
 - how wider school careers education is staffed and provided – do they have lead responsibility for careers provision in their school, or do they share this with others (if so, who); what proportion of their workload is dedicated to careers provision
 - what their personal responsibilities are in relation to school's wider careers provision

Profile of their school: what kind of families they work with; proportion of children at risk of becoming NEET

3 The context for Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (7 mins)

Section aim: *To understand teacher's perspective on the historical careers advice context within their school, in order to understand how Jobcentre Plus SfS offer has fitted in to this*

- **Careers education in their district:**

- Different sources of careers education in their district
- Which agencies are used to provide careers education in the school
- Any ethos/principles guiding the school's careers education policies
- Overall summary of the 'need' for careers advice in their school
- Any unmet need for specific types of careers education.

- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**

- Their spontaneous understanding of Jobcentre Plus SfS
- Key elements of Jobcentre Plus SfS – 'what it is'
- Their understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus – 'what it is trying to do'
(*Researcher Note: probe only as necessary – keep in mind section timing*)
 - Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students
 - Providing advice on traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - Facilitating work experience placements
 - Provide advice on local labour market
 - Improve students 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
 - Enhance students' understanding of available options
 - Facilitate transition from school to work, training or further study
 - Upskill teachers on the local labour market and/or vocational routes into employment
 - Facilitate engagement between schools and employers

- **Existing career support context:**

- Any previous role for Jobcentre Plus in engaging with / supporting their school
 - If yes – why no participation this time.

4 Reasons for not engaging with Jobcentre Plus SfS (13 mins)

Section aim: *To understand rationale for not participating in the Jobcentre Plus SfS programme*

- **Getting in contact with Jobcentre Plus**

- How they found out about Jobcentre Plus SfS
- How their school communicated with Jobcentre Plus staff
 - Meetings
 - Emails
 - Calls
- Who drove these connections / made the initial approach
 - Jobcentre Plus staff
 - School staff
 - CEC
 - Other local partners

- **Demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus SfS:**

- How much demand for / interest in Jobcentre Plus careers advice / support there was in their school when they first became aware of the programme
- What careers education support they want / need at their school
 - Support for staff
 - Support for students
 - - Support for specific groups
- What support they were offered by Jobcentre Plus
 - How far Jobcentre Plus support met (or failed to meet) existing careers support needs
- Responses to Jobcentre Plus SfS offers (prompts below); why do / don't these resonate
 - Labour market advice
 - Work experience and employer engagement facilitation
 - Advice re: traineeships and Apprenticeships
 - -Advice on the 'soft skills' employers expect
- Factors driving lack of interest in the programme
 - Lack of time / capacity to include Jobcentre Plus into school activities
 - Lack of awareness of full range of Jobcentre Plus offer
 - Overlap with existing careers advice provision/similar support sourced elsewhere
 - Support not suitable for school/pupils
 - Timing of approach
 - Perceived ability of Jobcentre Plus to provide high quality support
 - Other reasons

5 Concluding the interview (5 minutes)

Section aim: *Wind down the interview, provide the opportunity for participants to share anything they have yet to, capture any messages for DWP and/or other Schools, and express gratitude and complete remaining housekeeping tasks.*

- **What Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools could do to engage their school**
 - Possibility of their school considering using Jobcentre Plus support in future
 - Any changes needed to Jobcentre Plus SfS to encourage participation
 - What key needs they have that Jobcentre Plus SfS could aim to address
 - How communication / engagement with schools by Jobcentre Plus could be improved
- **Suggestions for learning** for Jobcentre Plus that could apply in their school or other schools
- Any **further comments or reflections?**
- **Thanks, and final housekeeping** (reminder of confidentiality and anonymity)