



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Work Choice – for disabled people who
need extra support to find and stay in work

Checking how well Work Choice is doing



Easy Read

Important

This booklet tells you what we found out when we looked at Work Choice, the work-support system for disabled people to help them find and stay in work.

Green writing

In this Easy Read booklet we explain what some words mean.

The first time we mention any of these words, it is in **bold green** writing. We then write what the words mean in a blue box.

These words and what they mean are also in a words list at the back of the booklet.

If any of the words are used later in the booklet, we show them in **normal green** writing. If you see words in **normal green** writing, you can look up what they mean by looking for the blue box earlier in the booklet, or by looking at the Words List.

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CDS, 7 Eastgate, Leeds LS2 7LY

Tel: 0113 399 4000

Web: www.cds.co.uk/clarity

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About Work Choice

Work Choice is run by the Department for Work and Pensions to help disabled people find work and stay in work.

Work Choice

This is support for disabled people who need help to get and keep a job. For example, Work Choice can help disabled people learn new skills or find out what it is like to work. Work Choice can also support disabled people who already have a job.

Disabled people may get help from **Work Choice** if they cannot get the support they need from other work-support systems or from their **employer**.

Employer

This is a person or company that pays people to work for them.

Work Choice replaced WORKSTEP and Work Preparation from October 2010.

The Department for Work and Pensions has paid for some **research** to find out how well **Work Choice** has done since 2010.

Research or researchers

Research is work that is done to find out more about something. Researchers are the people that do this work.

This booklet is about what the **researchers** found out.

How the research was done

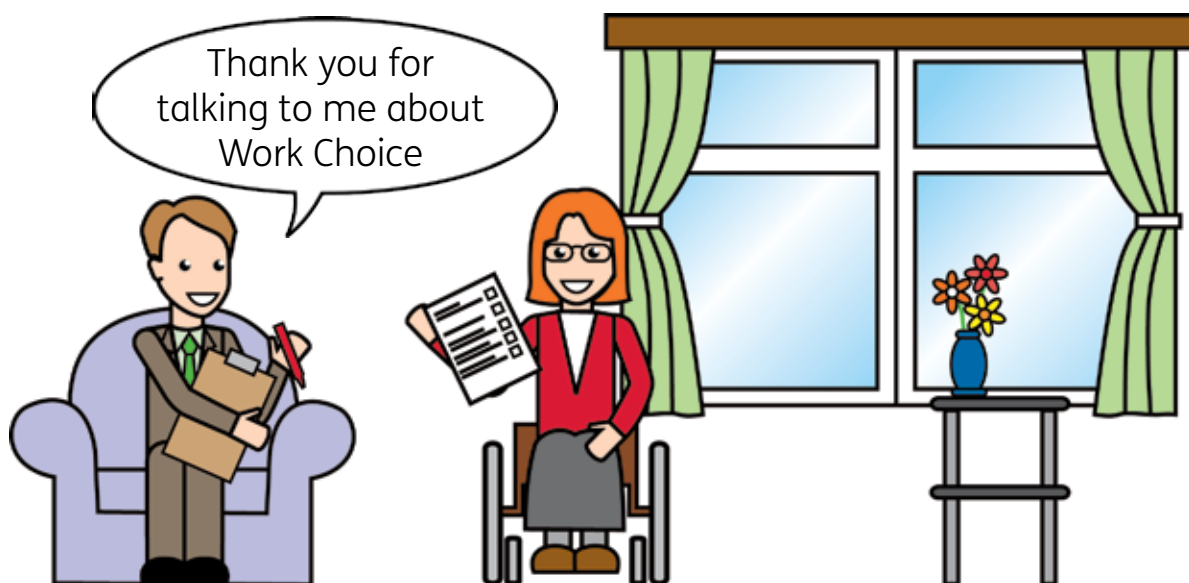
The **research** was done in 2 parts. First the **researchers** looked at how well **Work Choice** is doing. For example

- what makes it easier or harder for people to use **Work Choice**.
- what kind of people use **Work Choice**, and what kind of support works best for them.

They also looked at how the Department for Work and Pensions gets the support services it needs for **Work Choice** and how this affects its suppliers. This included things like

- the companies who supply support services to **Work Choice**.
- the way the Department for Work and Pensions checks and pays for the support services for **Work Choice**.

The **research** finished in January 2013. By then, the **researchers** had talked to 650 people, and 98 suppliers had done a survey which asked questions about what they thought of **Work Choice**.



How people get to use Work Choice

Most people get to use **Work Choice** through their **Disability Employment Adviser**.

Disability Employment Adviser

This is someone who works at the Jobcentre Plus office. Their job is to help disabled people find work or training.



The rules also allow groups called **Statutory Referral Organisations** to put people on **Work Choice**. This is mainly for people who may not go to the Jobcentre Plus office.

Statutory Referral Organisations

These are groups that work with disabled people. Examples of Statutory Referral Organisations are local councils or parts of the National Health Service.

The **research** found that many things can stop people getting onto **Work Choice**. For example, some **Disability Employment Advisers** and others thought that a disabled person must be able to work 16 hours a week within 6 months of joining **Work Choice**.

The Department for Work and Pensions has now made the rules clearer.

The **research** also found that only a few people get to use **Work Choice** through the **Statutory Referral Organisations**. This may mean that some people with the highest support needs do not have the chance to go on **Work Choice**.

Some disabled people on **Employment Support Allowance** had been put on the **Work Programme** even though they may need a lot of support to find and stay in work.

Employment and Support Allowance

This is a benefit for people with a disability or a health condition.

Work Programme

This gives support, training and work experience to help people find and stay in work. It is mainly for people who are not disabled and for disabled people who do not need a lot of support to find work and stay in work.

Many **Disability Employment Advisers** and suppliers did not know that the rules allow these people to move from the **Work Programme** onto **Work Choice** where they will get extra support.

Because of this, the **researchers** said the Department for Work and Pensions must be clearer about who can use **Work Choice**.

Support from Work Choice

Most people and **employers** who use **Work Choice** are happy with the support they get. Many disabled people said that **Work Choice** has helped them get and keep their jobs.

The **researchers** talked to many **Work Choice suppliers**, including some of the best suppliers, to find out what kind of support works best for **Work Choice** users.

Work Choice suppliers

These are the companies and groups that provide the **Work Choice** services that help disabled people find and stay in work.

The **research** showed that some kinds of support **do** work better than others. For example, **Work Choice suppliers** get the best results if they

- build support around the needs of each **Work Choice** user before they get work and later when they are in work.
- find a job for the **Work Choice** user and then train them to do the job while they are in work.
- support the **employer** as well as the disabled person.

As a result of what they found out, the **researchers** say all **Work Choice** suppliers should think about using the kind of support that works best for **Work Choice** users.

The **research** also shows that giving money to **employers** to help disabled people find and stay in work may not be working well.

Work support for disabled people in the future

The **research** compared **Work Choice** to the **Work Programme** by talking to suppliers who offer both kinds of support.

Many suppliers said **Work Choice** allows them more time to support disabled people and their **employers**. This makes it easier for them to identify and meet the person's work-support needs.

Many **Work Choice** and **Work Programme** suppliers said support from the **Work Programme** would not be enough for some disabled people.

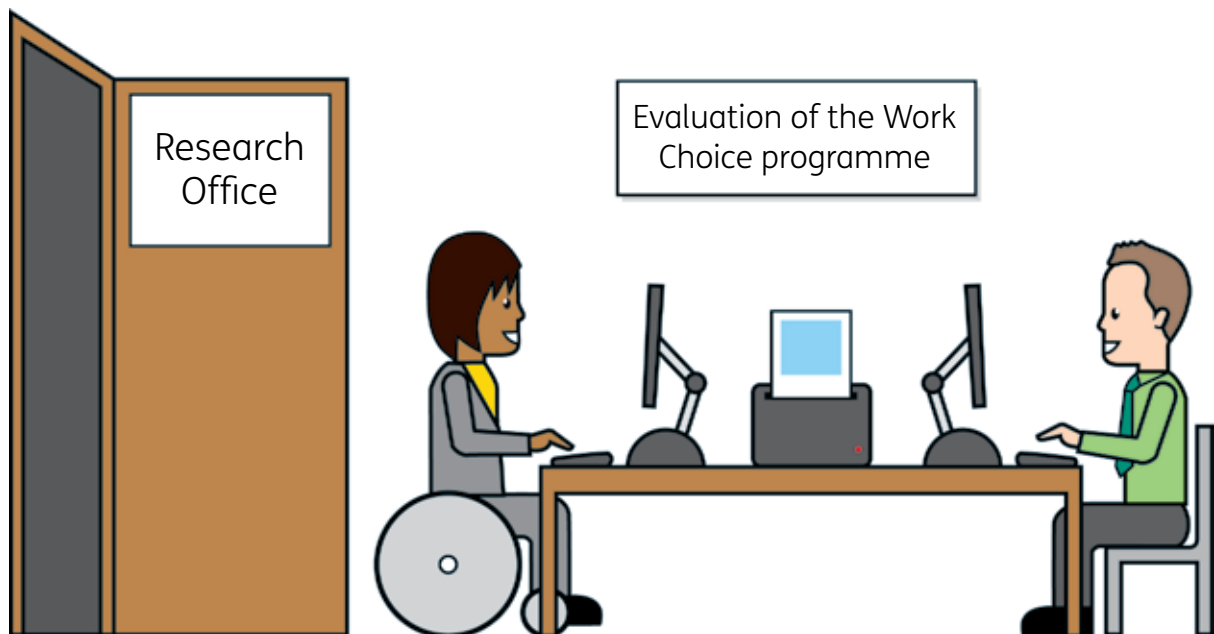
Most suppliers and all **Disability Employment Advisers** agreed there must be a separate work-support system for disabled people.

Because of this, the **researchers** said the Department for Work and Pensions should continue to have a separate work-support system for disabled people.



Changes to Work Choice suppliers

As part of their work, **researchers** checked to see if there had been any changes to **Work Choice suppliers** since **Work Choice** started in 2010.



The **research** shows there were many changes when **Work Choice** started. For example

- many local councils stopped offering work support services when **Work Choice** started.
- other companies and voluntary groups started offering work support services when **Work Choice** started.

But overall, the number of suppliers went down when **Work Choice** started.

The **research** also found that if a **Work Choice supplier** decides to stop offering **Work Choice** support, other **Work Choice suppliers** usually take their place.

Work Choice and specialist support

Most **Work Choice suppliers** offer services for many kinds of disabilities. But some suppliers only offer **specialist support**.

Specialist support

This is the support that some suppliers offer to people with a certain kind of disability, such as people who cannot see or people with a disability caused by a brain injury.

The **research** shows that

- some **specialist support** suppliers have stopped offering **Work Choice** support.
- those that offer **Work Choice** support get very little or no work from **Work Choice**. The **specialist support** suppliers think this is because of the high cost of this support rather than disabled people not having these needs.

Because of this, some suppliers and Jobcentre Plus workers are worried that people who need **specialist support** may not be getting the support they need. They said this would be bad for disabled people and bad for **Work Choice**.

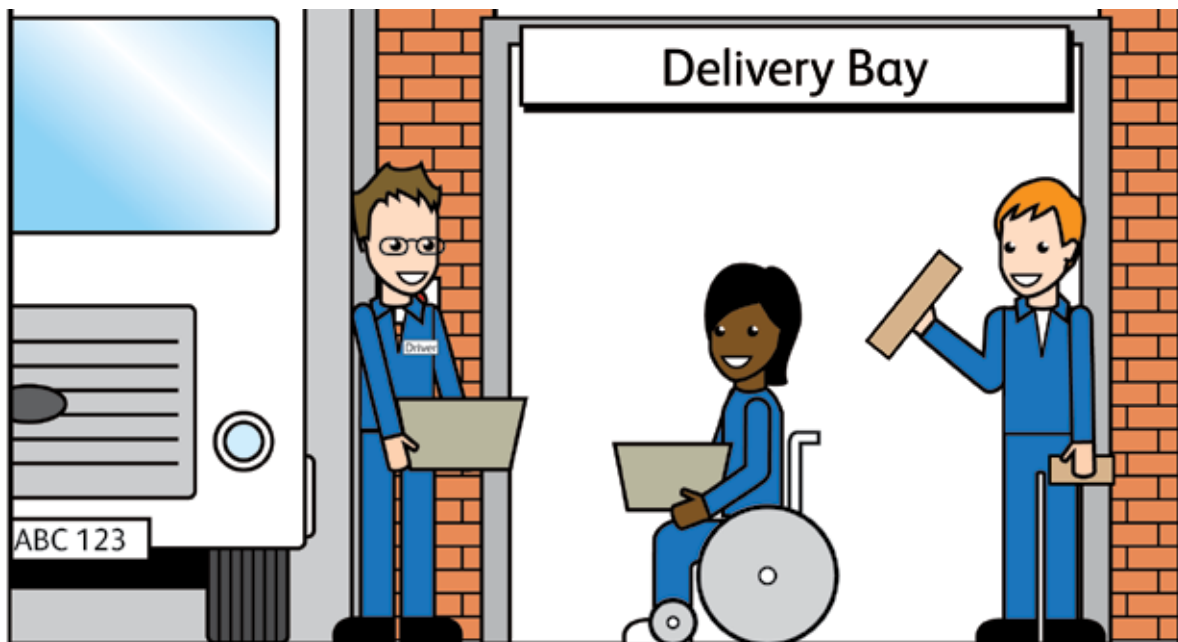
The **researchers** said the way the Department for Work and Pensions gets support services for **Work Choice** has had a bad effect on **specialist support** suppliers.

They also said that if there are any future changes to the work-support system for disabled people, the Department for Work and Pensions should think carefully about how the changes may affect **specialist support** suppliers.

Paying Work Choice suppliers

The Department for Work and Pensions pays **Work Choice** suppliers in 2 parts.

- Most of the payment is for the cost of supplying support, such as the support worker's wages and things that they use. So this payment is made when the supplier provides the service.
- The rest is paid later if the disabled person finds work and stays in work as a result of the **Work Choice** supplier's service.



Most **Work Choice** suppliers said this is a fair way for them to get paid. This is because providing this kind of service costs them a lot of money and they need to get paid for it quickly. They can then wait for the rest of the payment.

Researchers said that if the Department for Work and Pensions wants to change the way it pays for the work-support system for disabled people in the future, it should think about keeping the up-front payment for the cost of supplying the service.

Word list

Disability Employment Adviser

This is someone who works at the Jobcentre Plus office.
Their job is to help disabled people find work or training6

Employer

This is a person or company that pays people to work
for them4

Employment and Support Allowance

This is a benefit for people with a disability or
a health condition.7

Research or researchers

Research is work that is done to find out more about
something. Researchers are the people that do this work4

Specialist support

This is the support that some suppliers offer to people
with a certain kind of disability, such as people who
cannot see or people with a disability caused by a
brain injury11

Statutory Referral Organisations

These are groups that work with disabled people. Examples of Statutory Referral Organisations are local councils or parts of the National Health Service6

Work Choice

This is support for disabled people who need help to get and keep a job. For example, Work Choice can help disabled people learn new skills or find out what it is like to work. Work Choice can also support disabled people who already have a job4

Work Choice suppliers

These are the companies and groups that provide the **Work Choice** services that help disabled people find and stay in work8

Work Programme

This gives support, training and work experience to help people find and stay in work. It is mainly for people who are not disabled and for disabled people who do not need a lot of support to find work and stay in work7

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