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Evaluation of the Day One Support for Young People Trailblazer

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Summary

The Day One Support for Young People (DOSfYP) Trailblazer was a European Social Fund (ESF)-funded mandatory programme designed to help young people aged 18 to 24 with less than six months' work history get the skills and experience they need to help them move into employment. The Trailblazer took place in the North and South London Jobcentre Plus districts.

Eligible new Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants were referred to a placement provider at their first New Jobseeker Interview (NJI) appointment. The provider then arranged a community work placement with a 'host' organisation. The expectation was that claimants would be referred following their NJI (day one), meet the provider the next day (or earlier) (day two) and start their placement the following day (day three). Work placements were expected to last 13 weeks, with claimants attending the placement for 30 hours per week and conducting ten hours of provider-led job search.

The Department for Work and Pensions commissioned TNS-BMRB to conduct research into the Trailblazer. This evaluation consisted of:

- qualitative interviews and discussion groups with Jobcentre Plus staff, providers and hosts;
- a quantitative telephone survey with 800 claimants;
- qualitative depth interviews with 30 of these claimants.

The report looks at the outcomes and experiences for claimants who were eligible but did not start the programme, as well as those who participated (for some, or all of the 13 weeks).

The aim of the study was to explore:

- how DOSfYP was experienced by claimants, Jobcentre Plus staff, providers and hosts;
- the effect of DOSfYP on moving young people into employment, and moving them off JSA;
- hard and soft outcomes for claimants on DOSfYP.

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Executive summary

The Day One Support for Young People (DOSfYP) Trailblazer was a European Social Fund (ESF)-funded¹ mandatory programme designed to help young people aged 18 to 24 with less than six months' work history get the skills and experience they need to help them move into employment.

Eligible new Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants were referred to a placement provider at their first New Jobseeker Interview (NJI) appointment. The provider then arranged a community work placement with a 'host' organisation. The expectation was that claimants would be referred following their NJI (day one), meet the provider the next day (or earlier) (day two) and start their placement the following day (day three). Work placements were expected to last 13 weeks, with claimants attending the placement for 30 hours per week and conducting ten hours of provider-led job search.

This report summarises findings from research with Trailblazer participants, drawing on evidence from a survey of claimants and qualitative depth interviews with claimants, Jobcentre Plus staff, providers and hosts. The report looks at the outcomes and experiences for claimants who were eligible but did not start the programme, as well as those that participated (for some, or all of the 13 weeks). Where relevant, the report distinguishes between these different groups.

The evaluation of DOSfYP also includes an impact assessment, measuring whether the Trailblazer has achieved its aim of helping more young claimants off benefits and into work, and this is published separately to this report.

Starters and non-starters

The survey found that just over half of claimants eligible for DOSfYP started a placement (53 per cent) and 47 per cent did not start a placement. Of those that did not start, just under half (46 per cent) appear to have signed off JSA and a further third (33 per cent) received a sanction.

Those who started a placement tended to be slightly younger (under 21 years old rather than in the 21 to 24-year-old age group) to be slightly less qualified (ten per cent of starters had a degree or above compared to 19 per cent of those who did not start) and more likely to have no work experience prior to their JSA claim (48 per cent had no work experience, compared to 36 per cent of those who did not start because they discontinued their claim and 45 per cent of those who were referred but did not start).

Over half of claimants who started a placement did not complete the full 13 weeks (56 per cent). Numbers leaving their placement were highest during the first four weeks of the placement, with nearly two-thirds (61 per cent) leaving within four weeks. Sixty per cent of those who did not complete a placement moved into work.

¹ See Section 1.2 for further information on ESF and the funding arrangements.

The referral process

There was a good understanding of the requirements of the scheme by claimants and both Jobcentre Plus advisers and provider advisers appeared to be explaining these clearly and effectively. Seventy-nine per cent of claimants said they understood the scheme to be mandatory.

Jobcentre Plus staff did not always feel that they had time to explain the detail of the scheme or the potential benefits to claimants, particularly with those who might need some convincing. This is borne out by claimants who said that they were not always clear about the specifics of what they would be doing and how this would benefit their job search.

Nevertheless, around half of claimants felt positive about the scheme (49 per cent compared to 38 per cent who felt negative) at the time of referral, and 66 per cent felt that the Trailblazer was an opportunity to get used to the routine of going to work. Just over half felt it would help them to get a job (55 per cent), and 38 per cent felt that it would not help them to get a job.

As would be expected, starters were generally more positive than non-starters. Starters were also more likely to feel that the placement was suitable (51 per cent) compared to those who did not start a placement (26 per cent), based on the information they received from Jobcentre Plus and providers at the time of the referral. The main reason that placements were not felt to be suitable was because they did not match the type of job claimants were interested in (60 per cent).

The speed of the referral process was seen as an issue by providers. Providers mentioned that the timescales made sourcing good quality placements more difficult, as some hosts wanted to sift candidates, and limited the extent that they could offer placements to meet any specific claimant needs.

Experience of placements

Despite some reservations with placements, claimants who participated in the Trailblazer were positive about their experience. This was particularly the case for claimants who completed a full 13-week placement – 85 per cent of these claimants said they felt positive overall.

Three-quarters of claimants said: they felt they got the support they needed from staff while on their placement (78 per cent); they were satisfied with the amount of responsibility they were given (76 per cent) and they enjoyed the routine of going to work (75 per cent). However, forty-three per cent of claimants who started a placement felt that it was not suitable for them.

Compared to other elements of the scheme claimants were asked about, they were least satisfied with the amount of time for job search. Overall, 55 per cent were satisfied and 40 per cent were dissatisfied.

There was a feeling amongst some claimants and staff that spending 30 hours per week on the placement meant that claimants did not always have time to carry out sufficient job search, particularly when claimants were required to travel long distances to the host and the provider.

The range of work placements and the type of work carried out on placement sometimes lacked diversity (58 per cent were in charity shops) and this was seen as an issue by some Jobcentre Plus staff, providers and claimants. There was a feeling that placements were most worthwhile when they were at least partly tailored to the claimants' needs and aspirations.

Overall, hosts were positive about their experience of the Trailblazer and were largely impressed by the enthusiasm shown by claimants. However, there was a perception amongst hosts that unengaged claimants were unlikely to benefit from placements, and placements which matched claimants' interests were more beneficial to themselves, and the claimant. Where higher numbers of claimants than expected left their placement soon after it had started, this was difficult to manage for some hosts.

Employment and other outcomes from the Trailblazer

Employment outcomes: Around half of all those who did not start a DOSfYP placement moved into paid work following their decision not to participate (44 per cent).

Of those who started a placement, six in ten of those who did not complete their placement moved into work (60 per cent) and around a quarter of those who completed (26 per cent) subsequently moved into work.

Around six months after their initial claim, around three-quarters of those who had moved into work were still in work (76 per cent of non-starters and 72 per cent of starters).

Work outcomes tended to be more positive for older claimants (aged 21 to 24) and those with at least some prior work experience. Both among non-starters and starters, these claimants were more likely to have found work initially and to be in employment still at the time of the survey.

Benefit and other outcomes: Around six months after their initial claim, just over a quarter (27 per cent) of all non-starters said they were on JSA and just over four in ten starters (41 per cent) were on JSA. A small proportion said they had moved onto other benefits (Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Income Support (IS)), including 3 per cent of non-starters and 6 per cent of starters.

There was a group of young people (those who had either not started or not completed a placement) who said that they were no longer claiming benefit but had not moved into work. The majority of this group were 'looking for work' (over six in ten) and the evidence suggests that this group was not disengaged from entering the labour market (very few said that they were unemployed and not looking for work).

Intermediate outcomes: Most who completed a 13-week placement felt there had been a wide range of benefits to participating: 89 per cent felt their motivation to find work had increased, 80 per cent felt their chances of finding paid work had improved and 82 per cent felt they had new skills to help find work. Consistent with findings elsewhere, these wider benefits seem to be felt most strongly by younger claimants (under 21) and those with slightly lower educational attainment.

Of those who completed a placement, 89 per cent felt more motivated to find work, 85 per cent agreed that they looked more attractive to potential employers on job applications and 80 per cent reported increased personal confidence. Seven in ten claimants (70 per cent) felt

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they had gained in all three of these ways. Further, nearly all claimants (94 per cent) agreed that they felt more able 'to cope with the routine of going to work' following completion of the placement.

While most claimants who completed a placement were positive about the impact of attending a placement, there was concern amongst a small group (17 per cent) that participation in DOSfYP had not increased their chance of finding paid work.

Job search: Job search among claimants who completed a placement appears to have been invigorated by the experience. Over six in ten said that they were sending out more job applications at the time of the survey than they had before their placement (62 per cent) and they had applied for jobs they had never considered applying for previously (64 per cent).

1 Background and introduction

1.1 Background to Trailblazer

The Day One Support for Young People (DOSfYP) Trailblazer was a mandatory programme designed to help young people aged 18 to 24 with less than six months work history get the work experience they needed to move in to employment. It was jointly developed with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and was part-funded through the European Social Fund (ESF). As part of the programme, eligible new Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants were referred to a work placement provider at their first New Jobseeker Interview (NJI) appointment. The provider then arranged a work placement with a 'host' organisation that must have been of benefit to the community. Placements lasted 13 weeks and claimants were expected to be on the work placement for 30 hours per week and to conduct ten hours of job search activity led by the provider. The Trailblazer was launched on 26 November 2012 in the North and South London Jobcentre districts with one provider in each area contracted to provide the support. Trailblazer referrals were made over an eight-month period.

1.2 The European Social Fund programme

The Trailblazer was funded through the ESF programme². Reducing the level of youth unemployment is a key priority of the ESF programme, along with supporting innovative development. It was the combination of day one activation, intensive support and mandatory work experience that differentiated the DOSfYP Trailblazer from the existing 'standard offer' of support provided to young people through Jobcentre Plus³. The Trailblazer tested a new approach to supporting young JSA claimants with a limited employment history and aimed to equip them with skills, confidence and real-life experience needed to find work in their area.

1.3 The Evaluation Strategy

Evaluation of the Trailblazer was key to helping build the evidence base on the impact of intervention early into a young person's claim, to understand what works best to support young people off benefits and into employment. This will help inform the design of future labour market interventions. The evaluation strategy for DOSfYP included the following main elements:

- impact assessments of benefit and employment outcomes. These were carried out by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and are reported separately to this research; and

² Further information about the ESF programme can be found at: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/esf/> ESF funding is distributed through 'Co-financing Organisations' (CFOs), which includes DWP. CFOs are public bodies which bring together ESF and domestic funding for employment and skills so that ESF complements national programmes. CFOs are responsible for both the ESF money and match funding. The DOSfYP Trailblazer was jointly developed with the GLA and involved a transfer of ESF funds from the GLA to DWP.

³ The 'standard offer' includes provision within the Jobcentre Plus Offer and the Youth Contract.

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- qualitative and quantitative research on how the Trailblazer worked in practice and the effect on claimant outcomes.

Both these elements of the evaluation considered the DOSfYP Trailblazer alongside the standard support that is available to young people through Jobcentre Plus, as part of the Jobcentre Plus Offer and the Youth Contract⁴.

As well as this, the DOSfYP Trailblazer is being assessed alongside other ESF-funded provision, as part of the ESF evaluation programme. One element of this will be a synthesis report (due to be published later in 2014), which will consider the impact of the ESF programme in its entirety.

This report presents findings from the qualitative and quantitative research for the evaluation.

1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to undertake a series of research tasks to explore:

- how DOSfYP was being experienced by Jobcentre Plus staff; providers; hosts; and claimants;
- what effect DOSfYP had on moving young people into employment and off-flow from JSA;
- hard and soft outcomes for claimants on DOSfYP.

The critical success factors assessed by the qualitative research and quantitative survey were whether Day One Support was:

- leading to off-flow from JSA, most significantly off-flow into work;
- providing hard outcomes in terms of increased job search activity and finding paid work;
- providing softer outcomes for claimants, in terms of their self-confidence and ability to cope in a work environment.

1.5 Research approach

This section briefly describes the methodology undertaken. The study consisted of three main strands of work using both qualitative and quantitative methods:

- qualitative telephone and face-to-face depth interviews and discussion groups with Jobcentre Plus staff, providers and hosts in North and South London between May and June 2013;
- a telephone survey of 800 DOSfYP claimants undertaken between 13 August and 23 September 2013;
- qualitative telephone interviews with claimants in September 2013. Thirty telephone depth interviews with claimants from the survey who had agreed to be re-contacted.

The qualitative evaluative research was undertaken in both districts as shown in the Tables below. The telephone survey was carried out with a sample of claimants from the North

⁴ For more information on the Youth Contract please refer to: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/>

and South London districts who were referred between January and April 2013. Selecting claimants who were referred during this time would allow a reasonable amount of time from when they should have completed the Trailblazer to being interviewed for the survey.

1.5.1 Qualitative discussions with Jobcentre Plus staff, provider staff and hosts

Jobcentre Plus staff, provider staff and hosts were interviewed during May and June 2013 using a range of qualitative techniques including; group discussions, triads and depth interviews. A more detailed breakdown of the approach is provided in the Tables below.

An initial familiarisation stage of telephone interviews with Provider managers and DWP managers was undertaken in order to provide an early indication of how the Trailblazer was working, to inform the research approach with staff and to gain access to contacts within their organisations to arrange the proceeding interviews with staff.

Familiarisation stage

	Provider (South London)	Provider (North London)
Provider managers	1 x telephone interview	1 x telephone interview
DWP contract managers	1 x telephone triad	
Total	Telephone interviews – 3	

Providers

	Provider (South London)	Provider (North London)
Implementation manager (2 telephone interviews in total)	1 x telephone interview	1 x telephone interview
Delivery manager (2 interviews in total)	1 x telephone interview	1 x telephone interview
Placement officers (2 triad groups; 6 people in total)	1 triad face-to-face	1 triad face-to-face
Job search officers (2 triad groups; 6 people in total)	1 triad face-to-face	1 triad face-to-face
Placement hosts (10 telephone interviews in total)	5 x telephone interview	5 x telephone interview
Total	Telephone interviews – 14 Face-to-face triad groups – 4 (12 people)	

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Jobcentre Plus staff

	North	South
District Manager (2 telephone interviews in total)	1 x telephone interview	1 x telephone interview
Regional manager/administration (2 face to face in total)	1 x face-to-face	1 x face-to-face
CSOMs (6 telephone interviews in total)	3 x telephone interviews	3 x telephone interviews
ATMs (12 ATMs in total – 2 F2F; 10 telephone interviews)	1 x face-to-face interview 5 x telephone interviews	1 x face-to-face interview 5 x telephone interviews
Jobcentre Plus advisers (4 groups; 24 advisers in total)	2 x face-to-face group discussions comprising six advisers. Each group was located in a different Jobcentre Plus office with each adviser coming from a different site (12 Jobcentre Plus offices included)	2 x face-to-face group discussions comprising six advisers. Each group was located in a different Jobcentre Plus office with each adviser coming from a different site (12 Jobcentre Plus offices included)
DMA staff (4 telephone interviews in total)	4 x telephone interviews at Team Leader level across the central team	
Total	Telephone interviews – 22 Face-to-face interviews – 4 Face-to-face groups – 4	

1.5.2 The telephone survey of claimants

TNS BMRB carried out telephone interviews with 800 claimants who attended an NJI in one of the Trailblazer areas between January and April 2013. All claimants had been told that they would need to attend a DOSfYP placement as a condition of their claim. Claimants were selected based on three different profile groups (and all 800 fell into one of these groups):

- discontinued claims;
- non-starters; and
- starters.

The discontinued claim group was made up of claimants who were told about the DOSfYP Trailblazer but were not referred (through Provider Referrals and Payments (PRaP)) – claimants discontinuing their claim for JSA once they heard about the programme (before a formal referral was made).

Claimants in the non-starter group had been referred to DOSfYP (through PRaP), but did not start a placement (either failing to attend a meeting with their provider or not turning up at the host). As discussed in Chapter 4, most of those who did not start were sanctioned or ended their JSA claim, although a small number did remain receiving JSA.

Finally, starters were claimants who were referred to DOSfYP (through PRaP) and attended at least the first day of their placement, but did not necessarily complete the entire 13 weeks. Indeed, as described later in this section, a large proportion of starters only partially completed. They may also have started the placement at their first referral or a subsequent re-referral.

The initial sample of claimants included a purposive overselection of claimants who were potentially eligible to take part in the DOSfYP scheme, but who were not referred through PRaP (i.e. the 'discontinued'). The overselection of this group was to account for the difficult nature of contacting this group, for whom there were no records confirming whether they had been informed of DOSfYP before discontinuing their JSA claim or were exempt for some reason⁵. As part of the survey, these claimants were screened to see whether they would have been eligible for DOSfYP and would, therefore, likely have been referred to DOSfYP had they not discontinued their claim.

Otherwise, the remaining sample (those who were referred to DOSfYP but did not start, those who started but did not complete and those who completed) was selected to provide a representative cross-section of claimants referred to DOSfYP.

Telephone interviews were carried out by TNS BMRB interviewers between 13 August and 23 September 2013. From an initial selection of 3,754 a total of 800 interviews were completed representing an 'interview rate' of 21 per cent (although the interview rate was much higher among those who started a DOSfYP placement). Once ineligible cases (where the respondent claimed they had not been told about DOSfYP nor had dealings with Jobcentre Plus) and deadwood (largely invalid and inactive telephone numbers) are taken into account, the effective response rate was 27 per cent.

1.5.3 Weighting

Survey data were weighted to correct for purposive oversampling of claimants who started a DOSfYP placement. In addition, demographic weighting (by age and gender) was applied to those who started a DOSfYP placement and to those who were referred to DOSfYP but did not start a placement. No demographic weighting was applied to the discontinued group – as no accurate population figures were available to use for this purpose. Table 1.1 summarises the weighting approach.

⁵ Most likely because they were considered to have six months or longer work history.

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Table 1.1 Survey weighting approach

Weighting subgroups (cells)	Individual cells			Major sample groups		
	Population estimate (%)	Interviewed sample (%)	(n)	Population estimate (%)	Interviewed sample (%)	(n)
Discontinued						
No demographic weighting applied	15.00%	10.50%	84	15.00%	10.50%	84
Non-starters						
Male 18-19	13.76%	6.38%	51			
Male 20-21	9.45%	4.25%	34			
Male 22+	8.95%	4.38%	35	49.00%	25.75%	206
Female 18-19	8.11%	4.25%	34			
Female 20-21	4.30%	2.88%	23			
Female 22+	4.44%	3.63%	29			
Starters						
Male 18-19	9.34%	14.63%	117			
Male 20-21	6.38%	13.25%	106			
Male 22+	6.13%	10.38%	83	36.00%	63.75%	510
Female 18-19	6.69%	11.63%	93			
Female 20-21	3.43%	6.00%	48			
Female 22+	4.04%	7.88%	63			

1.5.4 Note on quantitative analysis

Throughout figures from the survey of claimants do not always sum to 100 per cent in tables and charts. This is due to rounding given that figures are quoted to the nearest percentage point.

1.5.5 Qualitative follow-up interviews with claimants

Additional qualitative interviews were undertaken with 30 claimants during September 2013 using the survey as a sampling source. The aim of this strand of the research was to provide insight into the experiences of being offered a DOSfYP placement, the decision making processes that claimants go through in deciding whether to accept or not and their overall experiences of the placement and the benefits that it provided to them.

Telephone interviews were undertaken with three claimant groups of interest: non-starters who refused DOSfYP and signed off the register, those who dropped out midway during the work experience placement and those that completed the 13-week placement. Quotas were also set for the district which the claimant made their claim (North/South London), equal spread of gender and a minimum quota of ten was set for ethnicity.

The interviews lasted between 10 and 20 minutes and were used to address the key issues. The achieved quotas are summarised in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Survey quotas

	North London	South London	Total
Non-starters	5	5	10
Did not complete	5	5	10
Completed	5	5	10
Total	15	15	30

1.6 Starters and non-starters

The report focuses on claimants who do not start a placement (either because they discontinued their claim when they found out about DOSfYP or were referred to a placement but did not start) and those who started a placement (attending at least the first day). At times the report separates out those who ‘discontinued’ their claim from those who were referred but did not start and at other times they are considered together and the report talks about ‘all non-starters’.

Those who start a placement may have started the first time they were referred or at a subsequent re-referral. As attendance at a placement was a condition of receiving JSA for those eligible for DOSfYP, claimants may have been re-referred if they continued to claim JSA. Starters, within this report, are those who started a placement at any point, either at their first or subsequent re-referral.

The focus of this report differs in this respect from the impact assessment. The impact assessment report looks at starters based on at what point they started a placement, whether this was at their first referral or any subsequent re-referral.

1.7 Profile of claimants in the Trailblazer

The following section outlines the profile of claimants who took part in the research, including an overall profile, and profiles for each of the three sample groups described above for the quantitative interviews. It should be noted that across all questions, the base size for the discontinued sample group is small and whilst figures have been presented, they should only be regarded as indicative.

The chapter concludes with a short discussion of claimants’ perceived barriers to finding paid work – to explore the extent to which lack of work experience was seen as a barrier relative to other factors (such as availability of work or level of qualifications).

1.7.1 Age, gender, highest qualification and age left school

The DOSfYP Trailblazer was mandatory for claimants up to the age of 24. Table 1.3 shows the demographic profile of claimants overall, and for each of the three different sample groups.

As shown in Table 1.3, claimants were fairly evenly divided between those aged 18-20 and 21-24. There was a slightly higher proportion of 18 to 20-year-olds in the starter group, and conversely a slightly higher proportion of 21 to 24-year-olds among those who did not start.

The majority of claimants left school aged 18 or above (60 per cent). One in five (21 per cent) left school before they were 16.

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Table 1.3 shows the highest qualifications which claimants held at the time of interview. In total, nearly two in five claimants (37 per cent) held A-levels or an HNC as their highest qualification. Almost a third (32 per cent) had GCSEs A*-C, or equivalent. A higher proportion of claimants who discontinued their claim held a degree or higher (29 per cent). Table 1.4 provides further background information on claimants – their living situation, what they were doing prior to making their claim for JSA and what level of work experience they had.

Table 1.3 Demographic profile of claimants

	Total %	Discontinued %	Non-starter %	Non-starters (net ¹) %	Starter %
Age					
18-20	57	41	55	51	61
21-24	42	59	42	46	38
Gender					
Male	62	50	67	63	62
Female	38	50	33	37	38
Age when leaving education					
15-16	21	20	23	22	19
17-18	39	30	35	34	44
18+	36	48	39	41	32
Highest qualification					
Degree or above	14	29	16	19	10
A levels or HNC	37	30	34	33	40
GCSEs A*-C; Vocational level 2 and equivalent	32	23	36	33	31
GCSEs D-G; Vocational level 1 and equivalent	10	3	10	8	12
Entry level qualifications	3	7	2	3	3

Base: All respondents (800); discontinued claims (64); non-starters (174); non-starters (net) (238); starters (562).

¹ The 'non-starter' net includes the sum of both 'discontinued' and 'non-starter' claimants.

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Table 1.4 Background to claim

	Overall %	Discontinued %	Non- starter %	Starter %
What doing prior to claim				
Looking for work	51	50	55	48
Studying	22	14	21	24
Working	19	17	20	19
Other	11	21	7	12
How long looking for work*				
Less than one month	7	0	8	9
One to four months	39	63	29	40
Five to eight months	22	9	25	23
Nine to twelve months	8	7	6	10
Over a year	16	15	22	11
Don't know	9	7	12	8
Whether looking for specific job*				
Yes – looking for specific job	45	50	51	39
Looking for any type of work	55	50	49	60
Work experience				
Nothing	45	36	45	48
Less than one month	5	1	6	5
Two to three months	10	8	10	10
Four to five months	6	3	4	8
Six months or more	25	44	23	22
Don't know	9	8	12	7
Living situation at time of claim				
Living with parents	72	61	75	73
Living with family/friends	14	25	12	13
Living on own	11	10	12	11
Contributing to household expenses**				
Yes	36	51	35	33
No	64	49	65	66
Claimed benefits prior to claim				
Jobseeker's Allowance	19	22	18	20
Employment and Support Allowance	2	0	2	2
Income Support	5	3	3	6
Other	3	1	3	3
No	73	75	76	71

Base: All respondents (800); discontinued claims (64); non-starters (174); starters (562).

* Base: All respondents who were looking for work (412); discontinued claims (32); non-starters (93); starters (287).

** Base: All respondents who were living with someone else (698); discontinued claims (55); non-starters (151); starters (492).

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As Table 1.4 shows, 51 per cent of claimants were looking for work in the months before making their claim. Claimants who said that they had been looking for work had generally been looking for work between one and eight months (39 per cent said one to four months and 22 per cent said five to eight months overall). The division between those looking for a specific type of job and those looking for any type of work was fairly even. Encouragingly, given that DOSfYP is meant for young people with less than six months' work history, the vast majority of claimants had less than this amount of work experience. However, there were still 25 per cent of claimants who said they had over six months' experience⁶. Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) were living with their parents, and of those who were living with other people (i.e. not by themselves), only around a third (36 per cent) were contributing to household expenses. Very few claimants had made a previous benefit claim – 73 per cent said they had never claimed benefits previously. Almost one in five (19 per cent) had claimed JSA previously, but very few had claimed other benefits.

There were few significant differences between sample groups. Whilst the base size for the discontinued group is small, there is a significant difference between this group and the starter group in terms of amount of work experience. Nearly half (44 per cent) of the discontinued group had at least six months' work experience compared to 22 per cent of the starter group. This may be a factor in why the discontinued group decide against starting the placement; however, this finding should be treated with caution. The discontinued group were also more likely to be contributing to household expenses (51 per cent) against 33 per cent of the starter group.

Overall the difference in the profile of those who started and those who did not start (both discontinued and non-starters) points to some of the likely reasons behind non-participation. Generally, those who did not start a placement tended to be slightly older, slightly better qualified and with at least some work experience prior to their claim; i.e. they were, on face value, better equipped to find paid work than those who participated.

1.7.2 Profile of start and completion levels

This section looks at the profile of start and completion levels amongst those eligible for DOSfYP in the pilot areas. Around half of all claimants referred to DOSfYP started a placement (see Table 1.5). This includes 22 per cent of all claimants who completed the full 13 weeks and 29 per cent who partially completed a placement – i.e. most who started a placement did not complete the full 13 weeks.

One in ten claimants (11 per cent) discontinued their claim without being referred through PRaP. The largest group who did not attend a placement were the non-starters – who were referred through PRaP but failed to start their placement (not even attending the first day). It was therefore most common for claimants to 'opt out' of the Trailblazer after being officially referred rather than immediately after they were told about it (as shown in Table 1.5 the former group outnumbered the latter by a factor of around three to one).

⁶ Work history for DOSfYP was defined as paid work of over 16 hours a week for either a continuous period of six months, or two blocks that make up six months (e.g. two periods of three months, or one period of four months plus another period of two months) since leaving full-time education. An 'alternative' work history (such as an internship or volunteering) would have to replicate the work environment. The survey asked respondents to add up the number of months they had spent doing paid or unpaid work since leaving full-time education. Therefore, although similar, the two are not directly comparable.

Table 1.5 Proportion of starters and non-starters

	%
Starters	53
Completes	22
Partial completes	29
All who did not start	47
Non-starter	36
Discontinued	11
Proportion of discontinued and non-starters	
Non-starters	76
Discontinued	24

Base: All respondents (800); discontinued claims (64); non-starters (174); starters (562); all respondents who started but did not complete a placement (305).

1.8 Barriers to work

This final section looks at claimants' perceptions of their main barriers to finding work (at the time they made their claim). All surveyed claimants were asked what they felt their main barriers to work were before they made their claim for JSA and were told about DOSfYP.

Overall, a lack of work experience was cited as a main barrier to claimants finding work (40 per cent). Other reasons which were given by respondents were a lack of jobs in the local area (22 per cent) and a lack of qualifications (ten per cent). The main perceived barriers are shown in Table 1.6. Other barriers (including health issues or a disability) were cited by very few claimants and are therefore not included in the analysis.

Table 1.6 Main barriers to work

	Overall	Non-starters (net)	Starters
	%	%	%
Lack of work experience	40	35	44
Lack of jobs in the local area	22	24	21
Lack of qualifications	10	9	11
Not having right skills for job interested in	5	4	5

Base: All respondents (800).

Note: Respondents were able to give more than one barrier. The table sets out the top four barriers mentioned.

Claimants who gave lack of work experience as a barrier to finding work, and also gave other barriers, were asked whether a lack of work experience was more or less important than these other barriers. Around three-quarters of this group (76 per cent) said that lack of work experience was more important than all other perceived barriers – with only one in ten saying lack of work experience was less important. Overall the survey findings suggest that lack of work experience was seen as the single biggest factor preventing claimants from finding work.

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Further, those who started a placement were more likely to say that a lack of work experience was one of their main barriers to work (44 per cent compared to 35 per cent of those who did not start a placement). For the claimants interviewed, a lack of work experience is a significant barrier to finding work.

Claimants with a degree (or a higher level of qualification) were also more likely to say that lack of work experience was a barrier to them finding work compared with those with lower levels of qualification (51 per cent compared to 39 per cent).

A lack of qualifications was more likely to be given as a barrier to work by claimants whose highest qualification was GCSEs or below (14 per cent) compared to those whose highest qualification was above GCSE level (6 per cent). Consistent with this view, in the qualitative research, claimants who had attained GCSEs (or below) were uncertain about the value of DOSfYP, believing that vocational qualifications or an apprenticeship would be better for helping them find employment.

A lack of job opportunities was also raised by claimants who participated in the qualitative interviews. However, this tended to be raised by claimants who had a specific career path in mind and therefore reflected more on the relevance of the job opportunities available rather than the local labour market generally. These claimants tended to be recent graduates, claimants waiting to start a university degree or those who had already completed vocational training in a specific field.

2 The referral process

The aim of Day One Support for Young People (DOSfYP) was that referrals to work placements would happen quickly, within a matter of days – Day one; the claimant would attend their New Jobseeker’s Interview (NJI) with Jobcentre Plus and be referred to DOSfYP where eligible, Day two (or sooner); the claimant would meet with the provider who would arrange the placement and Day three, the claimant would start their placement.

This chapter looks at the referral process from the perspective of Jobcentre Plus staff; providers; hosts and claimants. The way in which referrals were made and the way the Trailblazer was explained to claimants is important for meeting the aims of the programme. Additionally, this may have influenced the number of claimants who decided to engage with the programme. The perceptions of claimants were captured both in the quantitative survey and qualitative depth interviews, and the views of Jobcentre Plus staff, providers and hosts came purely from the qualitative research (a combination of depth interviews and discussion groups).

Key findings

- There was a good understanding of the requirements of the scheme by claimants and both Jobcentre Plus advisers and provider advisers seemed to be explaining these clearly and effectively. Seventy-nine per cent of claimants said they understood the scheme to be mandatory.
- There was some concern amongst Jobcentre Plus staff that they did not necessarily have the time to explain the potential benefits of the Trailblazer to claimants, particularly amongst those who might need some convincing. As a result, claimants sometimes made incorrect assumptions about what training and support would be offered. When this was not provided, this led to some negativity about the scheme.
- Further, claimants were often left feeling unclear about the relevance of the placements based on what they were told. They were not always clear about the specifics of what they would be doing and how this would benefit their job search.
- Nevertheless, around half of claimants felt positive about the scheme (49 per cent compared to 38 per cent who felt negative) at the time of referral, and 66 per cent felt that the Trailblazer was an opportunity to get used to the routine of going to work. Just over half felt it would help them to get a job (55 per cent), and 38 per cent felt that it would not help them to get a job.
- Starters were also more likely to feel that the placement was suitable (51 per cent) compared to those who did not start a placement (26 per cent) based on what the advisers (both Jobcentre Plus and provider) told them. The main reason that placements were not felt to be suitable was because they did not match the type of job claimants were interested in (60 per cent of those who felt their placement was unsuitable).
- Providers identified aspects of the Trailblazer which they felt affected the success of referrals, most notably the speed of the referral process, which affected their ability to source quality placements, and achieve a better match between claimant and placement.

2.1 Day One: Jobcentre Plus referral

This section looks at the referral process from the perspective of Jobcentre Plus staff.

The research found that Jobcentre Plus offices adapted their processing of referrals over time to make delivery of the scheme more efficient. When the Trailblazer was first launched, DOSfYP referrals were conducted as part of the New Jobseeker's interview (NJI). However, advisers experienced difficulty processing the referral, in addition to completing the NJI, within the time allotted for a standard NJI (between 20-40 minutes depending on the Jobcentre Plus office). They did not always have time to 'sell' the Trailblazer, particularly to claimants who were unsure of the benefits to them and so might need some convincing. Offices adopted different strategies to tackle these issues including introducing DOSfYP at the start of the NJI, to ensure there was sufficient time to 'sell' the Trailblazer during the NJI, and with other offices channelling eligible claimants through Group Information Sessions (GIS) where they were able to provide information on DOSfYP before the NJI. Group Information Sessions were also used as a way of filtering only claimants who wanted to proceed with their Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claim, after learning about the Trailblazer, on to a NJI. As a result, advisers were not carrying out NJIs for claimants who did not want to participate in DOSfYP.

To complete the referral, advisers called a centralised team at the provider who scheduled appointments at local offices. This process was considered straightforward; although advisers sometimes waited several minutes before their call was answered and as a result NJIs occasionally exceeded the targeted length.

2.1.1 Eligibility criteria for claimants

Overall, Jobcentre Plus staff (as well as provider staff) supported the principle of DOSfYP and thought that it was well suited to certain types of claimants, particularly for recent school leavers who had never worked before. However, the mandatory nature of the scheme and the fact that it applied to a wide group of young people, made staff question whether the aim of the scheme was to provide work experience to help move young people into work or whether there was also an aim of discouraging some young people from claiming JSA.

Jobcentre Plus staff said they would have liked more discretion to refer those claimants who they believed would benefit most from the Trailblazer. Many Jobcentre Plus staff described having informal targets for the number of referrals they should make and, as a consequence, were referring claimants who they believed would probably benefit more from other provision available through (for example) the Youth Contract.

The Trailblazer was intended for young claimants whose main barrier to work was a lack of work history. When the Trailblazer was first launched, there was some uncertainty over assessing eligibility and it was not always being applied consistently across offices. In some cases, advisers were told by office managers to refer all claimants who could not prove six months' work history, even when other issues were more of a barrier for the claimant in moving into work (such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) needs or caring responsibilities).

'There was some confusion and the messages were a little mixed.'

(Adviser, North London)

Over time advisers said they became more accustomed to identifying eligible claimants, although it is unclear whether this was due to the feedback they received about inappropriate referrals or advisers developing a better understanding of the guidance.

2.2 Day two – The referral process from the perspective of the providers

Providers had to adapt how they dealt with DOSfYP referrals over time. This was because the number of referrals was higher than they originally expected and also tended to fluctuate unpredictably each day, in large part because of claimants not attending appointments arranged with the provider.

Providers said they initially had difficulty adjusting their capacity across offices as they did not expect this level of variability. Therefore, providers were not always able to schedule appointments for all claimants that were referred each day, so not always meeting the one day turnaround for referrals.

Providers had some success tackling these challenges by introducing two new approaches. These were: creating mobile advisers who were able to travel to other sites at short notice; and group introductory sessions in which claimants learnt more about what the Trailblazer entailed – after which providers would schedule induction interviews with claimants who said they wanted to continue with the Trailblazer. Both of these approaches made the referral process more straightforward to deliver.

In addition, providers mentioned a number of issues that they considered affected the success of referrals to DOSfYP, including:

- difficulty sourcing hosts to deliver the Trailblazer;
- poor understanding of the Trailblazer amongst claimants; and
- poor or delayed information about referrals including claimant identity and any restrictions on the work they could carry out.

These are covered in turn below.

2.2.1 Sourcing hosts

Providers identified aspects of the Trailblazer which they said hosts found off-putting and made it more difficult for them to source (quality) placements. These included the speed of referral and that placements were mandatory. The key factor which providers said discouraged many hosts from participating was the requirement for the placement to start the following day. Hosts wanted to be able to meet claimants before the placement started, either to assess whether they were suitable for the position or simply to build a relationship with them before they started. They also wanted time to prepare for the placement to start and to ensure they had enough staff of sufficient seniority on site to manage placements. Having less than one working day to put these arrangements in place was not considered viable by many hosts.

Providers also said that some larger organisations were concerned about hosting placements that were mandatory, particularly as similar provision in the past had been criticised in the press. Although providers stressed that the placement was designed to fast

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track claimants into work experience, as this was considered to be a key barrier for them finding employment, they said that larger, more well-known organisations continued to be concerned about press coverage and public perception.

Consequently the range of placements on offer was limited and providers said it was difficult to source placements which provided the type of experience that claimants wanted or allowed them to better match claimants with placements. Providers had some success in encouraging claimants to source their own placements as a way of overcoming this.

2.2.2 Understanding about the Trailblazer amongst claimants

Providers believed high non-starter rates were, in part, due to Jobcentre Plus advisers not sufficiently selling the benefits of the Trailblazer, as well as claimants' apprehension about being referred to an unfamiliar organisation, particularly if they were nervous about entering the world of work. They thought a 'warm handover' (where claimants at Jobcentre Plus offices are able to speak to the provider over the telephone at the same time) may have helped, by allowing the provider time to discuss the placement, 'sell' some of the benefits of the Trailblazer, provide clear directions to the office they should attend, provide reassurance and promote a friendly and helpful approach.

2.2.3 Information about referrals

The IT processes (carried out through Provider Referrals and Payments (PRaP)) created difficulties for the referral process. These were raised by Jobcentre Plus staff as well and included issues such as:

- The referral/Jobseeker's Agreement not being received by providers before the meeting with the claimant. This meant that providers sent some claimants away because they could not check their identity, nor had any information about restrictions or eligibility. In some cases, claimants described a range of restrictions, including childcare responsibilities, attending education courses and sickness, which could not be verified by the provider. Such issues generated a number of telephone conversations between provider and Jobcentre Plus staff to clarify referrals, which also led to potential delays in the process and frequently claimants needing to be re-referred when they were sent back to Jobcentre Plus:
- Inconsistencies in the way Jobcentre Plus and providers recorded information.
 - For example, providers used purchase order numbers to identify claimants while Jobcentre Plus used National Insurance numbers.
 - Providers returned referral forms stating 'refused' which was not a term which was used by Jobcentre Plus staff, and could have meant the claimant refused to participate or that the claimant was 'refused' by the provider.

Providers also confirmed that they thought a number of claimants were referred for whom a lack of work experience was not the greatest barrier to employment, but rather they had other restrictions such as basic skills, including numeracy, literacy and ESOL.

2.3 Day three – Referrals from the perspective of the host

Descriptions of the referral process were largely consistent across hosts who took part in this research and typically involved the following activities: the host gave the provider a 'task list' or a job specification prior to the placements commencing; the host was then contacted by the provider to refer the claimant to the host via the telephone on an ad hoc basis; the claimant would attend an induction day; and then the placement would start the following day. In relation to managing this referral, hosts described the following challenges:

- insufficient information provided about the claimant, particularly on past experience and basic identification information;
- unpredictability in the claimant referral rate;
- Inconsistent information given to claimants by the provider; and
- level of staff resource dedicated to the claimant induction day.

Hosts said the information provided to them about the claimant by the provider was insufficient to prepare properly for the claimant's arrival. Providers were unable to provide any information on the claimant's work history, or interests, and some hosts reported that, due to data protection requirements, providers could not give even basic identification information (including the claimant's name) or any information about special support needs. As a result, hosts did not always recognise the claimant when they arrived and said they were often confused with customers. In one instance a claimant needed to attend the placement with their social worker, however, the host was not aware of this requirement until the claimant arrived. In this case the host said that they should have been warned of this in advance in order to prepare for and support the claimant appropriately.

'We became quite wary as it was difficult to plan work for someone if you don't know who you are getting and what they are capable of.'

(Host, South London)

Hosts also experienced challenges dealing with the unpredictability of claimant referrals from the provider. More specifically, hosts often agreed to take on a higher number of claimants than they could cope with because it was assumed a high proportion would fail to attend. However, on some occasions hosts became overburdened because more claimants arrived than they had been expecting and they did not feel comfortable sending claimants away, despite being told to do so by providers.

There was also a perception amongst hosts that the information given to claimants was inconsistent. Consequently, hosts felt obliged to provide an extensive introduction to the Trailblazer as claimants were not always aware what was expected of them or what would happen during the placement.

'I realised it was important to run a good induction session as I had a feeling that they [the claimants] were a little unsure about what it was all about ... when it first arrived they did seem a little bit, well I've been asked to come along, but I am not sure what it is about.'

(Host, South London)

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Hosts also reported experiencing difficulty assigning dedicated staff resource to run claimant induction days. As there was such a high level of drop out after the first day at the host, many decided that it was a more efficient use of staff time to run a two-stage induction process instead, concentrating staff resource on the second day for those claimants who had demonstrated more commitment. For example, one host undertook a 'taster session' on the first day to identify whether the claimant was likely to stay and to offer the claimant a better understanding of the role. This was followed by a more intensive induction on the second day for those claimants who returned.

2.4 Claimants' experience of the referral process

Having discussed the referral process from the perspective of Jobcentre Plus staff, providers and hosts, we now consider how claimants felt about the referral and how DOSfYP was positioned to them. The findings draw on the quantitative survey and qualitative depth interviews with claimants.

2.4.1 Overall perceptions of the referral process

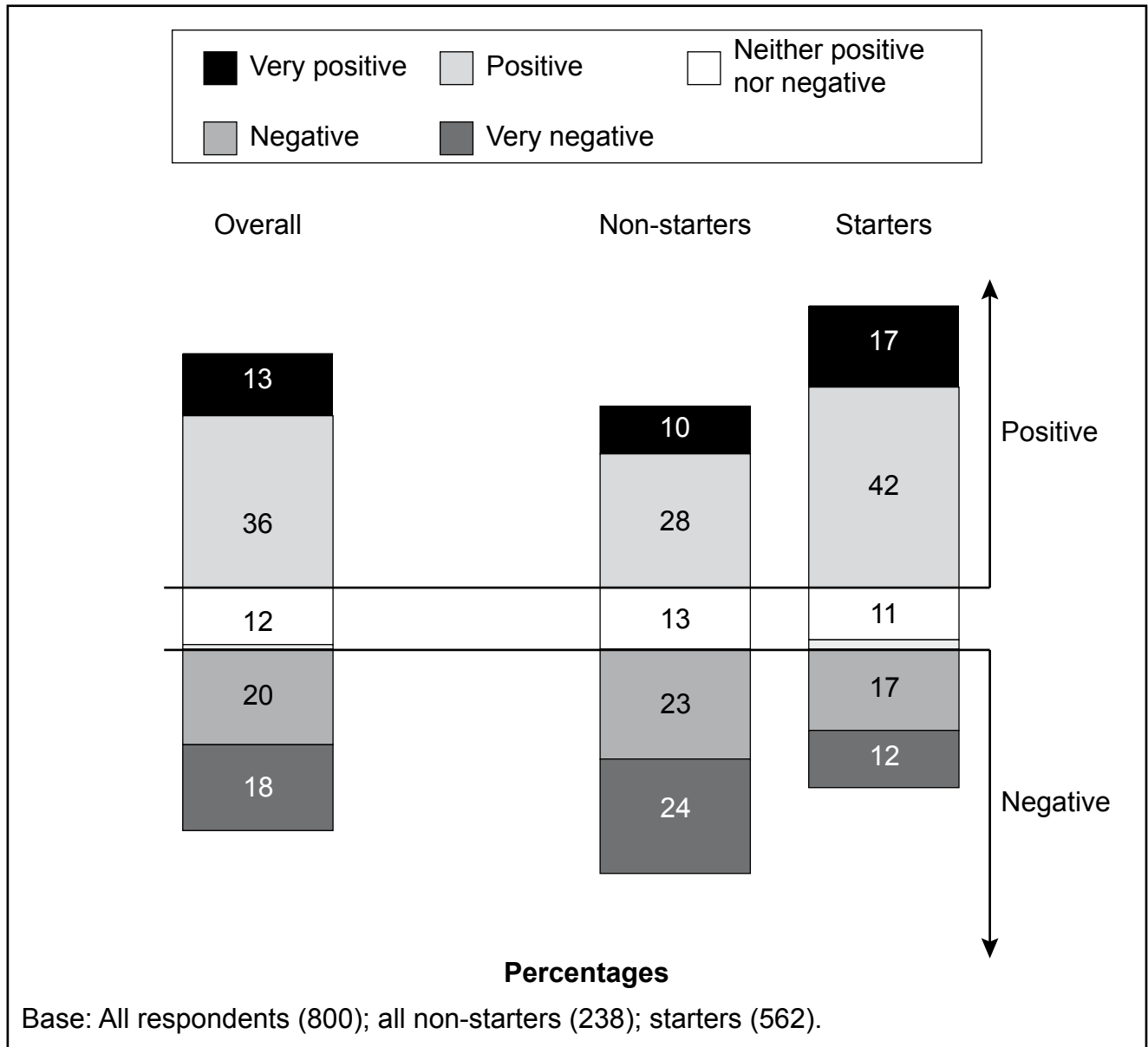
Surveyed claimants were asked how positive they felt overall about being referred to DOSfYP after the Jobcentre Plus adviser had explained the scheme to them.

Based on what they were told at the time of the referral, claimants generally seemed positive about the scheme. Almost half (49 per cent) felt positive about the scheme based on how the Jobcentre Plus adviser outlined it to them, with 13 per cent feeling very positive. Conversely, 38 per cent felt negative about the placement, with 18 per cent feeling very negative. A small minority (12 per cent) felt neither positive nor negative. This can be seen in Figure 2.1.

As shown in Figure 2.1, there were significant differences in opinion between claimants who started a placement and those who did not. As you would expect, there was more positivity towards the scheme at the time of the referral amongst those who started a placement, with 59 per cent saying they felt positive about the placement compared to 38 per cent of those who did not start a placement.

It is also worth noting that claimants with at least some work experience were more than twice as likely as those with no work experience to say they felt very negative about being sent on a placement (24 per cent compared with ten per cent).

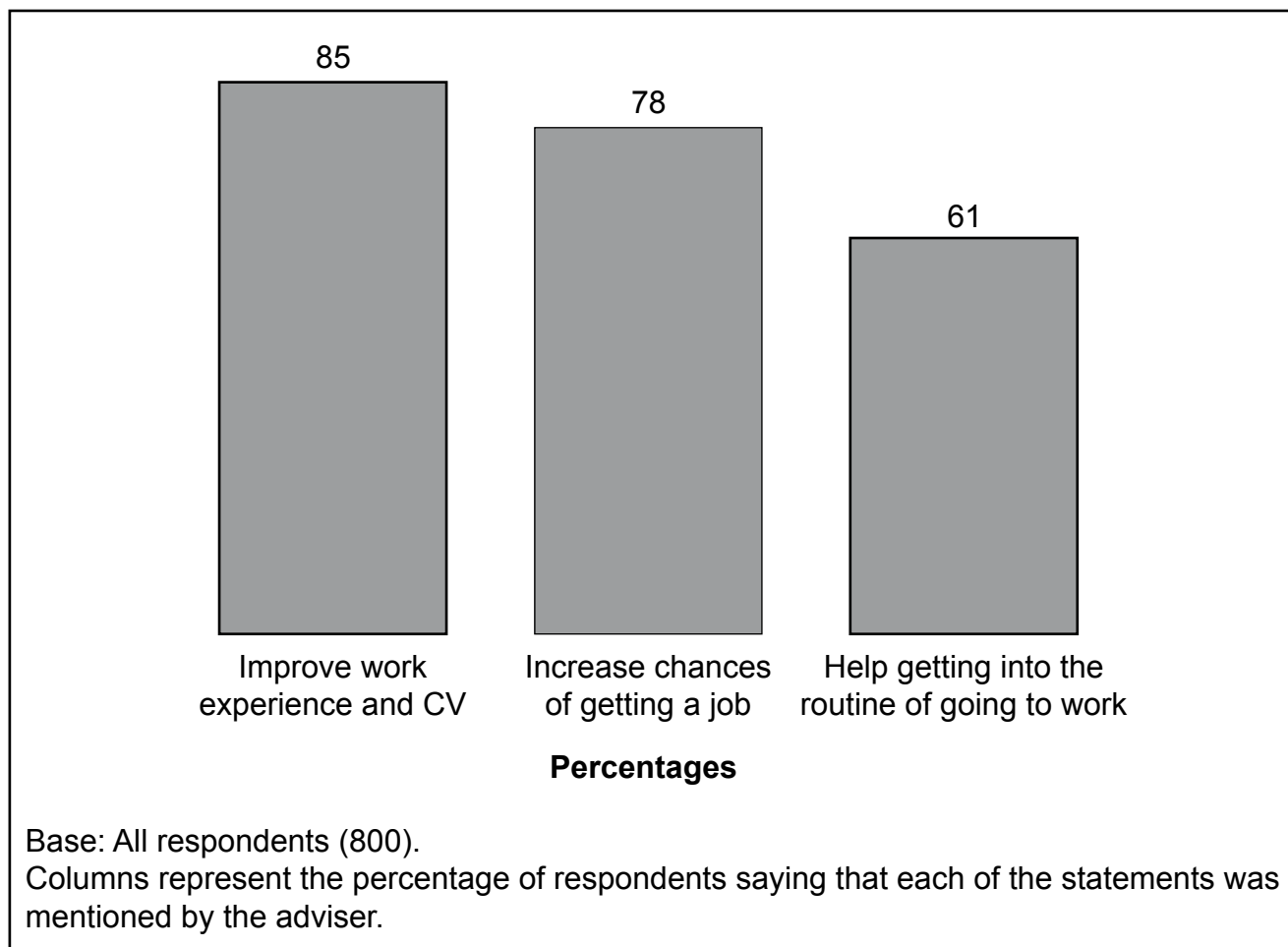
Figure 2.1 Positivity regarding DOSfYP once adviser had explained



2.4.2 Claimant understanding of the possible benefits

Surveyed claimants were asked what their understanding was of why they were being sent on the placement. Based on claimants' responses, advisers seemed to be conveying the core aims of the scheme effectively at the time of the referral. As Figure 2.2 shows, the vast majority of claimants felt they understood that, based on what the adviser told them, the scheme was to improve their work experience (85 per cent) and increase their chances of getting a job (78 per cent). Fewer, although still more than half, said they understood that it was to help them get into the routine of going to work (61 per cent). However, findings from the qualitative work with claimants and providers suggested that claimants wanted more information about what the Trailblazer would actually involve. Without this information they made incorrect assumptions about the training and support they would be given and were ultimately disappointed with the quality of the provision.

Figure 2.2 Impressions of why being sent on placement



There were no significant differences amongst subgroups of respondents, which is encouraging as it seems that all claimants received the same messages regarding the intentions of the scheme. Specifically those who started a placement were no more likely to have understood these three key principles of the scheme.

2.4.3 Claimant perceptions of DOSfYP at the time of referral

Surveyed claimants were also presented with a series of statements about how they felt when the adviser told them about attending the placement.

As Figure 2.3 shows, there was variation in how elements of the scheme were perceived by claimants. The majority (79 per cent) felt that there was no choice they 'had to attend' the placement, which suggests that the mandatory nature of the scheme was being conveyed effectively by advisers. Two-thirds (66 per cent) felt that the DOSfYP Trailblazer was an opportunity to get used to the routine of going to work although the same proportion (66 per cent) felt the scheme would not leave enough time to look for work. Just over half felt that DOSfYP would help them to get a job (55 per cent), but a significant proportion felt that it would not help them to get a job (38 per cent). Half of all claimants (50 per cent) felt it was happening too fast and 47 per cent felt put off claiming JSA.

Claimants who took part in the qualitative research routinely felt overwhelmed by the speed of the Jobcentre Plus referral to the provider as they said they did not have enough time to

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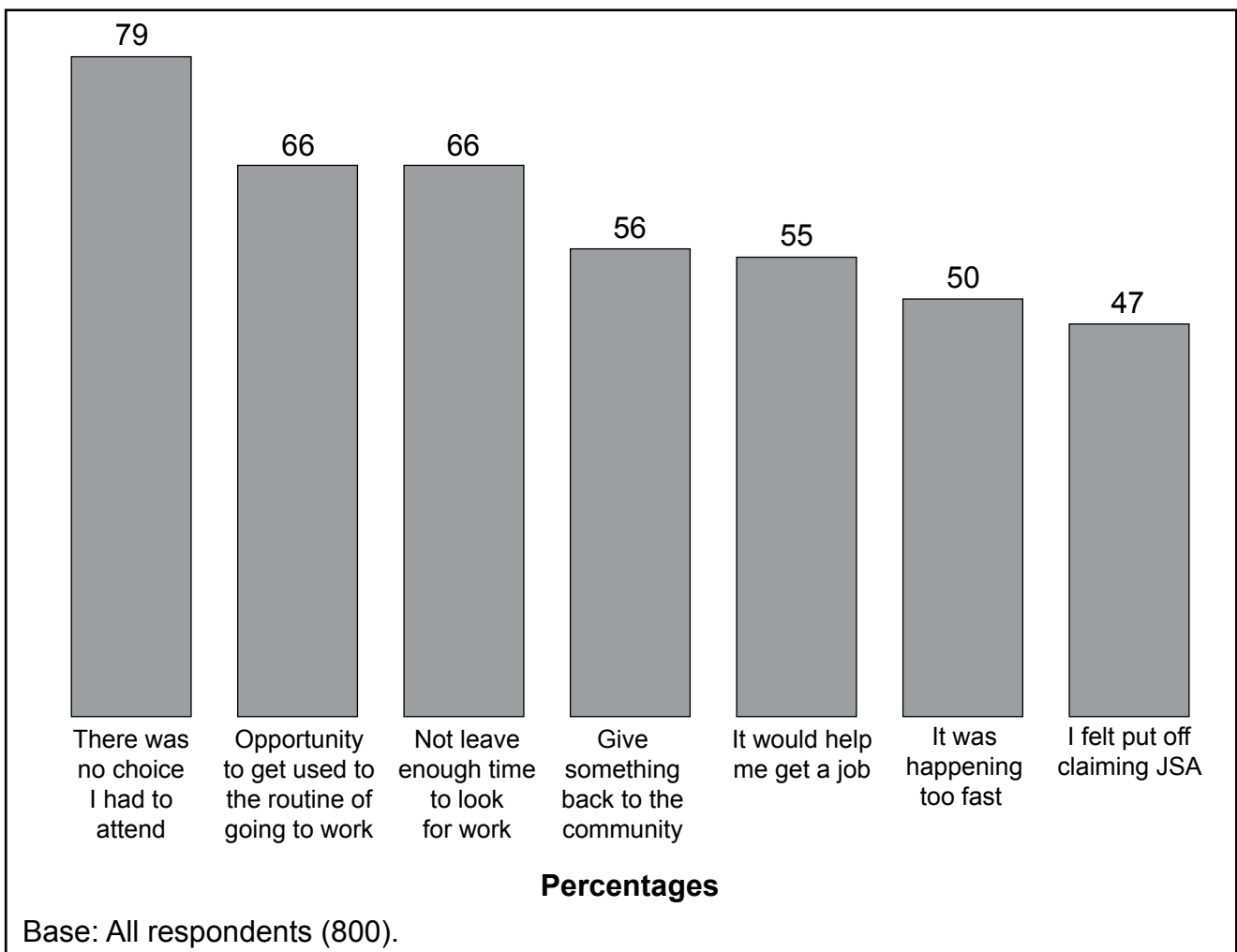
understand and assimilate the requirements of the scheme. Additionally, due to the speed of referral claimants had to rearrange other commitments at very short notice in order to attend the provider appointment the following day. They considered that the tight turnaround of the referral was unfair as it assumed that they did not have other commitments such as interviews or caring responsibilities. In a small number of instances claimants said they received a threat of a sanction, where they were not able to attend the provider interview the next day.

'It was a bit strange, I had to go to a job interview the next day so they said either you cancel it, or you will be sanctioned.'

(Claimant, non-start, North London)

This issue was mentioned by three claimants and was also raised by Jobcentre Plus advisers who said that they did not know how to delay a referral for claimants who were not available the following day and what proof was needed to validate this. They therefore told claimants that to avoid sanctioning they would need to return to the Jobcentre when they would be available to attend a provider interview the following day.

Figure 2.3 Attitudes towards the scheme



There were variations in attitudes between those who went on to start a placement and those who did not. Over half (56 per cent) of those who did not start a placement felt put off claiming

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JSA, compared with 40 per cent of those who did start a placement. Claimants who did not start a placement were also less likely to feel that the scheme was an opportunity to give something back to the community (48 per cent compared to 63 per cent of those who did start a placement) and were less likely to see the scheme as an opportunity to get used to the routine of going to work (57 per cent against 75 per cent of those who did start a placement).

Consistent with findings elsewhere, claimants with no work experience tended to express more positive views towards DOSfYP on each of the measures in Figure 2.3. They were more likely to feel that the programme was an opportunity to get used to the routine of going to work (73 per cent) compared to those who had some work experience (59 per cent). Similarly, there were significant differences in perceptions of the scheme depending on the claimants' level of education. Claimants with a degree (or higher) were more likely to say they felt put off claiming JSA based on the adviser's explanation (60 per cent) compared to those with qualifications below degree level (45 per cent). Similarly claimants with a degree (or higher) were significantly less likely to see DOSfYP as something which would help them to get a job (42 per cent compared to 57 per cent with a lower level of qualification).

The findings show that claimants who have some level of work experience or with higher levels of education were less positive about the scheme and more sceptical of its potential to help them to get a job. This may be because they feel that their CV and work experience were strong enough to get a job without the additional work experience offered by DOSfYP.

In addition, claimants who had been looking for work for longer than six months were more likely to feel that the placement would not leave them enough time to look for work (78 per cent of those looking for work for more than six months against 61 per cent of those looking for less than six months). Claimants who had been looking for work for longer than six months, but had only just made a claim for JSA, may have come to a Jobcentre Plus because their own job search was not productive and they wanted support (or simply needed the additional income from JSA while focusing on finding work). A 13-week work placement was possibly seen by these claimants as a distraction from their job search.

Claimants' perceptions of the speed of referral seemed to affect how some of them felt about the scheme. Half (50 per cent) of claimants who felt that things were progressing too quickly felt negative about the placement itself, compared to 24 per cent of those who did not feel things were happening too fast. As described above, claimants who participated in the qualitative research considered it 'unfair' that they were expected to be available the following day, particularly when this meant rearranging other commitments. Claimants who felt overwhelmed by the speed of referral said this influenced decisions to drop out of the Trailblazer.

Not surprisingly, whether the scheme was viewed as beneficial to the claimant's job prospects was also related to overall positivity. Of those who did not believe the placement would help them find a job, around two-thirds (67 per cent) felt negative about the placement against 18 per cent of those who felt it would help them find a job. Similarly, of those who did not feel the placement would help them get into the routine of going to work, 68 per cent felt negative about the scheme in contrast to 24 per cent who did feel it would help them get into the routine of work. As a counter point to this, almost half (47 per cent) of claimants who believed the placement would not give them enough time to look for work felt negative about the placement compared with 20 per cent of those who did not believe this. As may be expected, the survey findings suggest that, for claimants to feel positive about the scheme, they had to believe that their time will improve their job prospects, rather than diminish the amount of time they could spend looking for work.

Overall, attitudes towards the initial explanation of DOSfYP were varied and seemed to be heavily influenced by the claimant's level of work experience and their qualifications.

2.4.4 Explanation of the process by advisers

Surveyed claimants were asked about how clearly the adviser explained the requirements of the scheme (in relation to the series of statements summarised in Figure 2.4).

Advisers appeared to be conveying the core requirements of DOSfYP effectively. However, there are elements which were being lost in the explanation – particularly that the placement might be an opportunity to benefit the community.

The vast majority of claimants (90 per cent) said the adviser made it clear that they would have to spend a set number of hours searching for jobs (typically ten hours per week), and a similar proportion (87 per cent) said that it was clear they were expected to attend the placement for a set number of hours (typically 30 hours per week). More than four-fifths (83 per cent) also said it was clear that they would have to spend 13 weeks on placement. These findings suggest the fundamental attendance and activity requirements of the scheme were being explained effectively by advisers.

There was also a high awareness of potential sanctions – 90 per cent of claimants knew that their benefits could be stopped or reduced if they did not adhere to certain rules. Awareness was universally high in all sub-groups of claimants, suggesting that advisers had conveyed the requirements to the claimant effectively – there being high levels of awareness of potential sanctions if claimants did not meet the requirements of the Trailblazer.

However, slightly smaller proportions said it was clear they would have to meet someone from another organisation the next day (76 per cent) and 71 per cent were clear that the placement would start the day after meeting the provider. This suggests in around a quarter of referrals the claimant was unclear about the timeframe for the referral and placement start. This is supported by the findings from the qualitative research which suggest that, beyond the fundamentals of the programme, claimants were often unaware that they would need to start a placement so soon after their initial meeting.

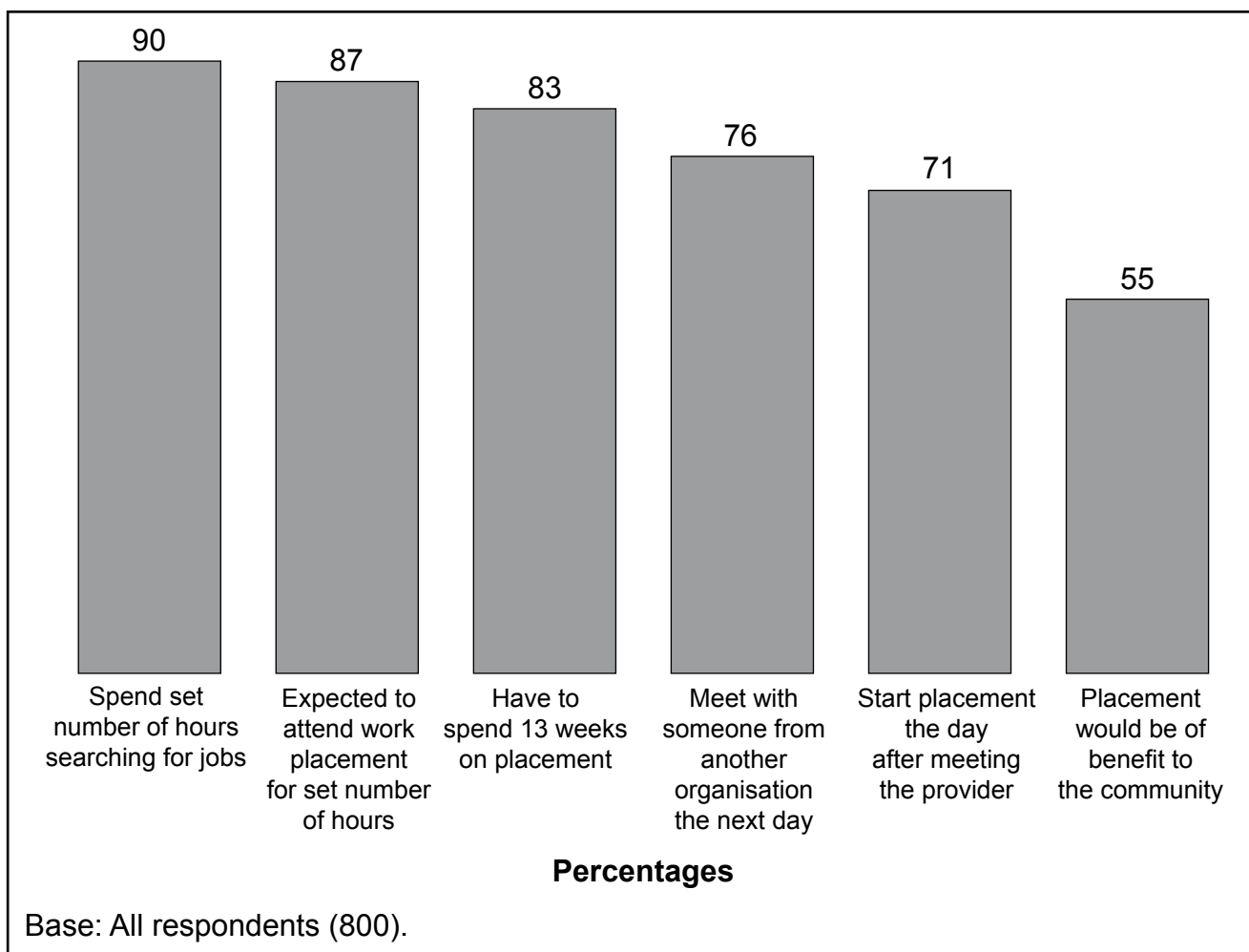
Only slightly more than half of claimants (55 per cent) said it was clear that the placement would be of benefit to the community.

There were significant differences in response between claimants who started a placement and those who did not in terms of their understanding the requirements of the scheme. There was a much higher level of clarity about what the scheme would entail amongst those who started a placement compared to those who did not.

Around four in five (81 per cent) of those who started a placement said it was clear that they would have to meet the provider the next day, compared to 71 per cent of non-starters. Similarly, 78 per cent of starters said it was clear that they would start the placement the day after meeting the provider, compared with 62 per cent of those who did not start. Almost nine in ten (91 per cent) starters were also clear that the placement would last 13 weeks in contrast to around three-quarters (73 per cent) of non-starters. Over nine in ten starters said it was made clear that they would attend the placement for a set number of hours and would have a set number of hours for job search as part of the placement (93 per cent for both compared to 80 per cent and 86 per cent of non-starters respectively).

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Figure 2.4 Clarity of adviser's explanation



While the survey findings suggest most claimants came away from their NJI fairly clear about the mechanics of the Trailblazer, the qualitative research suggests claimants were often very unclear about what their placement would actually involve. Claimants tended to only recall being told about the basic elements of the Trailblazer at this stage – that they were required to attend a meeting at the provider the following day, the provider would arrange a work placement, the placement would last 13 weeks and they would be sanctioned if they did not attend. Nevertheless, claimants still felt confused at the first stage of the process because their Jobcentre Plus adviser was unable to provide them with more detailed information about what the placement and the Trailblazer would involve, such as the type of placement and any training or support they would receive.

'They [Jobcentre Plus] didn't tell me a lot about it. I mean, I kept asking questions about what sort of things I would be doing ... and just said "oh you will find out at the provider" and gave me a leaflet.'

(Claimant, non-complete, North London)

2.4.5 The provider meeting

Following their referral from Jobcentre Plus, claimants were required to attend a meeting with their placement provider. Qualitative research with claimants suggests that these meetings

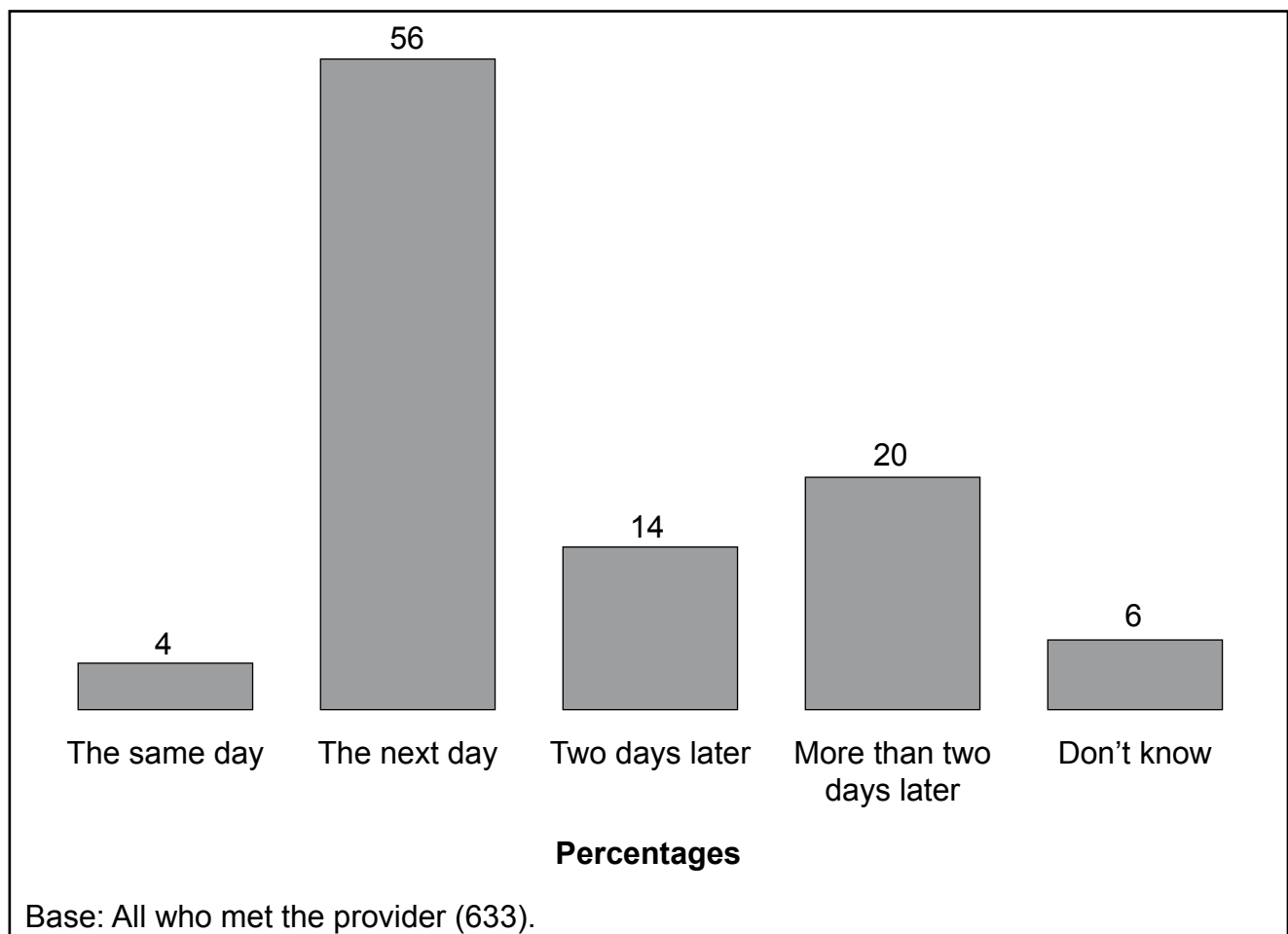
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often included two or more sessions. Claimants often described attending a group induction session that gave an overview of the Trailblazer, followed by an individual meeting with an adviser who asked them about their career aspirations, carried out a skills assessment and assigned a placement. Claimants' experiences and perceptions of the provider meeting are discussed in more detail below.

All surveyed claimants were asked whether, following their NJI, they met the organisation that would be arranging the work placement for them (the provider). Nearly three-quarters of all surveyed claimants (72 per cent) said that they had. Although only around half of those who didn't start a placement (52 per cent) attended this type of meeting – suggesting that non-starters were evenly divided between those who dropped out prior to their provider meeting and those who dropped out after.

Those who did meet their provider were asked when this meeting took place. As Figure 2.5 shows, more than half (56 per cent) met the provider the day after their initial claim/NJI, with an additional four per cent indicating the meeting was on the same day as their claim. A further 14 per cent met the provider within two days – leaving 20 per cent who said they met the provider more than two days after the initial Jobcentre Plus meeting.

Figure 2.5 Point met the provider



Qualitative research with claimants suggests that, on the whole, the experience of the provider meeting was as claimants had expected. However, several claimants voiced their disappointment that despite being asked about aspirations at their interview, their placement

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did not match their aspirations or skillset. Additionally, in some cases, claimants were unsure of the value of the provider meeting, as they were not asked to show their CV or any other proof of their previous experience.

'When I was talking to the advisers, they told me all that was available at the moment was charity shop placements ... they also didn't ask to see my CV which was quite odd seeing as they had wanted to know about my experience.'

(Claimant, non-complete, North London)

Claimants also experienced difficulty travelling to the provider as offices were often far from their homes and/or challenging to reach via public transport. This finding was reflected in the Jobcentre Plus staff interviews who felt it was unfair to ask claimants to travel over an hour away from their homes. This led to some claimants missing their initial appointment, risking being sanctioned for non-attendance.

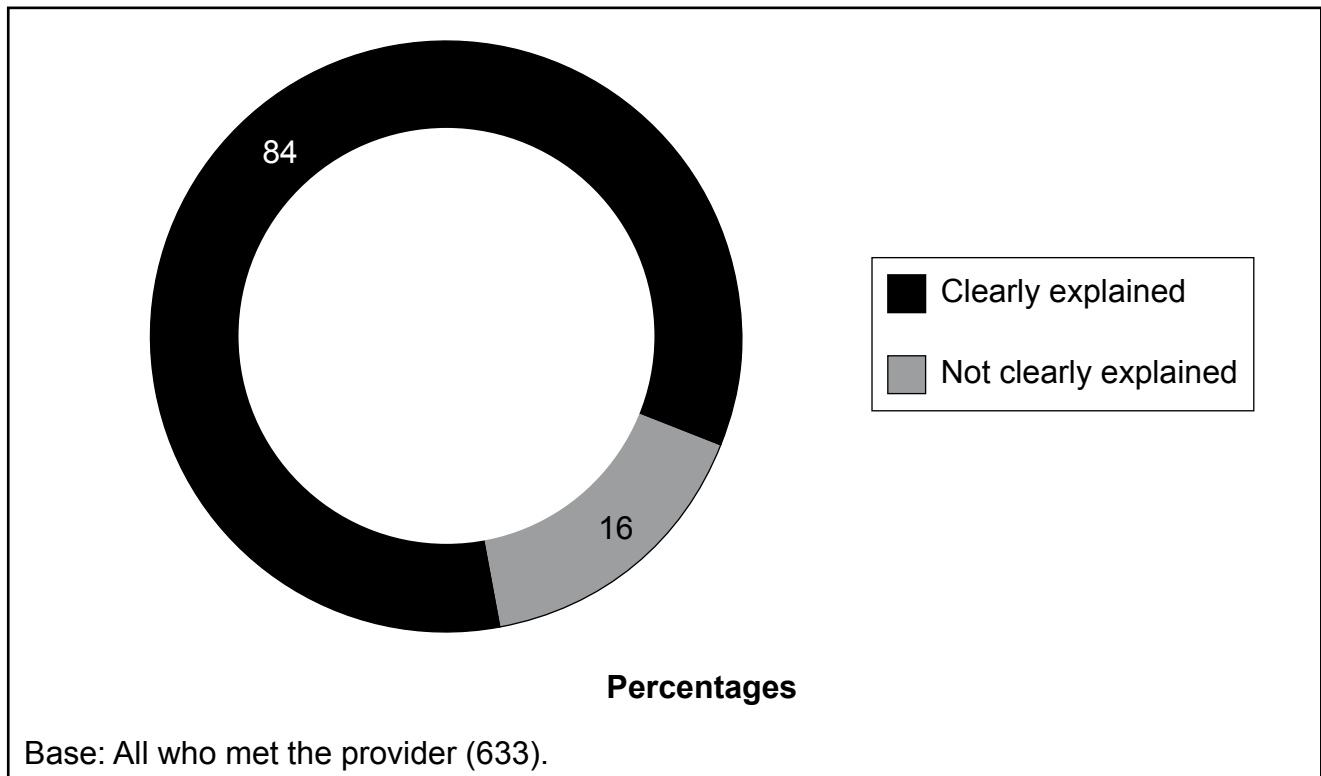
'I felt really annoyed; I had to travel an hour on two buses to get to that appointment to then be told I was doing a placement that was completely irrelevant to me.'

(Claimant, non-complete, South London)

In one case in the qualitative interviews, a claimant was turned away from the provider upon arrival as they were not recorded on their system. (This issue was also mentioned in the staff research and was attributed by staff to the PRaP IT system). This claimant voiced his frustration at having to return to the Jobcentre Plus to find out what had happened to his claim. Similar cases were reported by Jobcentre Plus staff in both North and South London who had to deal with several claimants who returned to the Jobcentre Plus after the provider had turned them away.

Surveyed claimants who met the provider were asked whether the provider clearly explained the placement. The vast majority (84 per cent) said that the placement organisers had explained the placement clearly, as depicted in Figure 2.6. On this measure, there was no difference in the views of those who went on to start a placement compared with those who did not.

Figure 2.6 Whether provider clearly explained placement



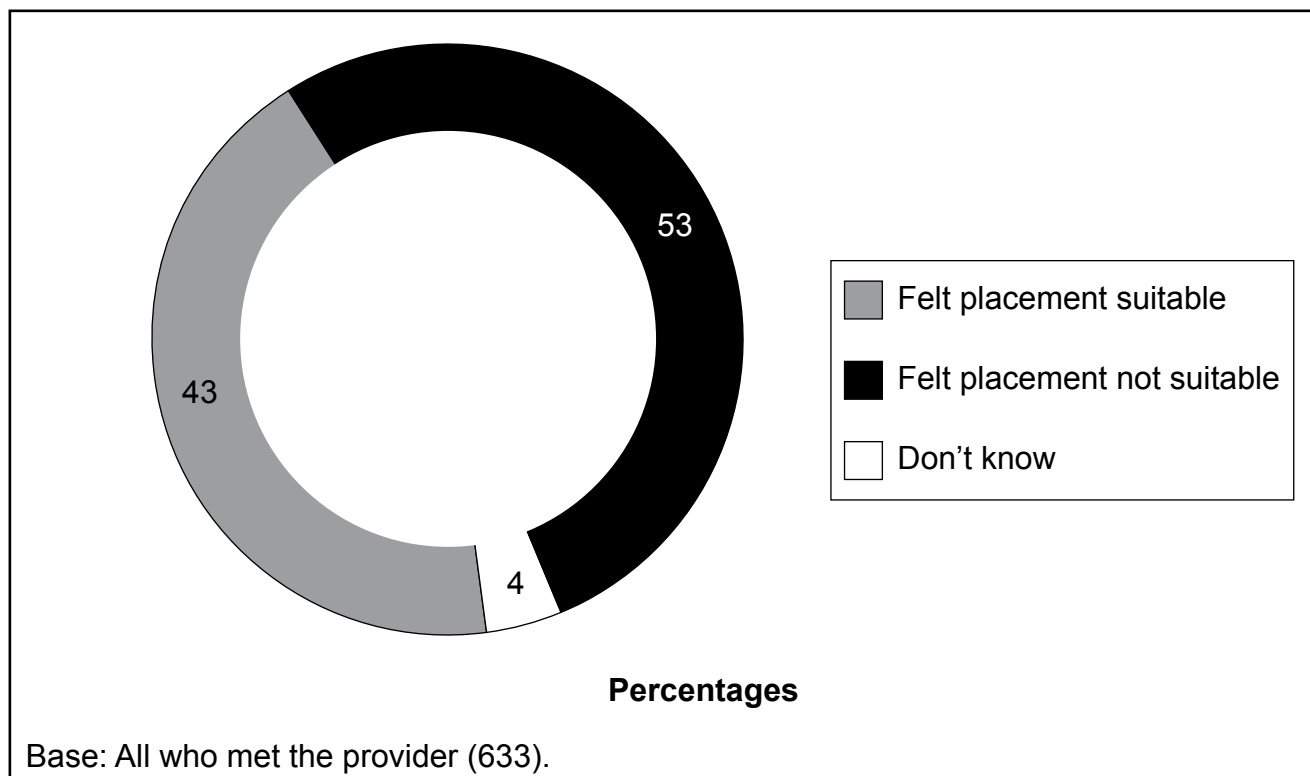
2.4.6 Perceived suitability and discussions of types of placements with providers

The survey asked claimants who attended a meeting with the provider whether they had a discussion with the provider about placements the claimant felt would be suitable for them. Around two-thirds (68 per cent) said that they discussed types of placement they felt would be suitable with the provider.

The survey questioned claimants as to whether they felt the placement they were offered was suitable for them (after meeting the provider). Figure 2.7 shows that opinion regarding this was split. Almost half (43 per cent) felt that the placement was suitable compared to 53 per cent who felt the placement was not suitable. So although the clarity of the explanation given by providers was generally good this doesn't translate into claimants feeling positive about the placement on offer.

Unsurprisingly, those who started a placement were around twice as likely (51 per cent) to feel that the placement was suitable for them compared with those who did not start a placement (26 per cent). There were no other significant differences between types of claimant, which suggests that there are few signifiers for whether a claimant felt a placement was suitable or not.

Figure 2.7 Whether claimant felt the placement was suitable



Attitudes do not seem to shift between discussing the placement with a Jobcentre Plus adviser and with the provider – 82 per cent of those who felt negative about the placement when it was explained by the adviser also believed the placement was unsuitable when the provider discussed it with them. Equally, around two-thirds (65 per cent) of those who felt positive about the scheme when it was explained by the adviser also felt the placement was suitable when the provider outlined it to them. This suggests that attitudes remain consistent amongst claimants from their feelings when the scheme was outlined by the Jobcentre Plus adviser, to their perception of the placement's suitability when it was described by the provider.

However, whether or not the provider discussed the types of placements that would match the claimant's interests and future job aspirations did have a bearing on the claimant's views of the placement. In cases where this type of discussion took place, slightly more than half (53 per cent) of claimants said they felt the placement offered was suitable. This compares with just one in five (20 per cent) of cases where the provider did not discuss the types of placements that would match the claimant's interests and aspirations.

Those who felt that the placement was not suitable were asked why they felt this way. The most commonly cited reason was that the placement did not match the type of job which the individual was interested in (60 per cent). The placement being unrelated to the individual's skills or experience was also mentioned by almost one in five respondents (19 per cent), with 14 per cent saying that the placement would not help their career plans. Therefore it seems that the placement's relevance to the individual's job aspirations and skill set is crucial in making the respondent feel that the placement is suitable for them.

Table 2.1 Why placement felt to be unsuitable

	%
Doesn't match the type of job interested in	60
Not suited to skills or experience	19
Wouldn't help career plans	14
Too far away	10
Wouldn't teach me anything new	6

Base: All who felt the placement was unsuitable (342).

Note: Claimants were able to provide more than one answer. The top five reasons are given in the table.

2.4.7 Differences between how Jobcentre Plus and providers position placements

There was evidence from the qualitative interviews with claimants that there were differences in the detail of what Jobcentre Plus and providers thought would be offered as part of the Trailblazer.

In some cases claimants believed that they had been misled by the information they received from Jobcentre Plus or they had inaccurate expectations because the information they had been given was very basic and therefore they had made assumptions about what the placement might involve.

'She told me about the course, saying I would learn skills to help me get a job. I thought [provider name] was a college. I didn't realise it was working in a charity shop most of the time.'

(Claimant, Completer, South London)

Claimants said that at the first stage of the referral they were only told basic information such as length of the placement and that they would be sanctioned if they did not attend. As a result they made assumptions about the Trailblazer such as that there would be a range of placements on offer and that they would be able to find one that was suitably matched to their skillset, which were subsequently not met.

Additionally, claimants mentioned that Jobcentre Plus advisers described the Trailblazer as a 'course' which many took to imply that there would be a classroom-based learning environment with the opportunity to learn a range of employability skills such as CV writing, interview technique and transferable job skills.

'I was told about a three-day seminar to learn about getting a job and then given work experience.'

(Claimant, non-start, North London)

Although some providers did offer this opportunity, this was not provided consistently and the job search support on offer from providers is explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

3 DOSfYP placements

This chapter looks at claimants' experiences and views of attending Day One Support for Young People (DOSfYP) placements, amongst all those who started a placement. Throughout this group of claimants are referred to as 'starters' and includes those who completed a placement ('completers') and those who started but did not complete the full 13 weeks ('partial completers'). As part of the Trailblazer, claimants were expected to complete ten hours of provider-led job search per week, which is considered in the second part of this chapter.

Key findings

- Just over half of claimants started a placement (53 per cent).
- Despite some reservations with placements (discussed below), claimants who participated in the Trailblazer were positive about their experience. This was particularly the case for claimants who completed a full 13-week placement - 85 per cent of these claimants said they felt positive overall.
- Three-quarters of claimants or more agreed that they got the support they needed from staff while on their placement (78 per cent); were satisfied with the amount of responsibility they were given (76 per cent) and enjoyed the routine of going to work (75 per cent). However, forty-three per cent of claimants who started a placement felt that it was not suitable for them.
- The range of work placements and the type of work carried out on placement sometimes lacked diversity (58 per cent were in charity shops) and this was seen as an issue by some Jobcentre Plus staff, providers and claimants. There was a feeling that placements were most worthwhile when they were at least partly tailored to the claimants' needs and aspirations.
- There was a feeling amongst some claimants and staff that spending 30 hours per week on the placement meant that claimants did not always have time to carry out sufficient job search, particularly when claimants were required to travel long distances to the host and the provider. Forty per cent of claimants were dissatisfied with the amount of time available for job search while on the placement.
- Claimants and Jobcentre Plus advisers tended to view the level of job search support while on placement as unsatisfactory (both in terms of the amount of time allocated and the level of support). The vast majority of claimants reported receiving less than the expected ten hours of provider-led job search.
- Overall, hosts were positive about their experience of the Trailblazer and were largely impressed by the enthusiasm shown by claimants. However, there was a perception amongst hosts that unengaged claimants were unlikely to benefit from placements, and placements which matched claimants' interests were more beneficial to themselves, and the claimant. Where higher numbers of claimants than expected left their placement soon after it had started, this was difficult to manage for some hosts.

3.1 Participation

Just over half of claimants started a placement (53 per cent). Of those, a sizable minority (17 per cent) attended two or more placements – including 3 per cent of all starters who had attended three or more. Those who attended more than one placement were slightly more likely than those who attended a single placement to say that the placement they were initially referred to was not suitable (56 per cent compared with 45 per cent). It is probable that some of these ‘multiple-placement’ claimants requested a transfer to a different placement or were told they would be moved on if a more suitable placement became available.

3.2 Placement settings and the range of work carried out

As shown in Table 3.1, charity shops were by far the most common setting for DOSfYP placements (around six in ten placements were in this type of setting). Working for youth organisations, organisations involved in construction and warehouse work were also fairly common.

Table 3.1 Location of placement

Where claimant was working on placement	%
In a charity shop	58
Youth or community organisation	8
Organisation involved in construction, renovation or decorating	4
A warehouse – including a warehouse for a charity	4
Charity organisation	3
Education establishment	2
Recycling charity or organisation	2
Retail	2
Business/Administration	2
Conservation or environmental organisation	2
Café or catering organisation	2
Art Gallery/Museum	1
Hospitality organisation	1
Library	1
Nursery	1
Government/local authority	1

Base: All who claimants who started a placement (562).

Charity shop placements were most common for claimants who had no work experience at all prior to making their claim – 62 per cent of those with no work experience worked in a charity shop compared with 52 per cent who had up to six months’ experience. Conversely, those with at least some work experience were slightly more likely to have been placed with organisations involved in hospitality and construction, or in warehouses. This suggests there may be some limited tailoring of placements for claimants who already had at least some work experience.

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There was some evidence from the qualitative research that providers were trying to match claimants to placements which reflected their aspirations. In one case, for example, a claimant was given a temporary placement in the head office of a charity, undertaking administration and receptionist duties. Three weeks later they were transferred to another placement, which successfully led to the offer of full-time employment. However, in another instance a claimant was placed in an art gallery where they gained experience carrying out light building maintenance duties. In this instance, however, the claimant said that the placement was not relevant to their desired career path and despite raising concerns were told by the provider that it was not possible to change. Given the relative scarcity of placements outside retail, this placement may have been more usefully matched to a claimant with those aspirations.

Further to this, qualitative research with claimants and providers indicated that there had been some success matching placements where claimants had sourced these for themselves. Providers said that they encouraged this as they did not have the resource available to source placements that were specific to the aspirations of individual claimants. It may also be the case that a broader range of hosts are willing to participate in DOSfYP when approached by the young person rather than the provider because they are able to meet the young person and see that they are eager to gain that experience. For example, a claimant who was interested in theatre stage management from a previous experience, found a community theatre group who agreed to take her on for a DOSfYP placement.

Reflecting the settings in which claimants were placed (i.e. predominantly charity shops) the most common types of activity carried out on placement were organising stock or goods, dealing with members of the public, working the till and sorting donations (Table 3.2). At least a quarter of all starters were engaged in each of these activities. Cleaning, administrative tasks, manual work and responding to telephone calls, emails or letters were also relatively common.

Table 3.2 Type(s) of activity carried out on placement

Organising stock or goods	52
Dealing with members of the public or serving customers	38
Dealing with money and credit/debit cards or using a till	25
Sorting donations/bags of donations	24
Cleaning	19
Administrative or clerical work such as filing, photocopying, and dealing with paperwork	14
Undertaking other manual work such as building or decorating	11
Responding to telephone calls, emails or letters	8
Looking after others, e.g. youth work or caring for elderly	4
Undertaking physical tasks outdoors such as digging and planting	3
Fundraising	2
Supervising children/Childcare	2
Catering/kitchen assistant	2

Base: All who claimants who started a placement (562).

The qualitative research pointed to some claimants feeling that there was limited diversity in the range of placements and tasks on offer. Those claimants who were placed in charity shops carried out a range of tasks, including cleaning and sorting shelves, labelling and

pricing clothing, operating the till, and greeting/helping customers. This was considered a useful experience by those claimants who were looking for retail work or who simply found the experience of a working environment valuable in increasing confidence and providing a daily routine, but did not meet the needs and aspirations of other claimants.

Furthermore, the quality of placements was thought to vary considerably. Whilst some claimants were given a range of tasks to do and kept busy during the day, in other cases claimants said that there were too many claimants at the host and therefore they did not have enough to do during the day.

3.3 Meeting the 30-hour work placement target

As described in the introduction to the report, the DOSfYP Trailblazer was designed with the requirement that all attendees must spend 30 hours on placement per week. In addition, attendees were required to carry out ten hours of provider-led job search per week. Job search activity is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Unsurprisingly it was most common for claimants to have attended for 30 hours exactly per week (52 per cent who started a placement said this was the case) with a further 13 per cent indicating that they worked in excess of 30 hours. Around three in ten (30 per cent) of all starters said they attended for less than 30 hours per week. Those whose placement lasted less than 30 hours per week were around twice as likely to have children than those whose placement was 30 hours or more (six per cent compared with two per cent) and around twice as likely to have a physical or mental health condition or illness (19 per cent compared with ten per cent). These may have been factors that led to a reduction in the 30 hour requirement.

In fact, around two-thirds (65 per cent) of those who said their placement involved less than 30 hours per week indicated that this had been agreed with their adviser – leaving 29 per cent who said it had not been agreed and seven per cent who didn't know or could not remember.

The remaining seven per cent said they did not know how many hours they had worked (presumably due to limited recall among those who attended for a short period of time or whose placement ended some months prior to interview).

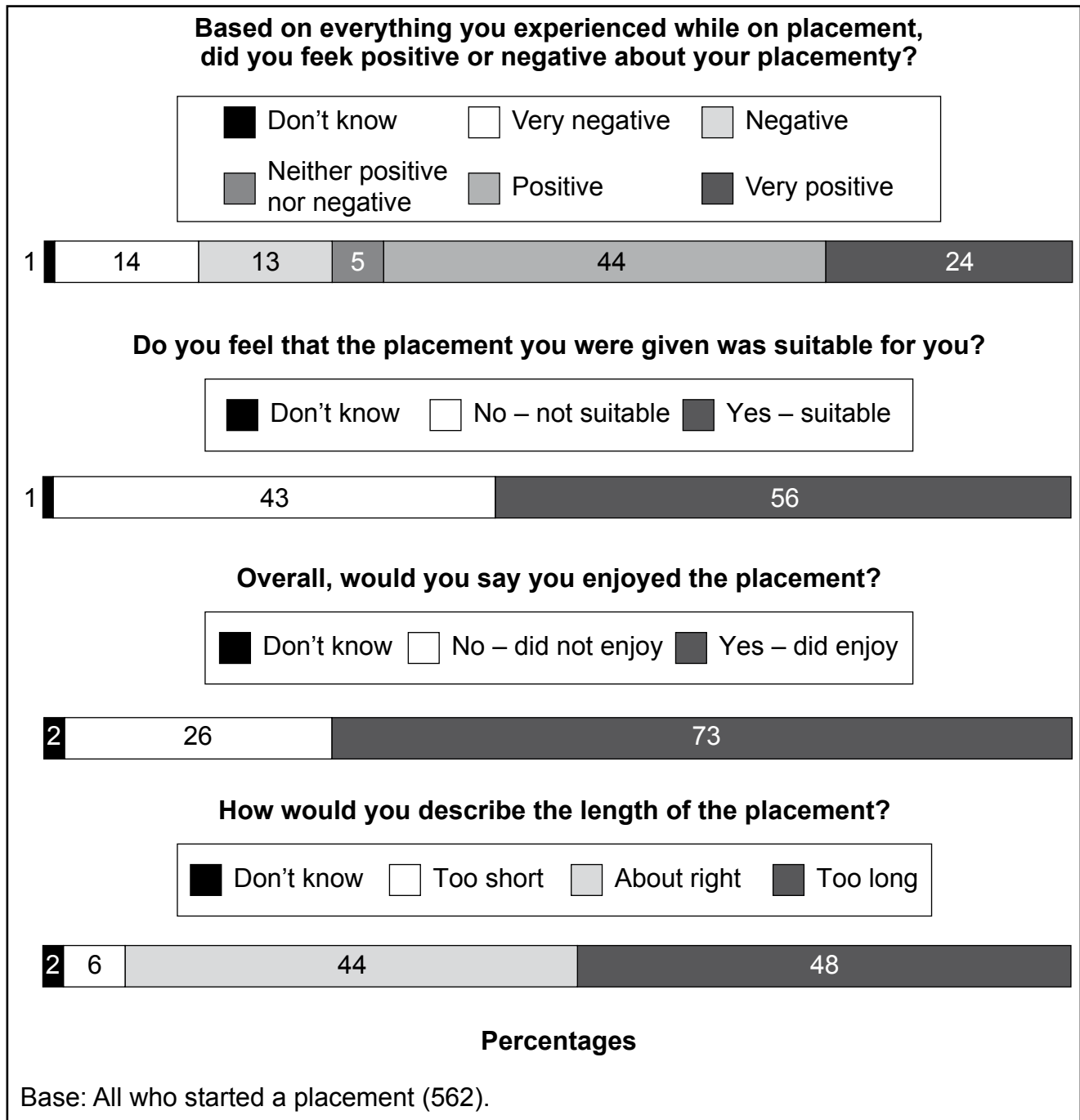
3.4 Claimants' perceptions of the DOSfYP placements

All claimants who attended at least part of a placement were asked a series of questions to assess whether they felt their placement was suitable, how positive they felt about the placement, whether or not they enjoyed the placement and their views on the length of the placement. As shown in Figure 3.1, the majority who attended a placement said that they enjoyed the experience and felt positive about attending (including around a quarter, 24 per cent, who felt very positive). However, claimants were less likely to describe the placement as suitable – with just over a half (56 per cent) of all starters saying this was the case. This is consistent with the proportion of claimants who felt the placement was suitable at the time of the referral (see the preceding chapter). In fact claimants' views largely remained unchanged between referral and attending the placement – the vast majority of those who felt the placement sounded unsuitable based on what the provider told them continued to feel it was unsuitable having started the placement.

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Generally those who were based in charity shops tended to be less positive than those who were based in other settings. They were more likely to say the placement was not suitable (46 per cent compared with 39 per cent placed elsewhere) and were more likely not to have enjoyed the placement (28 per cent compared with 24 per cent).

Figure 3.1 Overall perceptions of placement among starters



As we might expect, those who completed a full 13-week placement tended to be more positive about their experience with 90 per cent saying they enjoyed it, 85 per cent feeling positive to some degree and 75 per cent feeling that the placement was suitable.

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Those who started a placement were asked about their views on the length of the placement. Responses were fairly evenly split between those who felt the length of the placement was too long (48 per cent) and about right (44 per cent) – very few felt the 13-week placement was too short (6 per cent). Those who partially completed a placement were twice as likely as completers to say the placement was too long (60 per cent and 32 per cent respectively).

The findings from the survey are consistent with those from the qualitative research among claimants – those who completed their placement largely described their experience in positive terms; despite not necessarily believing that it had helped them to find employment. They believed they had gained confidence and other soft skills such as good time management, managing a daily work routine and interpersonal skills (e.g. being able to greet customers). Claimants who already had some experience and/or a degree did not always feel that they had gained any new skills, although they still believed that the Trailblazer had the potential to help those who lacked experience and confidence necessary to join the labour market.

'At first I wasn't that happy being put in a charity shop. But once we got started and the manager was really nice I actually enjoyed it.'

(Claimant, completer, North London)

'There should have been more placements for us to choose from. There were three of us at the placement and none of us were interested in working in social care.'

(Claimant, non-completer, South London)

'I was really disappointed because it could actually be quite a useful scheme for people who needed more experience, or more confidence with working... but [working in charity shop with limited tasks to do] was a waste of time.'

(Claimant, non-completer, North London)

Those who felt that lack of work experience was a barrier to them finding work prior to making a claim were more likely to feel the placement was suitable than those who didn't (59 per cent felt it was suitable compared with 56 per cent).

Further, those with higher levels of education tended to be less positive about their placement. For example, 78 per cent of those with GCSEs or lower said they enjoyed the placement compared with 69 per cent of those with A-levels or equivalent and 63 per cent of those with a first degree or higher. Similarly, 62 per cent of those with GCSEs or lower said that the placement was 'suitable' compared with just 50 per cent of those with a higher level of education. Claimants with higher levels of education may have entered the programme with higher expectations of the type of work they were looking for and what they wanted to get out of the placement – which may explain their slightly less positive views of the DOSfYP Trailblazer.

Perceptions of the placement also varied depending on whether or not the placement provider supported the claimant with their job search activity. Claimants who had these scheduled sessions tended to be more positive about their placement than those who did not (75 per cent were positive compared with 62 per cent) and were more likely to regard the placement as suitable (63 per cent compared with 50 per cent). See Section 3.7.2 for more detail on job search.

3.5 Suggested improvements to the placements

With just under half (43 per cent) of starters feeling their placement was unsuitable it is important to understand how their experience could have been improved. To this end, all starters were asked an open-ended question about what could have been done to make their placement more useful to them. The most common response to this question was that nothing could have been done but, among those who were able to provide a suggestion, the most common responses were:

- offering placements that were suitable/beneficial/relevant to them (40 per cent);
- being offered more variety/different types of placement (13 per cent);
- sourcing placements that were closer to where they lived (9 per cent);
- being given more tasks or a variety of work to do (6 per cent).

3.6 Wider perception of the placement and the work offered

Despite some reservations about the suitability of placement, as shown in Figure 3.2, the majority of starters were satisfied with their placement in terms of: the amount of responsibility, the amount of work and the variety of tasks given (two-thirds or more were satisfied with each of these factors).

As we would expect to see, those who completed their 13-week placement tended to be more positive on all measures shown in Figure 3.2. There was also a strong link between starters' perceptions of the placement and their level of education. In particular, levels of satisfaction with the variety of tasks given were lower for those with higher levels of education; 71 per cent of those with GCSEs or lower were satisfied compared with 63 per cent of those with higher levels of qualifications. Further, starters with a first degree or higher were particularly negative – 55 per cent were satisfied with the variety of tasks given, with 40 per cent indicating that they were dissatisfied. Variations in the views of claimants by age and work experience were less pronounced.

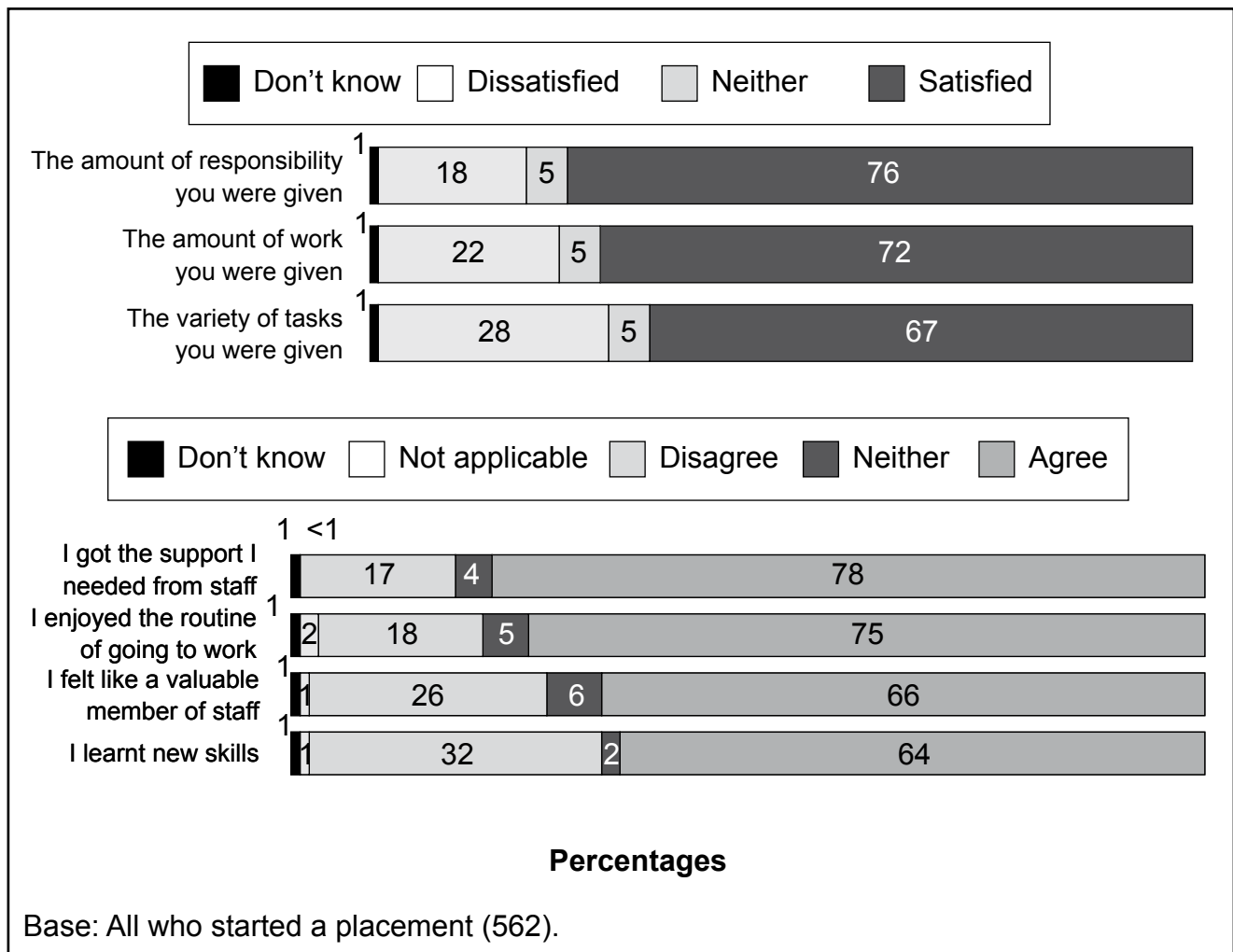
In addition, two-thirds or more of starters agreed that while on placement they:

- got the support they needed from staff (78 per cent),
- enjoyed the routine of going to work (75 per cent),
- felt like a valuable member of staff (66 per cent), and
- learnt new skills (64 per cent).

Overall these findings point to starters feeling generally positive about their placement having attended. However, almost a third (32 per cent) of starters disagreed that they had learnt new skills while on placement.

Consistent with the findings discussed already, those who completed a 13-week placement tended to be more positive on these measures than those who only partially completed. In fact between 80 and 90 per cent of all completers agreed with each of the statements in Figure 3.2, suggesting a positive experience for most people who completed a full placement.

Figure 3.2 Perceptions of the placement – including amount and type of work carried out



Once again, those with higher levels of education tended to be less positive about their placement on each of these four measures. Notably, 69 per cent of those with GCSEs or lower agreed that they learnt new skills on placement compared with 60 per cent of those with a higher level of education. That said, even among those with a first degree or higher more than half (59 per cent) agreed that they had learnt new skills (leaving 39 per cent who disagreed) suggesting there have been benefits to some claimants regardless of educational attainment.

3.7 Provider-led job search

As part of the Trailblazer, claimants were expected to complete ten hours of provider-led job search per week in addition to their work placement. In essence the Trailblazer was based on a 40-hour week with three-quarters of this time on work placement (30 hours) and the remaining quarter on provider-led job search (ten hours).

The type of support and contact offered by providers could be flexible to ensure it was tailored to the individual claimant – with job search support carried out in house by some providers or sourced via a third party in other cases. There was also a requirement for the provider-led job search element to be recorded in the claimant’s Action Plan (which was held by the provider).

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The evidence from both the survey and qualitative research showed that the provision of ten-hours of provider-led job search was limited. In fact slightly more than half (52 per cent) of all starters who took part in the survey indicated that their placement organiser either did not schedule sessions during their working day when they should focus on job search activities or that they spent no hours per week in these sessions. A further one per cent said they didn't know whether these sessions were scheduled – and presumably therefore did not participate in this type of supported job search.

Additionally more than two-thirds of those whose provider did schedule job search activities indicated that they spent less than ten hours per week in these sessions (30 per cent of all starters), with around half indicating that they spent no more than five hours per week.

That said, while many starters appeared to be falling below the ten-hour provider-led target, most starters who were involved in supported sessions were involved in these sessions at least once a week (72 per cent) – with ten per cent indicating that they were involved every day. Around one in ten (12 per cent) said that sessions were fortnightly with seven per cent indicating that sessions were less frequent.

Table 3.3 Summary of hours spent on job search per week – total and provider-led sessions

Average per week	In total 10.5 hours	Provider-led 2.6 hours
None (including where provider did not schedule any sessions)	3%	51%
Less than ten hours	29%	33%
Ten hours	29%	8%
More than ten	27%	2%
Don't know	13%	6%

Base: All who started a placement (562); all who attended at least one working week (497).

While a large proportion of starters did not meet the ten-hour provider-led job search target while on placement, most were involved in at least ten-hours job search in total per week. The average number of hours spent per week on job search was 10.5 in total compared with 2.6 hours provider-led (i.e. around four times the amount). That said, this still leaves around a third of starters who carried out less than ten hours job search per week in total (29 per cent) or who said they spent no time at all on job search per week (three per cent).

Further to this, the survey suggests that some Jobcentre Plus advisers were exercising discretion around the amount of time that claimants were required to spend on job search per week. More than half (61 per cent) of starters who spent less than the mandated ten hours per week on job search said that this has been approved with their Jobcentre Plus adviser. It is also worth noting that, while many claimants were failing to meet the ten-hour weekly job search target, the majority of claimants described the amount of time they spent in supported job search sessions as either about right (61 per cent) or even 'too much' (24 per cent) – just one in ten (ten per cent) who felt there was not enough time in these sessions.

3.7.1 Supported job search activities

Table 3.4 shows that only around a third whose provider scheduled job search actually offered support during these sessions either fully supported (seven per cent) or in combination with independent job search (24 per cent).

Table 3.4 Job search support on placement

Whether or not scheduled job search was supported	%
Independent	66%
With support	7%
Combination (independent and with support)	24%
(spontaneous code) Never attended a scheduled slot	3%
<i>Base: All whose provider scheduled job search sessions</i>	282
Types of supported activities (where provided)	%
Help with finding vacancies on line	40%
Help or advice to improve the presentation of your CV	38%
Practice job interviews	31%
Careers advice	28%
Advice about the types of jobs you could apply for	24%
Help with filling in job application forms	15%
Help with writing covering letters	15%
Help with IT skills	10%
None of these	12%
Don't know	4%

Base: All whose provider supported the claimant during job search sessions (85).

Where support was provided in scheduled job search sessions, this tended to be targeted at helping claimants find vacancies on line (40 per cent), help and advice to improve the presentation of CVs (38 per cent), or practice interviews (31 per cent). Careers advice (28 per cent), advice about the types of jobs to apply for (24 per cent) and help actually applying for jobs (21 per cent) were also relatively common.

Most encouragingly though, among those who had some form of supported job search while on the Trailblazer, a large majority (84 per cent) felt that these activities helped to improve their job search.

3.7.2 Claimant views of job search

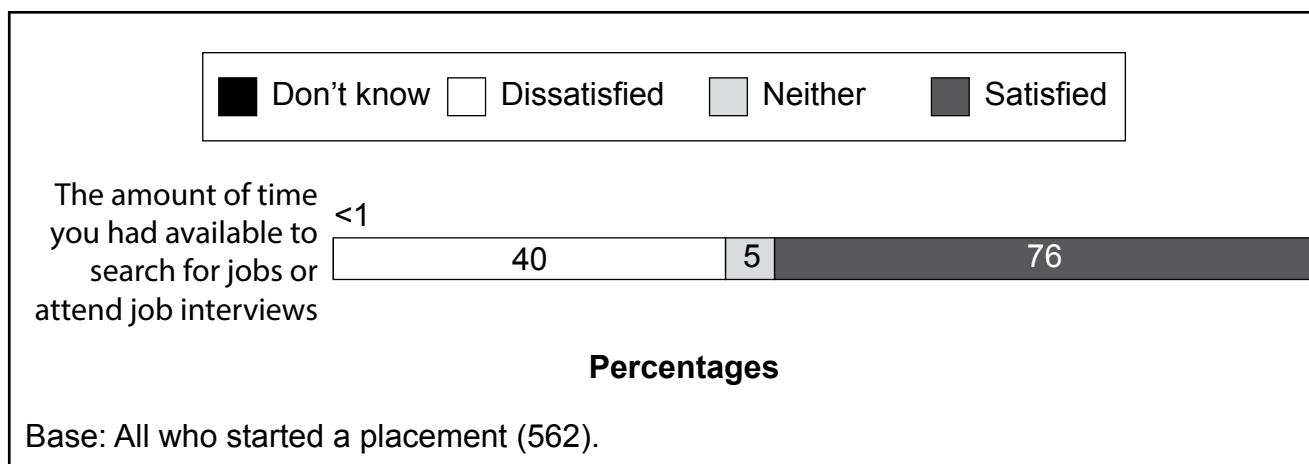
Claimants in the Trailblazer had concerns about the amount of time they had and the support they were provided with for job search. Overall the findings from the survey suggest that job search was an issue for a large number of claimants.

Before attending the placement, claimants were concerned that the number of hours attending the placement would not leave enough time to look for work (71 per cent), with those having previous work experience being the most concerned (76 per cent felt that attending the placement would not leave enough time for job search, compared to 65 per cent of those with no work experience).

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Once having participated in the Trailblazer, claimants tended to be less positive about the amount of time available for job search than other aspects of the Trailblazer. Figure 3.3 shows that while slightly more than half (55 per cent) were satisfied with the amount of time for job search, four in ten (40 per cent) were dissatisfied with the amount of time. Fewer of those who partially completed a placement were satisfied with the time available for job search (49 per cent) compared to around two-thirds (62 per cent) of those who completed.

Figure 3.3 Satisfaction with amount of time for job search while on placement



The most common reasons given for being dissatisfied with the amount of time for job search were because: the placement did not leave enough time to look for/apply for jobs (36 per cent); they had to work full time (35 per cent); or they were too tired to look for work (13 per cent). A further six per cent said that this was because they were not given time to attend interviews (although the DOSfYP Trailblazer specifically did allow claimants time off for this purpose).

Claimants who participated in the qualitative interviews typically felt that attending the placement for 30 hours meant that they were too tired to fill out job applications effectively. This was compounded where claimants had to travel long distances to their placement, which in some cases increased their placement day by up to 90 minutes. Claimants who did not believe that they were gaining any valuable experience believed that DOSfYP was hindering, rather than supporting, their efforts to find employment.

'During the placement I didn't have time to apply for jobs because I was mainly focused on getting up early to go to work, then coming back I was too tired ... that lowered my chances of getting a job.'

(Claimant, completer, South London)

'It didn't help me [the placement] it didn't give me any more experience than I already had and it just used up my time during the week when I could have been looking for work that I actually wanted to do.'

(Claimant, completer, South London)

Claimants who took part in the qualitative interviews often said they needed job search support. This was because they did not always feel able to carry out job searching in a methodical way. Recent school leavers, for example, had little experience using job search

sites, despite being internet literate. Therefore they said they needed one to one support to learn how to use job search sites efficiently and for filling in application forms. Claimants who did not receive supported job search raised this as a key area where the Trailblazer failed to meet their expectations.

‘They made me come to their offices [the provider] and kept talking about ‘job focus’ meetings but I never had any of them. I would have liked that, I didn’t really know what I was doing to be honest.’

(Claimant, non-complete, North London)

Even when attending provider premises, claimants were being expected to carry out job search activities independently. Because of this and because they often had to queue for a PC and the PCs were often very slow, claimants said that they would have preferred to do any unsupported job search at home.

Overall the survey findings suggest that provider-led job search was limited – with providers not generally fulfilling their commitment to provide ten-hours scheduled job search as part of a claimant’s placement. Where these sessions were provided they appear to be regarded as useful by claimants and their inclusion is linked to more positive claimant experiences while on placement.

3.8 Follow-up discussion after completing a placement

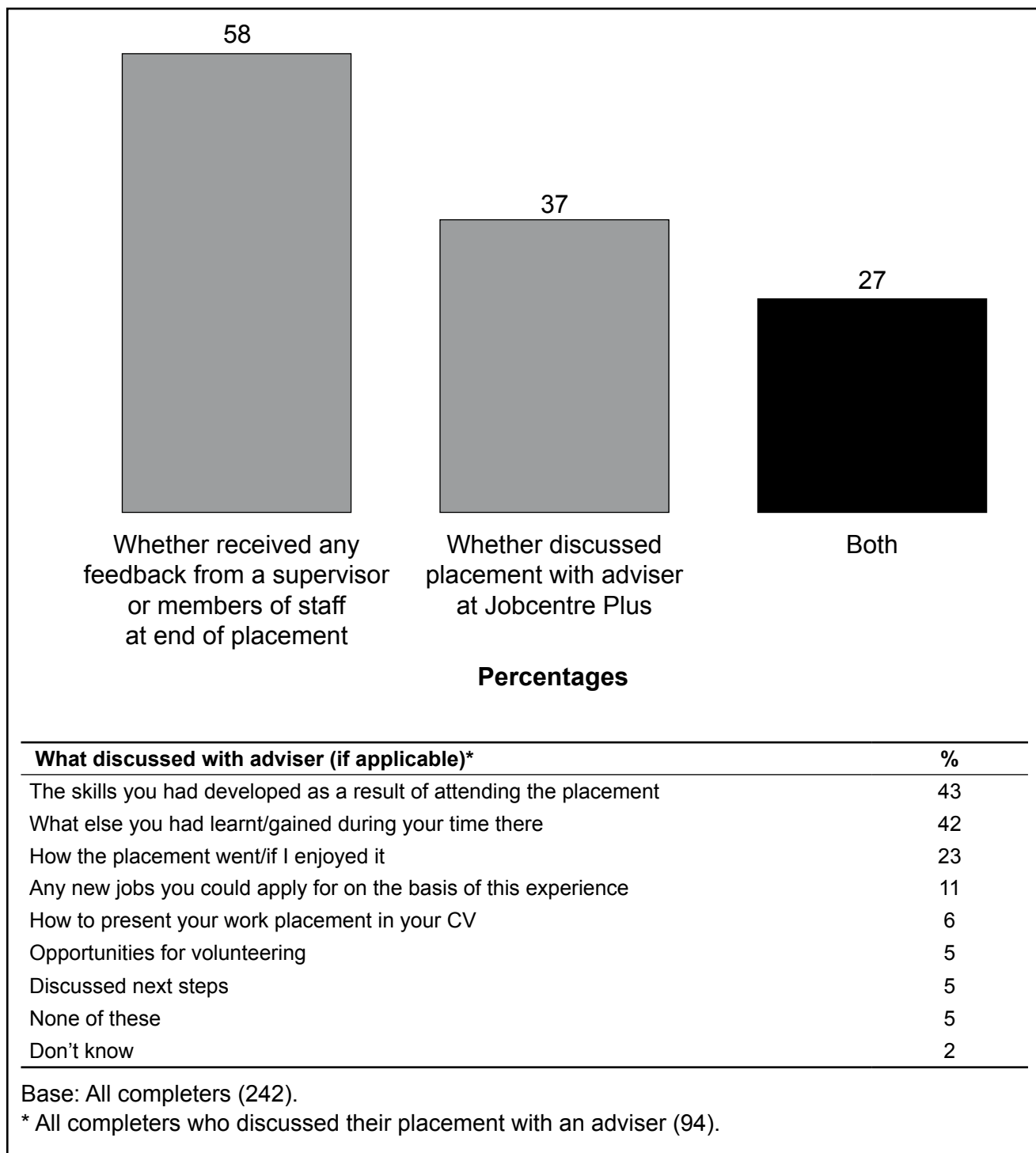
After completing a placement, providers are required to give feedback to Jobcentre Plus on the claimant’s participation. This feedback includes:

- how the claimant performed during the placement;
- verification of the claimant’s attendance;
- separate employer placement references; and
- the claimant’s CV.

Although not a formal requirement of the Trailblazer, if claimants are to make the best use of what they have learnt on the Trailblazer, discussions with advisers on claimants’ experiences of the placement are likely to be an important part in helping claimants move into, or closer to, work. Therefore, all claimants who completed a full 13-week placement (242 in total) were asked what follow-up discussions they had, if any, either with someone from the placement provider/host or with their Jobcentre Plus adviser. As shown in Figure 3.4, discussions with placement providers/hosts were reasonably widespread – with more than half (58 per cent) of all completers having had this type of discussion. Discussions with Jobcentre Plus advisers after the placement had finished were far less common – with only around a third (37 per cent) of completers indicating that this had happened. Furthermore, only a quarter said they had both types of discussion – both with their placement provider/host and their Jobcentre Plus adviser.

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Figure 3.4 Follow-up and feedback following completed placements



Those who had a discussion with a Jobcentre Plus adviser following the placement tended to focus on the skills and learnings gained while in placement – with around four in ten having discussed skills developed (43 per cent) and anything else learnt/gained during their time (42 per cent). A quarter also discussed more generally how the placement had gone (23 per cent) with around one in ten discussing new jobs they could apply for (11 per cent). Thus, in most cases where these discussions took place, the focus was on how the placement had benefited the claimant, presumably with a view to leveraging new skills and experience with a view to finding work.

3.9 Placements/job search support from the perspective of Jobcentre staff

The views of Jobcentre Plus staff about the quality of placements were shaped primarily by the conversations they had with claimants during their fortnightly signing. Jobcentre Plus advisers generally did not visit the providers throughout the Trailblazer so they were not able to confirm claimants' views for themselves and had no named point of contact at the provider. This meant that advisers found it difficult to follow up any queries or concerns that claimants had, for example when claimants were unhappy with their placement and they raised this at their signing meeting. Advisers said it was very difficult to locate the correct person at the provider to raise the complaint. It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that Jobcentre Plus advisers views closely reflected those of the claimants, with staff primarily concerned by the lack of variety of placements. Jobcentre Plus staff believed that the Trailblazer would be more successful if the provider was able to accommodate claimants' career interests and offer placements in sectors where claimants wanted experience, such as construction and administration.

There was also a perception that the 13 weeks duration of the placement was unnecessarily long, particularly if claimants were learning basic skills which they could easily acquire over a shorter period. There was strong support across Jobcentre Plus staff to shorten the placements to between four to eight weeks to allow claimants to access other tailored support available at Jobcentre Plus via the Youth Contract.

Requiring claimants to work for 30 hours per week was also considered unnecessary and potentially undermined claimants' job search activities (as they were too tired). This was particularly apparent among recent school leavers who were not yet accustomed to full working days and among claimants who had to travel long distances to their placement or to their provider (to carry out job search activity). This concern was raised by all the respondent groups in the qualitative research (claimants, Jobcentre Plus staff, providers and hosts) and was considered particularly challenging for recent school leavers not yet used to this level of commitment.

As noted elsewhere, some Jobcentre Plus staff taking part in the qualitative research also had concerns around the quality of the job search support for claimants, based on the feedback they received from claimants. They were under the impression from claimants that the level of tailored job search support such as CV writing and interviewing skills offered to claimants by the provider was minimal. They sometimes had to review claimants' CVs themselves because the provider was not offering support on CV development. They were concerned that claimants were being given no skills training as they believed that providers had specialist knowledge in this area and were in a good position to deliver this type of support.

3.10 Placements/job search support from the perspective of providers

Providers' feedback on placements reflected many of the issues raised by Jobcentre Plus staff, including: the distances some claimants were required to travel; limited variety of placements available through hosts; and the number of hours claimants were expected to attend per week. They were concerned that the length of placements and travel time reduced the amount of time claimants had to look for work themselves.

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In terms of job search support, the job search support on offer to claimants was confirmed within the interviews with providers. From these interviews, there was no evidence that all claimants were offered ten hours of supported job search per week. Instead, providers said they checked that claimants had recorded ten hours of independent job search on their timesheet during fortnightly meetings. Although providers offered a variety of job search and employability support services, there was no formal referral process. Instead it was at the discretion of the provider adviser to refer the claimant who they believed would benefit from additional support.

3.11 Hosts' experience and views of placements

Overall, hosts were positive about their experience of participating in the DOSfYP Trailblazer. Although participation could be resource intensive and hosts were disappointed that drop outs were higher than expected, particularly in the first week, they were willing to provide their time because they believed that enabling young people to gain work experience was important. In addition, hosts were often pleasantly surprised by the quality of those claimants who did complete the placement.

Hosts believed that placements which matched the claimants' interests were more beneficial to both the claimant and themselves as a host. For example, one host (a social enterprise) described how the claimants they received who had an interest in their sector were hard-working and felt that they benefited from new ideas coming into the organisation. However, hosts were concerned that, due to mandation, claimants were often compelled to attend placements that were not well suited to their aspirations, skills or interests. In these cases, hosts believed that it was unlikely that either the host or the claimants would have a positive experience.

'I don't think that the speed of the referral allows the person to be put in the best place possible for them. I also think if you are sending someone off to something that is not particularly relevant to them it is not going to enthuse them to want to go out to work. I think it will actually have a negative effect.'

(Host, North London)

There was a perception amongst hosts that claimants were unlikely to benefit from placements unless they were engaged in the process and that managing a young person who was unengaged was burdensome and disheartening for them.

4 Receipt of JSA and sanctions

This chapter looks at receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) amongst those who did not start a placement and those who participated but did not complete the full 13 weeks

In many cases, these groups would not have received JSA (never initiating a claim, 'signing off', or receiving a sanction for not attending). In this section we explore levels of receipt (and non-receipt) of JSA at the time of the original New Jobseeker Interview (NJI) and referral to Day One Support for Young People (DOSfYP).

The findings are based on information provided by respondents to the claimant survey. Receipt of JSA and sanctions are also a key focus of the impact assessment, published separately. The impact assessment findings are based on information on all claimants referred to DOSfYP. Therefore, this chapter should be read in conjunction with the impact assessment report for a fuller picture of JSA receipt and sanctions overall.

Key findings

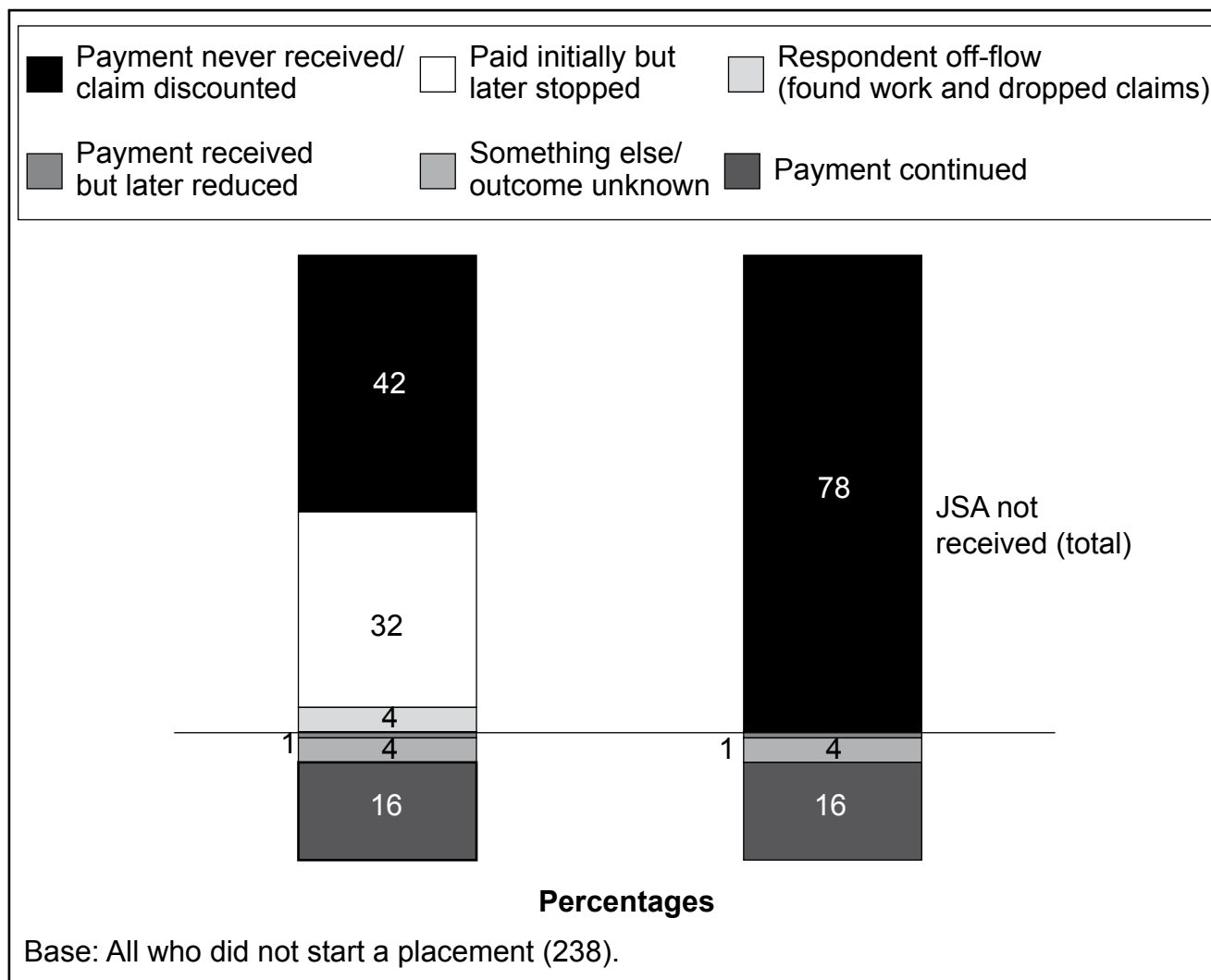
- From the findings of the survey, just under half (47 per cent) of claimants eligible for DOSfYP did not start a placement. Just under half of these (46 per cent) appear to have signed off JSA as a result, and a further third (33 per cent) appear to have received a sanction.
- Over half of claimants who started a Trailblazer placement did not complete the full 13-weeks (56 per cent). Numbers leaving their placement were highest during the first four weeks of the placement (nearly two-thirds (61 per cent) of non-completers left within four weeks).
- The research does not suggest significant levels of re-signing at different Jobcentre Plus offices to avoid rereferral to DOSfYP.

4.1 Non-starters

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, a high proportion of new claimants who attended an NJI in one of the Trailblazer areas either (i) discontinued their claim (i.e. ended their claim before an official referral to DOSfYP was raised through Provider Referrals and Payments (PRaP)) or (ii) were referred to DOSfYP through PRaP, but decided not to start the placement (either failing to attend the provider interview or not turning up for the first day of their placement). As described elsewhere, these two groups are referred to as 'discontinued' and 'non-starters', but in this chapter we combine these two groups and refer to them all as 'non-starters'.

Just under half of claimants (47 per cent) did not start a placement. As shown in Figure 4.1, nearly eight in ten of all non-starters (78 per cent) did not receive JSA as a result. This was due to a variety of reasons, either not continuing their claim for JSA and so never receiving benefit; receiving benefit initially and having their JSA payment stopped by Jobcentre Plus after a period of time (ie were sanctioned); or receiving benefit initially but ending their claim shortly afterwards.

Figure 4.1 Receipt of JSA among those who did not start a placement



Nearly half of claimants appear to have taken action to end their claim for JSA (46 per cent) as a result of not starting a placement⁷. The rest seem to have received a benefit sanction (33 per cent) or continued to receive benefit payments (16 per cent)⁸. These are considered in more detail in Sections 4.4 and 4.5.

4.1.1 Reasons for not attending a placement

All non-starters were asked to describe the reason(s) they decided not to attend their placement. As shown in Table 4.1, 11 per cent of all non-starters indicated that they didn't attend because they had found a job. Work outcomes are covered in more detail in Chapter 5. A further six per cent indicated they didn't start because of training commitments.

⁷ Respondents either stated that they did not receive payment when asked when they were first paid JSA after making a claim, or said that they discontinued their claim for JSA when they did not start the placement.

⁸ If non-starters said that they received JSA after making a claim, they were asked whether Jobcentre Plus stopped or reduced their JSA payments for not starting.

Table 4.1 Reason for not starting a placement

	%
Found work/other commitments didn't allow	17%
Found a job	11%
You were too busy with training or some other course	6%
Related to placement offered/placement not useful	43%
Not type of work I was interested in	12%
You did not like the placement location	8%
You already had enough work experience	4%
Did not want to work for free	5%
You did not like the placement hours	3%
Placement wasn't useful	3%
Did not like the idea of a placement	3%
You did not like the placement host	2%
Expenses were not offered	2%
Personal or practical reasons	23%
You were too busy with job search and interviews	11%
Health prevented from starting the placement	5%
Practical issues meant couldn't attend (either referral meeting or placement)	4%
Too busy with childcare/other family commitments	4%
Other reasons	28%
Administrative problems	9%
You decided you didn't need to claim JSA (other source of income available)	6%
Was not offered a placement	2%
Did not know about placement scheme	1%
Advisor unhelpful	1%
Other answer	9%
Don't know	4%

Base: All non-starters (238).

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 per cent as respondents were able to provide more than one response.

The type of work offered on placement also appears to discourage some claimants from starting a placement – around one in ten (12 per cent) saying it was 'not the type of work they were interested in'. Some non-starters also cited issues with the placement that had been offered – including not being interested in the type of work, the location of the placement, the fact that they had to work for free, the hours or because they didn't 'like' the placement host. These types of reason were most often given by claimants who had at least some previous work experience. For example among non-starters with work experience 15 per cent said they didn't attend because it wasn't the type of work they were looking for compared with ten per cent of those with no work experience.

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Personal and practical reasons for not starting a placement were also common with being too busy with job search and interviews the most often cited response in this category (11 per cent). Health issues and caring commitments were less common but mentioned by around one in 20 who did not start their placement.

Finally there was some evidence of problems with the DOSfYP scheme itself acting as a factor driving non-attendance – administrative errors were mentioned by nearly one in ten non-starters with a further two per cent saying that they actually weren't offered a placement.

Some claimants who participated in the qualitative research questioned whether the Trailblazer was worthwhile or relevant for them, which influenced their decision to start a placement or not. This was underpinned by a view among some claimants that their main barrier to work was a lack of academic or vocational skills, not a lack of work experience. Some of these claimants were planning to start university and were therefore looking for short-term work; others with minimal skills and qualifications were looking for greater support that would provide them with long-term career options. Both of these groups believed that the Trailblazer had little relevance to the goals they were trying to achieve.

'It seemed to be a programme for people who did not have many qualifications or any experience, with a very broad brushstroke approach. Not for someone like me with experience and specific aspirations.'

(Female, non-start, South London)

'Can't they just send me to a college to learn some hands on skills like joinery so I then actually get on with my life, instead of wasting time?'

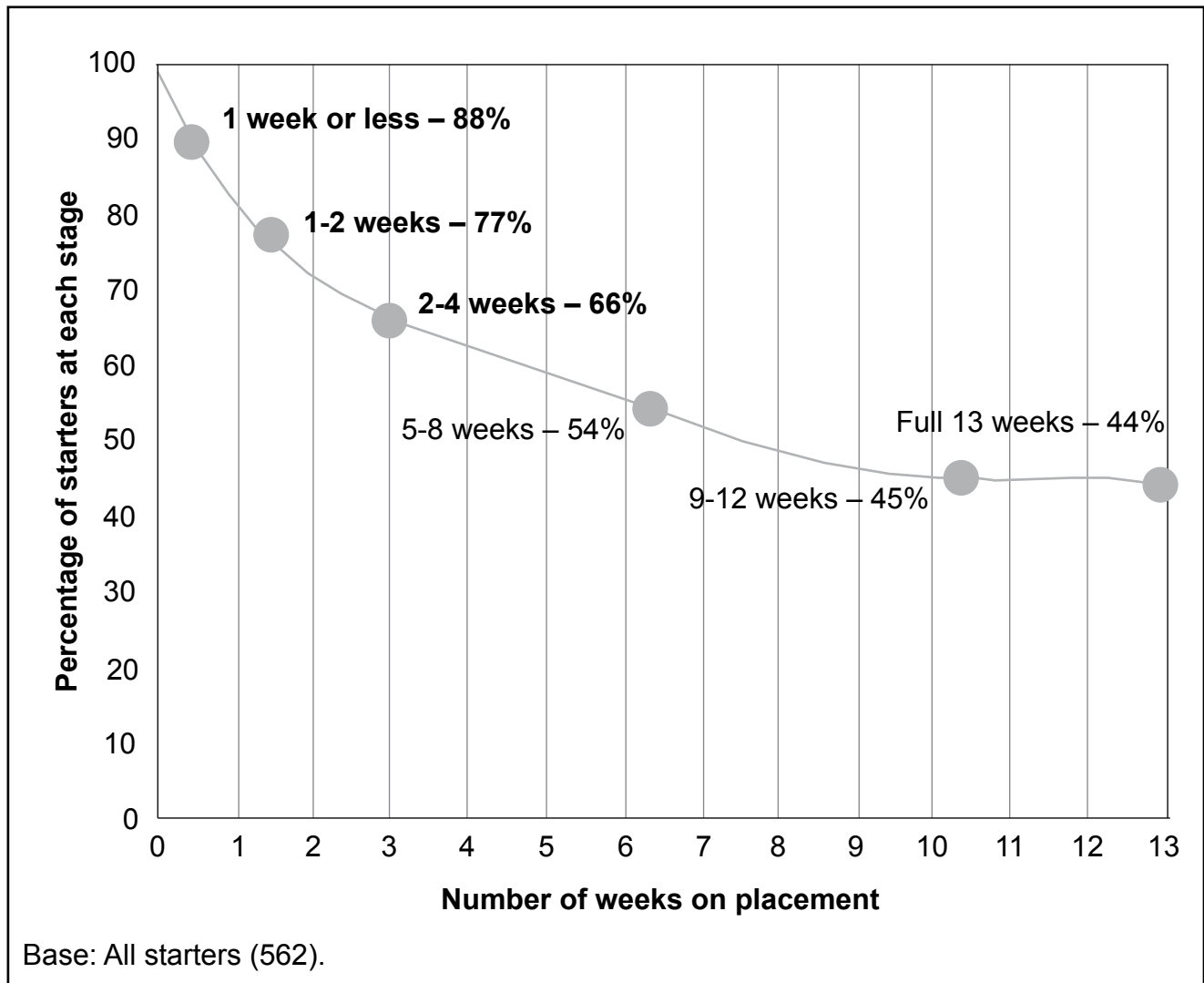
(Male, non-start, South London)

However, the qualitative findings suggest that where claimants needed the income from JSA (through for instance living independently from their families or where their parents would not support them financially) they would complete the Trailblazer regardless of whether they believed it was worthwhile and were consequently unengaged throughout the placement. These claimants typically noted that regardless of their perceived barriers to work, they were compelled to start the Trailblazer in order to receive JSA.

4.2 Non-completion of placement

Fifty-three per cent of all new claimants who were asked to attend DOSfYP started a placement (attending at least the first day). Figure 4.3 summarises the proportion of these starters who completed the full 13 weeks and, where they did not complete, the points at which claimants left placements.

Figure 4.2 Non-completion rates over time among those who started a placement



As shown in Figure 4.2, claimants were more likely to leave towards the start of a placement, most dramatically within the first four weeks of the 13 week placement. From five to 13 weeks, the rate claimants left a placement stabilised. By the end of the 13-week period, 56 per cent of all starters had left their placement.

4.3 Sanctioning

This section looks at the experience of sanctioning amongst claimants who either did not start a placement, or did not complete the full 13 weeks. As discussed throughout, the DOSfYP Trailblazer was a mandatory programme – once referred claimants’ JSA payments were conditional on attending the work placement for the full 13-weeks for the required number of hours each week. Those who were referred but did not start a placement (non-starters) and those who started but did not complete (partial completes) may have been referred for a sanction unless there was a valid reason for non-attendance.

The survey asked claimants whether their benefit had been stopped or reduced as a result of not starting or not completing a placement. As shown in Table 4.2, a third of claimants had their payment stopped (31 per cent) or reduced (two per cent).

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Table 4.2 Benefit being stopped/reduced among non-starters and partial completers

Whether payment was stopped (sanction applied)	Total	Non-starters	Partial completers
Yes – payment stopped	31%	32%	30%
No – but payment reduced	2%	1%	2%
No - not stopped or reduced/something else	21%	25%	17%
Not applicable – claim discontinued/off-flow into work	45%	42%	50%
<i>Base sizes vary</i>	558	238	320

If we take out those whose benefit stopped because they signed off JSA (45 per cent), around six in ten claimants were sanctioned (either having their benefit stopped or reduced by Jobcentre Plus). The proportions were similar for both non-starters and non-completers.

Overall the survey findings suggest that sanctions were applied in most cases where they were likely to be applicable. There were around four in ten claimants where it was unclear what had happened to their claim or why they did not have their benefit stopped/reduced for not participating in the Trailblazer.

To better understand why this might have been, all surveyed claimants whose payment wasn't stopped or reduced were asked why this was. The most common responses are summarised in Table 4.3 and suggests that many instances would not have been reason for a sanction.

Figure 4.3 Reasons JSA payments not stopped or reduced

I signed off/stopped it	13%
Didn't have to go on a placement	11%
Started/got a job	8%
Didn't attend/finish the placement	7%
Discussed with adviser	7%
Provider stopped/cancelled placement/did not do placements anymore	5%
Spoke to provider	3%
I was put on a course	3%
Found my own placement	3%
Wasn't eligible/should not be on the scheme	2%
Going on/had another placement	2%
It was an error by them	1%
No suitable placement	1%
Went on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	1%
Other answer	13%
No answer	2%
Don't know	19%

Base: All non-starters and partial completers whose payment wasn't stopped or reduced (125).

Note: This was an open-ended question, so claimants could provide a range of answers.

4.3.1 The experience of claimants who were sanctioned

We looked further into the circumstances of those whose payment was stopped by Jobcentre Plus (i.e. were sanctioned). The findings show that those whose payments were stopped as a result of not starting or not completing a 13-week placement were fairly typical of the non-starters and non-completers generally.

On the face of it, a large proportion of this group were living with a parent (74 per cent of those whose payments were stopped) with around two-thirds (62 per cent) not contributing to household bills and expenses. However, it is not possible to surmise the extent to which the parents of these claimants were supporting them financially (although clearly claimants were benefiting in some way by not having to contribute to household bills). Furthermore the proportion who were living with parents and not contributing to household bills was in line with that of the wider population of referred claimants – i.e. they were no more likely to be supported by parents than claimants in the Trailblazer areas generally.

That said, it is worth noting that some Jobcentre Plus staff taking part in the qualitative research were concerned not only by the financial impact of sanctioning, but also the loss of access to training and services that Jobcentre Plus provides, particularly by vulnerable young people.

In summary the evidence is inconclusive, but there is no reason to believe that claimants who were sanctioned were particularly vulnerable or financially disadvantaged.

4.4 Re-signing for JSA and evidence for avoiding rereferral to DOSfYP

There was little or no evidence of claimants attempting to re-sign for JSA at different offices to avoid rereferral to DOSfYP. The total number of non-starters and partial completers who recontacted Jobcentre Plus to make a new claim for JSA was 55 so it is not possible to present a full quantitative analysis. However, of these 55, only six said they made this claim at a different office – nearly all of whom indicated that this was purely because they had moved. The issue was raised as a concern by management staff at a district level, although this was based on limited anecdotal evidence from staff of a small number of incidences where they believed this may have happened.

Further, most non-starters and partial completers who attempted to re-sign for JSA were successful – of the 55 who specifically said they had made contact to claim JSA, 45 said their claim was successful with only five indicating that their claim was unsuccessful (the remainder were still waiting on a decision). That said, roughly half of these claimants who re-signed for JSA had been rereferred to DOSfYP – of the 55, 25 had been rereferred although only one had started a placement.

5 Outcomes

This chapter looks at outcomes for claimants during the 5 to 7 months after their initial claim for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). It considers employment and benefit outcomes, based on information provided by respondents to the claimant survey. Employment and benefit are also a key focus of the impact assessment, published separately. The impact assessment findings are based on information on all claimants referred to DOSfYP. Therefore, these sections should be read in conjunction with the impact assessment report for a fuller picture of benefit and employment outcomes overall.

This chapter also looks at changes to attitudes and work-readiness, as well as reporting on the job search activities that claimants undertook during and immediately after attending a placement. This will help gauge whether the DOSfYP experience may have contributed (positively or negatively) towards their employment prospects and success in finding a job.

Key findings

Employment outcomes

- Around half of all those who did not start a DOSfYP placement moved into paid work following their decision not to participate (44 per cent).
- Of those who started a placement, six in ten of those who did not complete their placement moved into work (60 per cent) and around a quarter of those who completed (26 per cent) subsequently moved into work.
- At the time of the survey, around three-quarters of those who had moved into work were still in work (76 per cent of non-starters and 72 per cent of starters)
- Work outcomes tended to be more positive for older claimants (aged 21 to 24) and those with at least some prior work experience. Both among non-starters and starters, these claimants were more likely to have found work initially and to have remained in employment at the time of the survey.

Benefit and other outcomes

- At the time of the survey, just over a quarter (27 per cent) of all non-starters were on JSA and just over four in ten starters (41 per cent) were on JSA. A small proportion had moved onto other benefits (Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Income Support (IS)), including three per cent of non-starters and six per cent of starters.
- There was a group of young people (those who had either not started or not completed a placement) who said that they were no longer claiming benefit but had not moved into work. The majority of this group were 'looking for work' (over six in ten) and the evidence suggests that this group was not disengaged from entering the labour market (very few said that they were unemployed and not looking for work).

Continued

Attitudes

- Most who completed a 13-week placement felt there had been a wide range of other benefits including to their motivation to find work, how ready they felt to enter paid work and how attractive they looked to potential employers on application forms. Consistent with findings elsewhere, these wider benefits seem to be felt most strongly by younger claimants (under 21) and those with slightly lower educational attainment.
- Of those who completed a placement, 89 per cent felt more motivated to find work, 85 per cent agreed that they looked more attractive to potential employers on job applications and 80 per cent reported increased personal confidence. Seven in ten claimants (70 per cent) felt they had gained in all three of these ways. Further, nearly all claimants (94 per cent) agreed that they felt more able 'to cope with the routine of going to work' following completion of the placement.
- While most claimants who completed a placement were positive about the impact of attending a placement, there was concern amongst a small group (17 per cent) that participation in DOSfYP had not increased their chance of finding paid work.

Job search

- Job search among claimants who completed a placement appears to have been invigorated by the experience. Over six in ten said that they were sending out more job applications at the time of the survey than they had before their placement (62 per cent) and they had applied for jobs they had never considered applying for previously (64 per cent).

5.1 Employment outcomes

5.1.1 Non-starters: employment outcomes

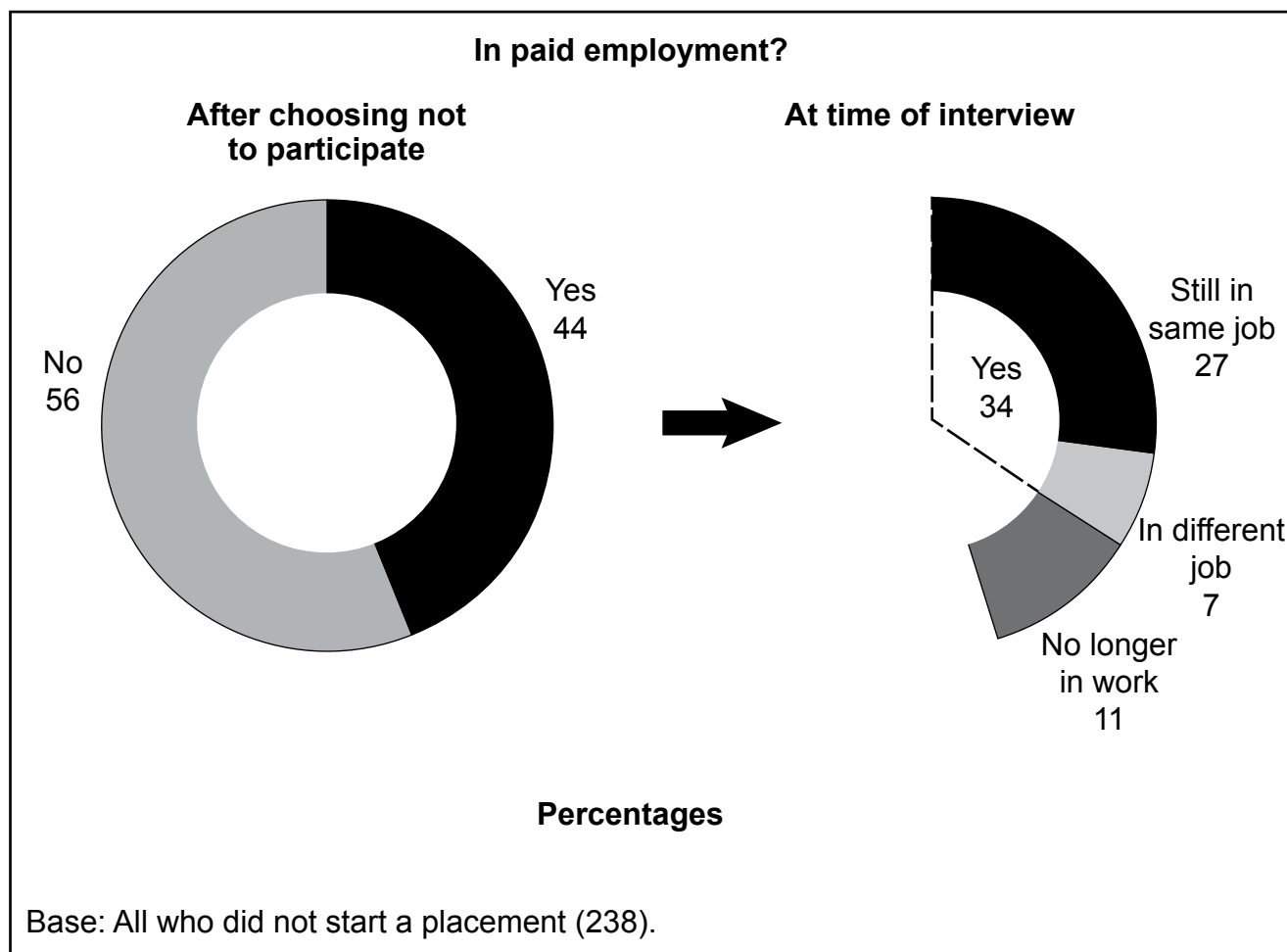
This section focuses on the employment outcomes of 18 to 24-year-olds who made a claim for JSA but did not start a placement, either because they decided to close their claim rather than taking part in the DOSfYP scheme ('discontinued') or because they chose not to meet with a provider or go along to the host organisation after being referred ('non-starters').

As illustrated in Figure 5.1, more than two-fifths of this population (44 per cent) moved into paid work at some point following their decision not to participate in the scheme⁹. At the time of the survey interview – which typically took place between five and seven months after these claimants made their JSA claim – three-quarters of those who found paid employment were still in work (76 per cent, the equivalent of 34 per cent of everyone who did not start a placement).

⁹ Respondents were asked 'Since (not starting the placement) have you found any paid work?'.

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Figure 5.1 Employment outcomes of claimants who did not start a placement



Sixty-eight per cent of claimants who decided to close their JSA claim rather than proceeding with a referral to DOSfYP (the 'discontinued') moved into paid employment (68 per cent). For those who were referred but did not start a placement, 38 per cent moved into paid employment¹⁰.

Claimants were more likely to off-flow into work if they were aged 21 or above (50 per cent, compared with 39 per cent of those aged 18 to 20) or had some previous work experience (55 per cent, compared with 35 per cent of those who lack any work experience).

The jobs that claimants moved into were usually full-time: two-thirds of claimants were working 16 hours a week or more (68 per cent, the equivalent of 30 per cent of everyone who did not start a placement).

Claimants with a degree stood out as having the lowest likelihood of dropping out of employment altogether once they moved into work: looking just amongst claimants who off-flowed into work after opting out of the DOSfYP scheme, 13 per cent of graduates moved out of work and did not find a replacement position, compared with more than twice this proportion among claimants with lower qualifications (28 per cent).

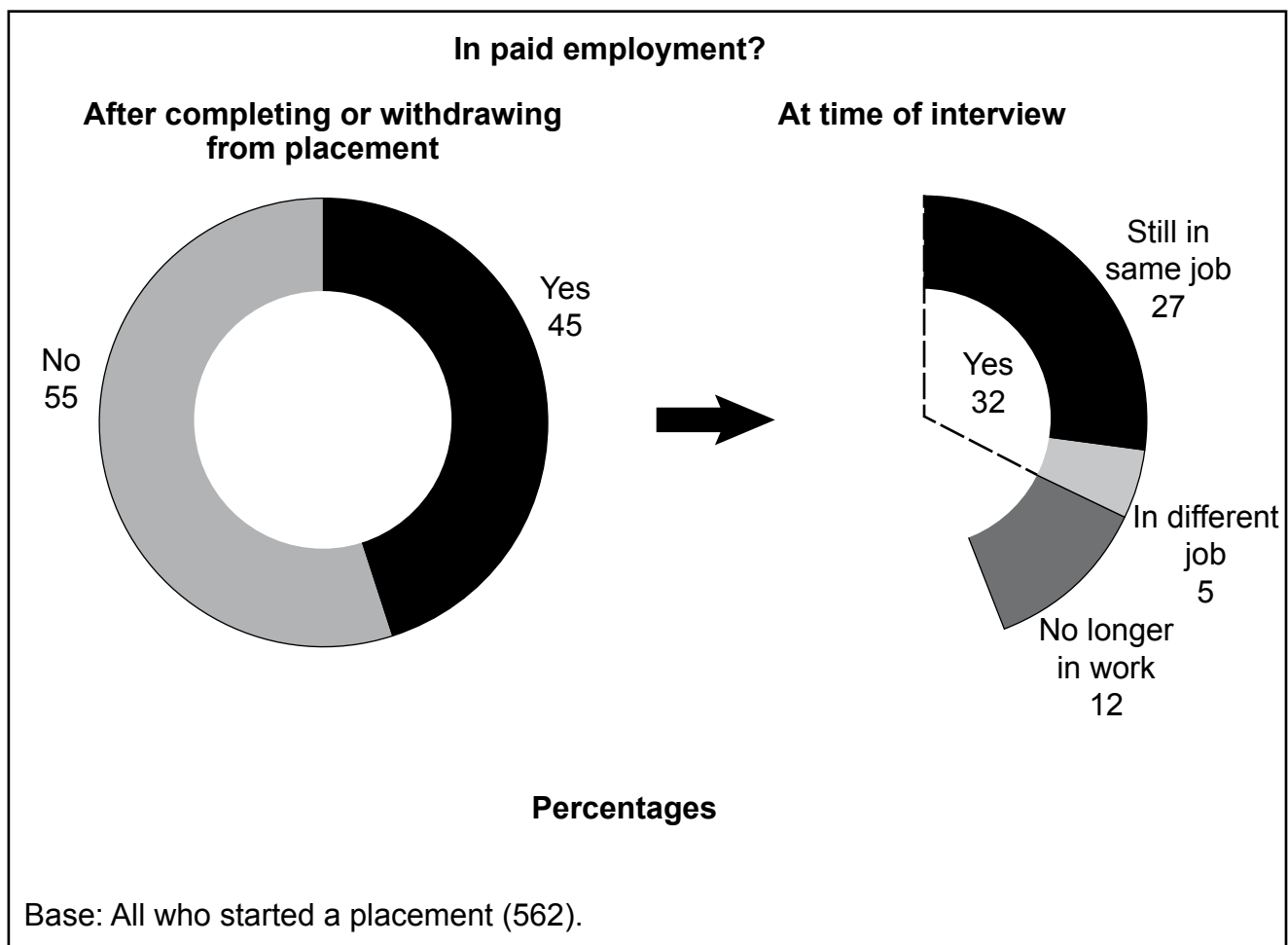
¹⁰ Although the magnitude of this difference should not be overstated as the figure for discontinued claimants is based on a small number of responses.

5.1.2 Participants: employment outcomes

This section considers the employment outcomes of claimants who started a placement, looking at both those that did, and those that did not, complete the full 13 weeks.

Nearly half (45 per cent) of claimants who were referred to DOSfYP and attended at least the first day of a placement moved into paid work at some point after completing or during their placement¹¹. By the time of the survey interview (which could have been several months after the placement for those who did not complete their placement, or a much shorter period of time for those who did complete), 72 per cent of those who moved into work were still working (equivalent to 32 per cent of all who started a placement), and most were still in the same job. These findings are illustrated in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 Employment outcomes of claimants who started a placement



Comparing the employment outcomes of claimants who did not start a placement (Figure 5.1) against those who did (Figure 5.2) shows that the likelihood of off-flowing into work and entering sustainable jobs was broadly similar for the two groups. This is despite the fact that the two groups were differently disposed towards the DOSfYP scheme and differed both in terms of the length of time they had been looking for work (36 per cent of claimants who started a placement had been searching for seven months or more before making a

¹¹ Respondents were asked 'Since (not completing/completing the placement) have you found paid work?'.

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claim, compared with 26 per cent of those who did not start a placement) and the nature of the work they were targeting (39 per cent of starters were looking for a specific type of job, compared with 51 per cent of those who did not start a placement).

The figures for starters vary a great deal for claimants who completed a placement and those who did not. Table 5.1 displays the employment outcomes of these two sub-groups, showing that claimants who did not complete their placement were much more likely to off-flow into work than those who completed the full 13 weeks.

Table 5.1 Employment outcomes of claimants who completed and who did not complete their DOSfYP placement

	Completed	Did not complete
	%	%
Moved into work	26	60
Still in work at time of survey interview	18	43
Same job	18	35
Different job	1	8
No longer in work at time of survey interview	7	17

Base: All claimants who completed 13 weeks on placement (252); all claimants who did not complete 13 weeks on placement (310).

5.1.3 Claimants who did not complete their placement

Six in ten claimants (60 per cent) who did not complete their placement (partial completers) moved into work: this is higher than those who discontinued their claim once they were told about the Trailblazer.

Of those non-completers who entered employment:

- 80 per cent went into jobs that required them to work for 16 hours or more per week;
- six per cent started a job with the organisation which hosted their placement;
- 72 per cent were still employed around half a year later, though almost a fifth (19 per cent) of those who were still employed were in a different job to the one they had off-flowed into;
- around a quarter (27 per cent) said that the work experience placement had helped them get this.

The likelihood of off-flowing into work was higher for claimants aged 21 or above (68 per cent, compared with 54 per cent of 18 to 20-year-olds) and particularly those who had some previous work experience (74 per cent, compared with 48 per cent of those who lacked any experience). It was also higher amongst claimants who were contributing to household bills or expenses when they made their JSA claim (67 per cent, compared with 52 per cent of those who did not make a contribution). In addition, the proportion who found work was higher amongst claimants with higher levels of qualifications (rising from 51 per cent amongst those educated to GCSE-level, to 89 per cent of those educated to degree level or above).

5.1.4 Claimants who completed their placement

Around a quarter (26 per cent) of claimants who completed the 13-week placement entered the labour market. Out of those who entered employment:

- 73 per cent went into jobs that required them to work 16 hours or more per week;
- 18 per cent found a position with the organisation which hosted their placement, three times more than non-completers;
- 56 per cent felt that the work placement they had completed helped them to find their job;
- 72 per cent were still employed around half a year later. While this is identical to the proportion of non-completers who remained in employment over the same space of time, it is worth noting that job retention was higher amongst completers: only six per cent of those who were still employed had changed jobs by the time of the survey interview (compared with 19 per cent of non-completers).

The number of completers who off-flowed into work is too small to support demographic or sub-group analysis of the above findings.

5.2 Benefit outcomes

5.2.1 Claiming JSA at the time of the survey

This section looks at claimants' longer term benefit status, at around six months after they initially claimed JSA.

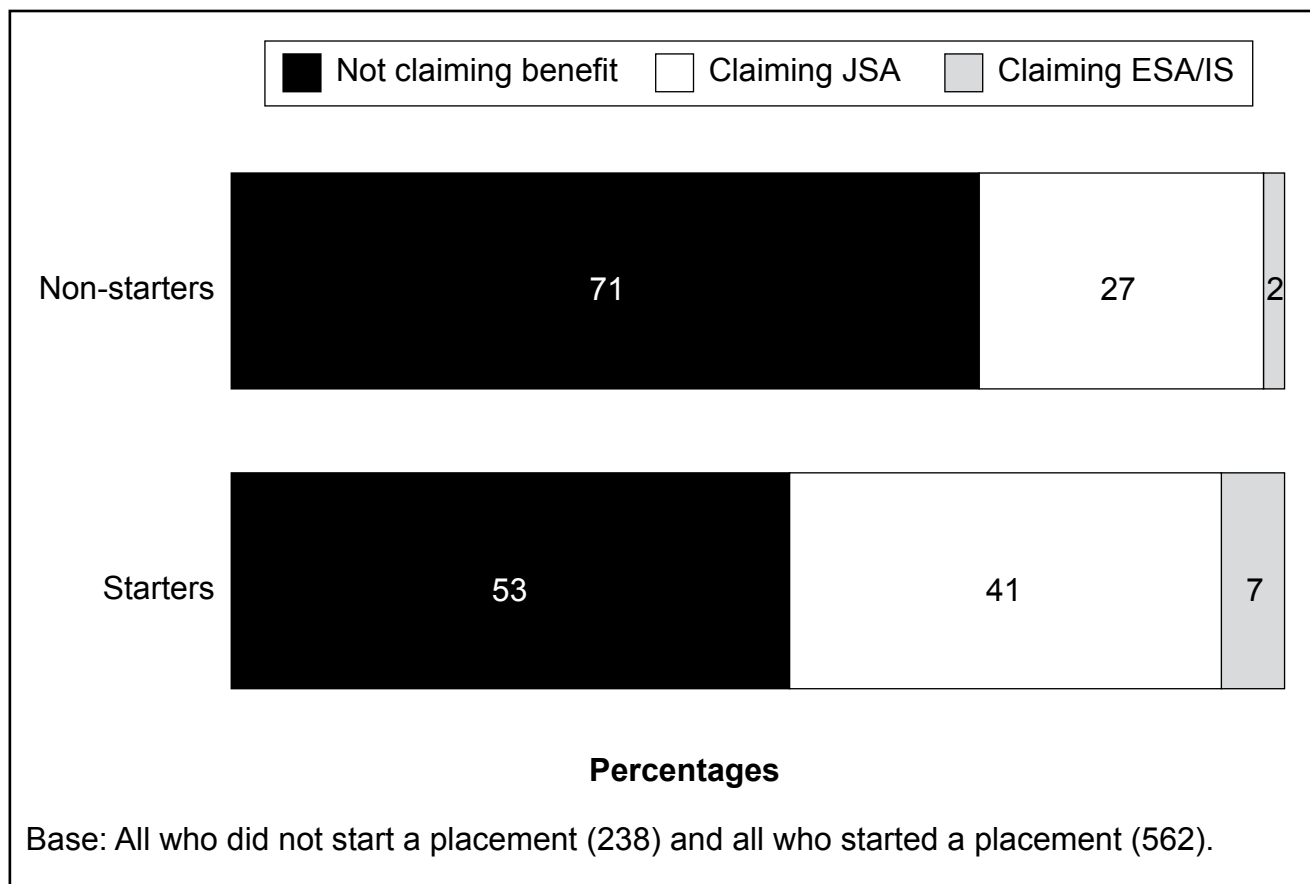
Non-starters

At the time they were interviewed, nearly three-quarters of all non-starters (73 per cent) were not claiming JSA. Being off JSA at the time of the interview was associated with a range of factors – most notably:

- those with at least some previous work experience were more likely not to be receiving JSA than those without (78 per cent compared with 72 per cent);
- those with A-levels/equivalent or higher were more likely not to be receiving JSA than those with GCSEs/equivalent or lower (83 per cent compared with 62 per cent).

It should also be noted that the 73 per cent of all non-starters who were not receiving JSA at the time of the survey contained a small proportion who were now either claiming ESA or IS in place of JSA. If these claimants are removed from the calculation, the proportion who were not receiving any form of out-of-work benefit drops from 73 to 71 per cent.

Figure 5.3 Claiming JSA among non-starters and starters at time of interview



Starters

In addition, at the time of the survey (around 5 to 7 months after the initial JSA claim), 59 per cent of participants who started a placement were not claiming JSA. Similar to all non-starters, there was a small proportion who were now claiming ESA or IS instead of JSA (seven per cent).

Again, as with non-starters the factors associated with higher levels of not claiming JSA included previous work experience – those with at least some experience being less likely to be claiming JSA at the time of the interview (68 per cent had off-flowed compared with 54 per cent of those with no previous work experience). Consistent with this, those who did not regard a lack of work experience as a barrier to finding work were also more likely not to be receiving JSA (63 per cent compared with 56 per cent who saw lack of work experience as a barrier).

5.3 Other outcomes

Here we consider the other non-work or benefit outcomes for both non-starters and starters.

If we take out those who had moved into work and those remaining on benefit (JSA, ESA or IS), this leaves around three in ten (29 per cent) of all claimants who were neither working nor claiming benefit (38 per cent of non-starters and 21 per cent of starters). The majority of these were focused on looking for work, with smaller numbers in training/education or in a caring role. Very few were not looking for paid work.

Table 5.2 Other outcomes of non-starters and starters

	Overall	Non-starters	Starters
	%	%	%
Looking for work	62	63	60
Training/education	25	27	22
Caring for children/other	4	3	7
Unemployed/not looking for work	4	4	4
Getting better from illness	1	-	2
None of these	5	4	5

Base: All who were not working or claiming benefits at the time of the survey (overall = 195; non-starters = 83; and starters = 112).

Understanding what this group were doing helps us to understand whether the DOSfYP Trailblazer may have had any negative impacts on claimants, including whether or not they became more disengaged as a result of not participating in the Trailblazer programme.

The survey shows the group who were neither working nor claiming JSA being similar to the wider group of claimants in the Trailblazer area. Their levels of work experience, education and age are consistent with the wider population.

There was also little or no evidence that this group did not engage with the DOSfYP programme because they decided that they didn't need JSA (having an alternative source of income) – very few claimants cited this as the reason for never starting or for stopping a placement part way through. Furthermore, while most of this group were living with their parents (70 per cent) this is comparable with the proportion of claimants living with parents at the time of their New Jobseeker Interview (NJI) more generally. Rather the survey points to a fairly broad group of claimants who decided not to engage with the programme even when they had not found work to move into.

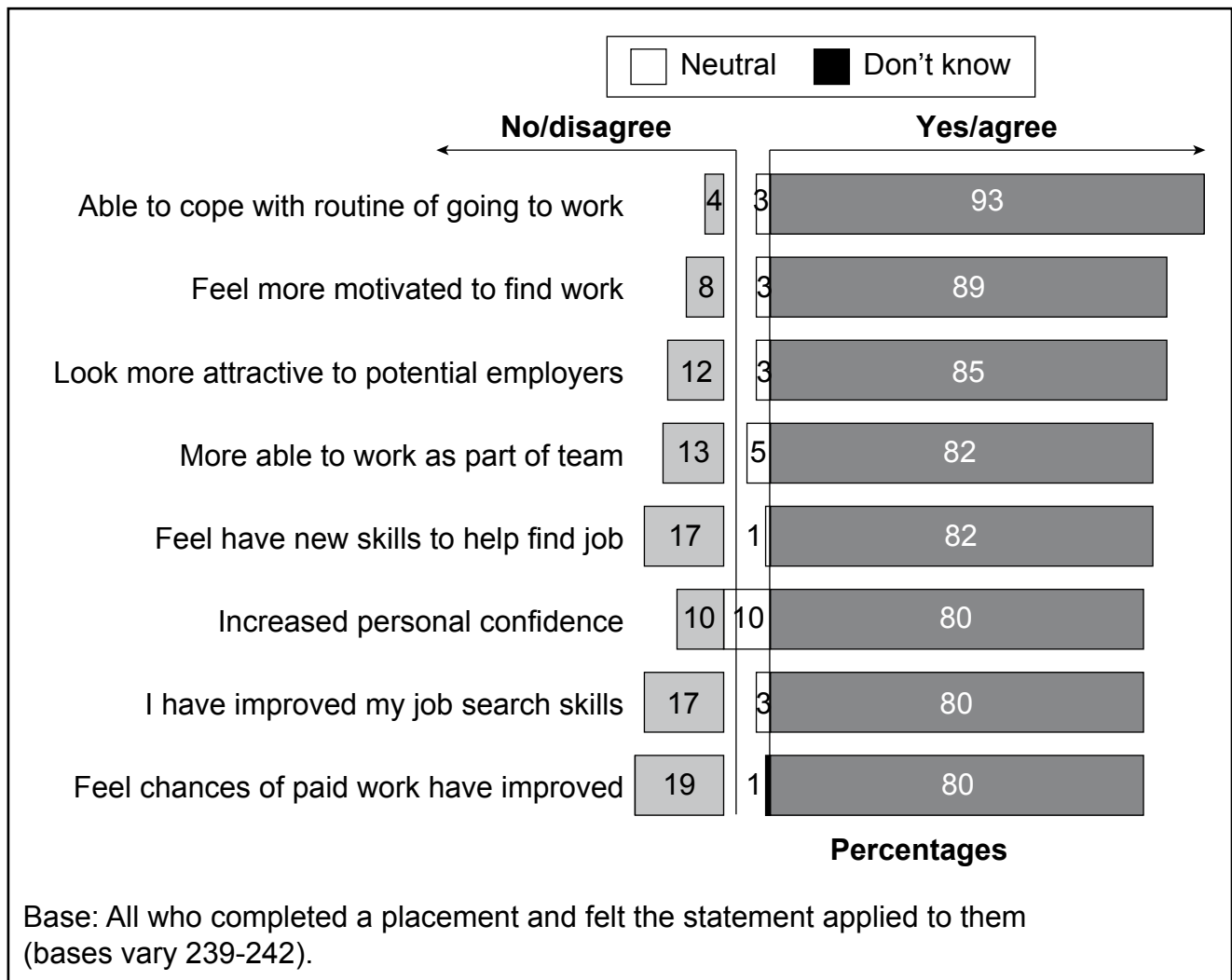
5.4 Attitudinal outcomes

5.4.1 Views of the scheme

This section looks at the views of claimants, who completed their DOSfYP placement, on their work readiness and the qualities they believe they acquired or developed by participating in the scheme. By way of introduction, Figure 5.4 provides an overview of all the ways in which claimants felt they benefited from the scheme. At least four in five of those who completed their placement felt that they had benefited in each of the ways shown in Figure 5.4.

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Figure 5.4 Qualities acquired or developed by participating in DOSfYP

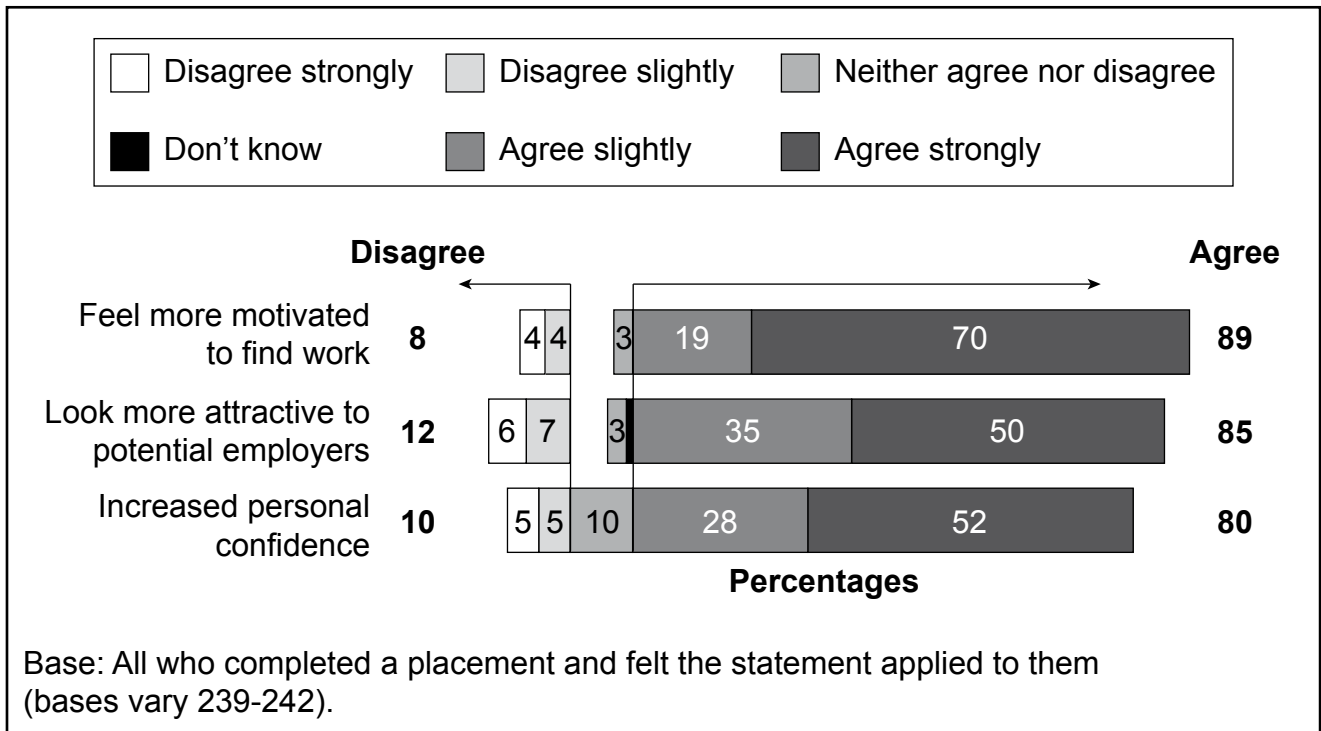


5.4.2 Perceptions regarding job prospects amongst claimants who completed a placement

Claimants who completed a placement were also asked a number of questions to see whether attending a placement had helped them to move closer to the labour market. This may be expressed in a number of ways: for example, through increased motivation to find work, or self-belief about the prospect of finding a paid job.

Figure 5.5 presents three aspects of claimants' beliefs regarding their job prospects after completing their 13-week placement. Seven in ten claimants (70 per cent) felt they had gained in all three of the ways shown in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5 Claimants' views regarding their job prospects

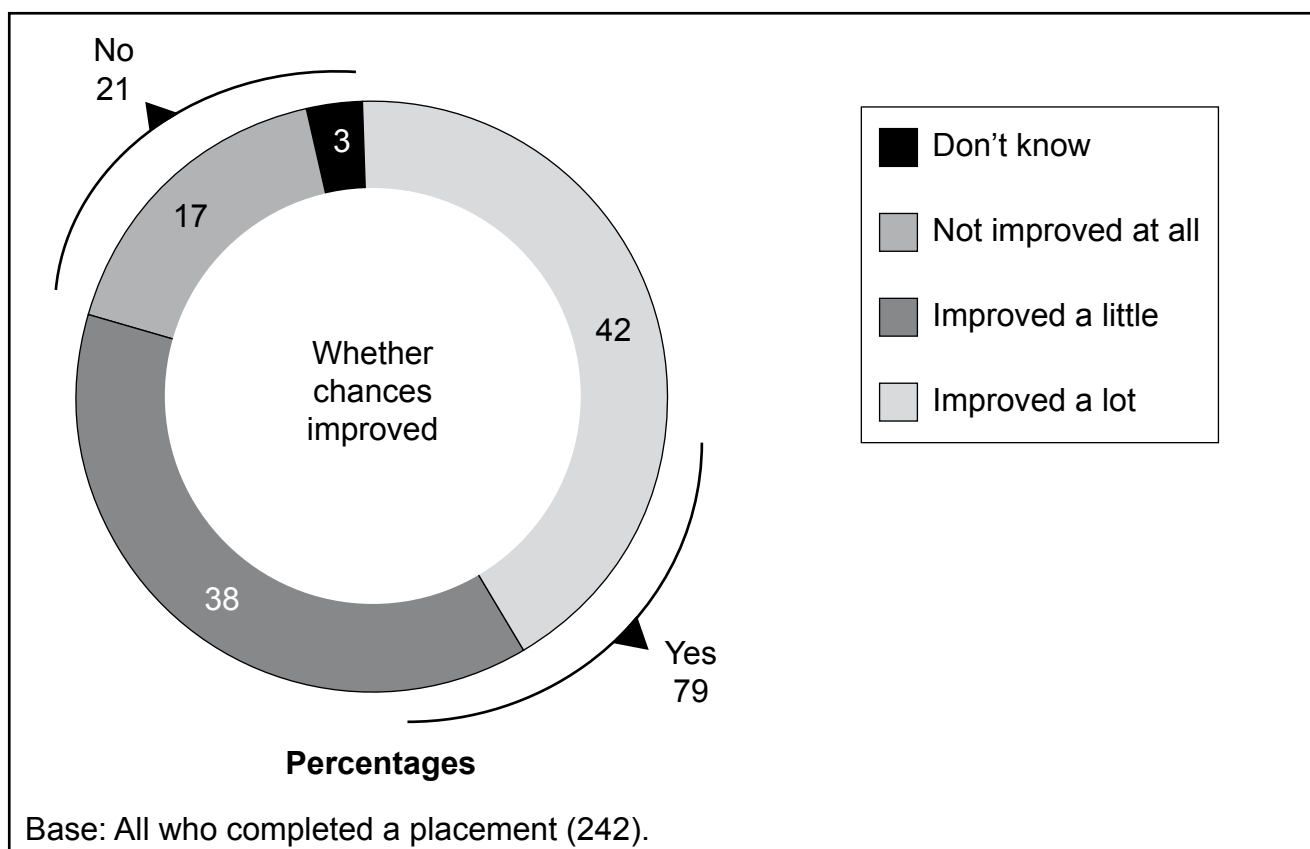


Almost nine in ten claimants said they were 'more motivated to look for work' as a result of the placement, with seven in ten agreeing strongly with this statement. This applied across the board – regardless of claimants' age, highest qualifications, and previous work experience – and was one of the most common gains reported by claimants who attended a placement.

Slightly less common was the belief that 'I will look more attractive to potential employers on job applications', which 85 per cent of claimants agreed with, or that 'my personal confidence has increased' as a result of the placement, which 80 per cent agreed with. Only around half of claimants believed either of these strongly.

Claimants who completed a placement were also asked more directly whether the experience they had gained had improved their chances of getting paid work, and 79 per cent said that it had (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6 Whether ‘experience you have gained during your placement has improved your chances of getting paid work’



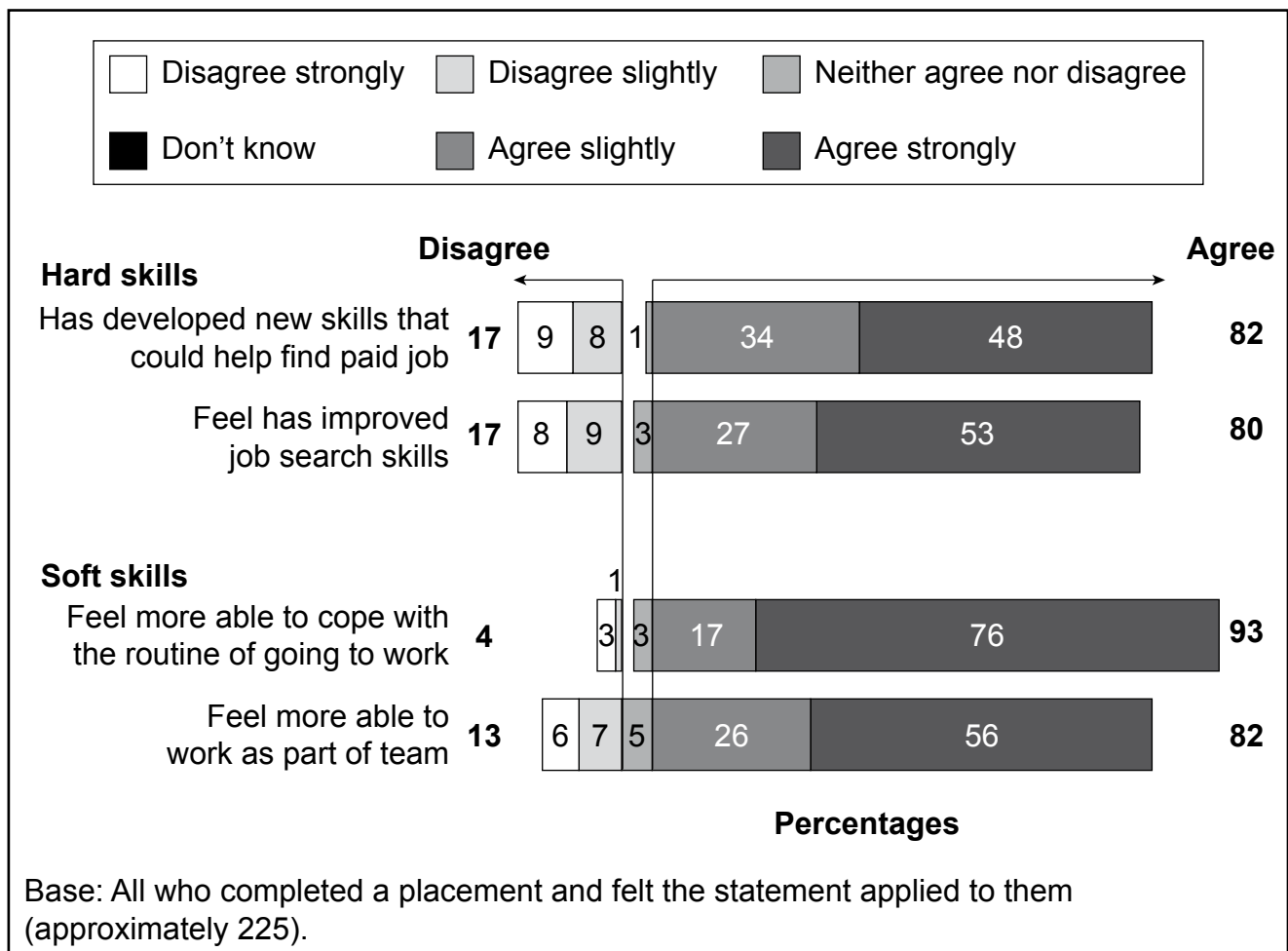
The proportions who felt this way fell with rising educational attainment (dropping from 83 per cent amongst claimants whose highest qualification was at GCSE level or below, to 67 per cent amongst those with a degree), but did not vary by age or amount of previous work experience, nor differ between claimants who perceived their lack of work experience as a barrier to finding work and the rest.

Claimants who moved into work soon after completing DOSfYP were more likely to agree strongly that their appeal to employers had increased as a result of the placement (62 per cent) than those who did not move into work (44 per cent). This is unsurprising, given that claimants in this situation had concrete evidence of their appeal in the form of a job. At the same time, it is heartening to find that those who were still unemployed after their placement felt the benefits of attending a placement despite not finding a job: this group was even more likely to strongly agree that their confidence had increased as a result of the placement (57 per cent) than those who had moved into work (38 per cent). In other ways, however, there was no difference between those who did and those who did not off-flow into work after their DOSfYP experience: their self-reported levels of motivation to look for work or perceived chances of finding paid work were similar.

5.4.3 Other qualities gained by claimants who completed a placement

This section explores the extent to which claimants felt they gained various ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ skills which could stand them in good stead when looking for a job or being in work. Claimants who attended the full 13 weeks were asked whether they agreed that they had gained four qualities as a result on their placement. The results are shown in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7 Claimants’ views regarding their ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ skills



Around four in five claimants agreed that the placement had equipped them with ‘new skills that could help me find a job’ (82 per cent). This belief was no more common amongst those with lower qualifications than those with higher qualifications, and did not vary according to the claimants’ age or the extent of their previous work experience.

A similar proportion (80 per cent) agreed that, as a result of the placement, ‘I have improved my job search skills’. Claimants who might be thought to need the least amount of help with their job searching skills in fact seemed to have benefited the most in this regard: strong agreement was particularly common amongst claimants who had already had some experience of work (63 per cent, compared with 44 per cent of those with no previous experience), and claimants with a degree or higher qualification (64 per cent, falling to just 49 per cent amongst claimants educated to GCSE level or below).

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The skill that claimants most commonly reported gaining was the ability ‘to cope with the routine of going to work’ (reported by 93 per cent). Over nine in ten felt that they had made a gain in this respect, with around three-quarters (76 per cent) agreeing strongly that they were now better able to cope. Claimants who remained unemployed after attending the placement were more likely to agree with this statement (94 per cent) than those who off-flowed into work (83 per cent).

Many of the placements gave claimants the opportunity to work with others on a day-to-day basis, so it is unsurprising to find that around four-fifths of claimants (82 per cent) agreed that they felt ‘more able to work as part of a team’ as a result of the placement. While it might be assumed that claimants without previous experience of work would benefit more in this regard, the proportions agreeing with this statement were no higher amongst those who lacked work experience or saw this as a barrier to finding a job, and the rest.

Almost two-thirds of the claimants who completed a placement (64 per cent) said that they had gained all four qualities. Claimants aged below 21 or whose educational attainment was no higher than GCSE level benefited the most: these two groups were the most likely to feel that they had benefited from all four skills (71 per cent each, compared with 52 per cent of claimants aged 21 or over and 57 per cent who held higher qualifications).

5.5 Job search activity

One of the aims of the DOSfYP Trailblazer was to support and enhance claimants’ job search activities in order to boost their prospects of finding employment. This section looks specifically at the job search-related activities that claimants undertook during and shortly after their placement, for those who completed the full 13-week placement (‘completers’). This allows us to explore whether the level and nature of job search-related activity differed between those who succeeded in finding a job and those who remained unemployed. It should be noted that the questions reported below cover only a limited range of activities, all of which are related to applications for paid work.

5.5.1 Use of placement experience in job search activities

Overall, 81 per cent of claimants who completed their placement said they had sent out job applications for paid work either during or after the end of their placement, while 64 per cent sent out applications both during and after. Table 5.3 shows further details about the applications sent out by claimants.

Table 5.3 Job search-related activities undertaken by claimants who completed their DOSfYP placement

Whether...	All %
Mentioned experience of the placement on any applications (on application itself or CV)	87
Sending out more job applications per week now than before attending placement	62
Applied for jobs never considered applying to previously	64

Base: All claimants who completed 13 weeks on placement and sent out job applications (205).

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It was very common for completers who sent out applications to showcase the work experience they had gained while on placement – 87 per cent of completers mentioned their participation in the DOSfYP Trailblazer.

Around three-fifths of the completers who applied for paid jobs (62 per cent) said they were sending out a greater volume of job applications at the time of the survey compared with before their placement. Those with lower qualifications showed the greatest intensification of job search activity following their placement: 75 per cent of completers who held GCSE or lower qualifications increased the volume of applications they sent out, compared with 50 per cent of those with A-level or higher qualifications. While this is the case, the proportion of claimants who increased their volume of job applications was no different amongst those who attended supported job search sessions while on placement and those who did not. Claimants' economic activity and levels of work experience before making their JSA claim also had no bearing on whether or not they sent out 'more job applications per week now than before attending the placement'.

Furthermore, around two-thirds of completers (64 per cent) reported applying for a broader range of jobs since their placement, saying they were sending applications for positions they would never have considered previously. Claimants aged 21 or older were more likely to report this (74 per cent, compared with 58 per cent of those aged 18-20). Claimants who attended supported job search sessions while on placement were particularly inclined to expand the range of jobs they would consider applying for (though it is not clear whether this was something that providers encouraged during job search sessions): 71 per cent said they would consider alternative jobs since taking part, compared with 52 per cent of those who were not offered supported job search while on placement.

5.5.2 Job search activity whilst on placement

On average, claimants who completed their placement spent 11.5 hours per week searching and applying for jobs. Almost three-quarters (72 per cent) said they submitted applications for jobs whilst they were still on their placement.

The proportion of completers who sent out job applications during their placement was similar across all age groups. Claimants with degrees were particularly likely to have sent out applications (23 of the 25 graduates who completed a placement), though the number of claimants in this group is too small for this to be statistically reliable. Claimants who were dissatisfied with 'the amount of time you had available to search for jobs or attend job interviews' were as likely to send out applications during this time as those who were satisfied in this regard. Claimants who felt they had insufficient time to spend on job search made just as much effort to find employment as anyone else: they were just as likely as claimants generally to have increased the volume of applications they sent out and to have expanded their job search to consider new types of jobs.

It was rare for completers to carry out all their job search activity after their placement had been completed, but one in ten completers (ten per cent) did in fact report that all their applications were submitted after the 13 weeks were over.

5.5.3 Job search activity amongst claimants who off-flowed into work

Up to this point the analysis has looked separately at work outcomes and job search activity. A key consideration is whether successful employment outcomes were associated with increased job search activity linked to the Trailblazer.

The amount of time spent searching and applying for jobs while on placement was similar amongst completers who off-flowed into work (12.6 hours per week) and those who did not (11.1 hours per week).

The proportions who mentioned their DOSfYP work experience when sending out applications, who increased the volume of job applications they were sending out, and who expanded the range of jobs they were searching for, are shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Job search-related activities undertaken by claimants with different employment outcomes

Whether...	Off-flowed into work %	Did not off-flow into work %
Mentioned experience of the placement on any applications (on application itself or CV)	86	88
Sending out more job applications per week now than before attending placement	45	68
Applied for jobs never considered applying to previously	63	64

Base: All claimants who completed 13 weeks on placement and sent out job applications (205); all claimants who completed 13 weeks on placement, sent out job applications, and off-flowed into work (59); all claimants who completed 13 weeks on placement, sent out job applications, and did not off-flow into work (146).