

Off-Flows Potentially to Employment destination report

by Jan Shury, Lorna Adams, Sarah Fish
and Charlie Taylor

Department for Work and Pensions

Research Report No 658

Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) destination report

Jan Shury, Lorna Adams, Sarah Fish and Charlie Taylor

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Abbreviations

BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
IB	Incapacity Benefit
IS	Income Support
JOT	Job Outcome Target
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
LP	Lone Parents
LT JSA	Long-Term JSA
OPtE	Off-Flows Potentially to Employment measure
PG	Priority Group
PHCD	People with a Health Condition or Disability
ST JSA	Short-Term JSA

Summary

Background and method

The Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) measure provides a figure for the number of individuals leaving working-age benefits, but excludes those who have either moved onto other benefits, died, left the register and returned within one week, retired, or taken up New Deal options. The customers who remain after these exclusions are classed as potentially having moved into employment. This study was designed to check the accuracy of the OPtE measure as a means of defining the destinations of customers who leave out-of-work benefits.

Specifically, the study establishes the proportion of those who were classed as OPtE who actually ended their claim to enter paid work.

OPtE pilots were relaunched in three Jobcentre Plus districts in April 2009. In these areas, advisers had access to previous months' OPtE data, giving them an indication of how their office is performing in terms of helping move customers off working age benefits into paid employment. The study is based on a sample of customers who left out-of-work benefits in April and May, and were designated as OPtE at the point the sample was drawn in July 2009.

Telephone interviews were conducted with 6,542 of these customers who were classed as 'OPtE'. Eight-hundred and twenty interviews were also undertaken with other customers who off-flow from benefits (who were not classed as OPtE), to produce destinations data on all off flows. Interviews were conducted in August 2009, the month after the sample was drawn – and up to four months after the customers left out-of-work benefits.

Equal proportions of customers ending short-term Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), long-term JSA, Income Support (IS) and Incapacity Benefit (IB)/Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claims were interviewed and findings have been weighted to reflect the true proportions of customers leaving each benefit type.

Customers from the three 'pilot' districts were included, alongside those from three matched 'control' districts. A secondary aim of this research was to explore

the views of Jobcentre Plus service among customers in pilot districts so that if OPtE data is used for targets, any changes in pressure put on customers to end claims or variation in support can be detected.

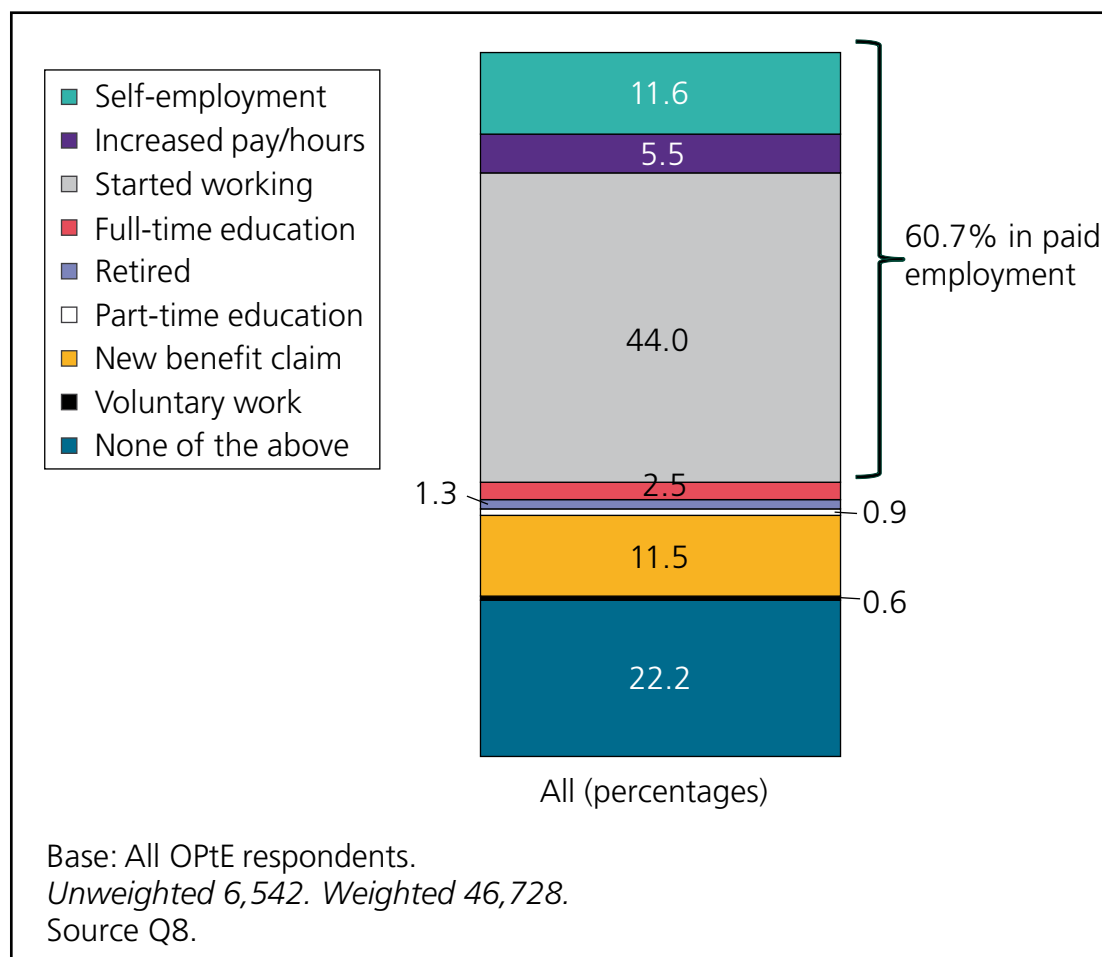
How accurate was the OPtE measure in July 2009?

Sixty-one per cent of customers classed as potentially having moved into employment when the sample was drawn in July 2009 had entered paid work immediately after ending their claim as shown in Figure 1. This leaves 39 per cent of customers who were classed as OPtE, not actually moving into employment.

The measure does not appear to have excluded all customers who ended their claim to start a new benefit claim: 12 per cent of customers classed as OPtE said they immediately started a claim for a new benefit. Similarly, one per cent had retired, started claiming a pension or pension credit straightaway but were classed as OPtE. These are exclusions that should be made by the OPtE code.

Those who moved into education or training, took up voluntary work, went overseas, went to prison or ended their claim for an 'other' reason, account for a further 26 per cent of OPtE customers. The main 'other' reason for claims ending was being no longer eligible to claim, either due to a change in circumstances or because the customer was not meeting the conditions of their claim.

Figure 1 Initial destination on ending benefit claim – main destinations



To increase the accuracy of the OPtE measure, the code needs to be further refined to ensure all new benefit claims are picked up, as well as perhaps adding criteria to exclude those who have their claim ended by Jobcentre Plus, rather than choosing to end it themselves.

The majority of those ending claims in these six pilot and control districts in April – May 2009 were short-term JSA customers. As this is the group most likely to enter paid work and least likely to start a new claim, the overall accuracy measure is considerably higher than it would be if long-term JSA, IS or IB/ESA customers were examined separately.

How do the proportions of OPtE customers entering work compare with previous OPtE outcome studies?

In the destinations study conducted in 2008 (customers who had ended claims in February – April 2008), 63 per cent of OPtE customers had entered work straight after ending their claim, compared to 61 per cent of OPtE customers in this recent study. As the sample sizes are substantial this difference is statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level.¹

In 2009, more OPtE customers started new benefit claims than had done so in 2008 (12 per cent compared to seven per cent). This confirms that the measure has not increased in accuracy in excluding new claims for benefit. However, fewer 2009 customers had ended their claims for 'other' reasons (i.e. not employment, education or a new claim) so it seems the measure is being successful in screening out some of these.

Views on Jobcentre Plus service and pressure among customers classed as OPtE in pilot districts

At the point customers included in this study ended their claims (April – May 2009), OPtE data was not available to advisers in pilot districts. Findings here are essentially a benchmark for future studies that may be conducted once targets are set, based on OPtE figures.

Views on the suitability of outcome (whether a new claim or a job) varied by customer type. Those who moved onto JSA were less likely to feel their new benefit was more appropriate for their circumstances than those moving onto other benefits. The majority of customers **ending** claims for JSA to enter paid work agreed the new job was a good match for their experience, skills and interests. However, customers ending claims for other benefits and entering paid work were almost twice as likely as JSA customers to disagree that the job was a good match.

Customers in pilot districts were reasonably positive about the service they received from Jobcentre Plus staff. Those who had ended a claim to move benefits were most positive and fewer than one in six of those who had ended claims because they did not like the service, had their claim ended or were told they were no longer eligible, reported a poor relationship with advisers.

Some customers classed as OPtE did feel under pressure to end their claim, but customers in pilot areas were less likely to do so than those in control areas. Over half of those entering work in pilot areas thought the pressure they were under was reasonable.

¹ Some differences in sample included in the study (and in data weighting) should be taken into account, as detailed in Appendix B.

1 Introduction, aims and objectives

1.1. Purpose of survey

This study aims to establish the destinations of customers ending claims for out-of-work benefits to check the accuracy of the Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) measure. OPtE is designed to be a measure of those customers who have potentially moved into employment. It includes all those leaving working-age benefits except those who have moved onto other benefits, died, left the register and returned within one week, retired or taken up New Deal options. This leaves a figure (OPtE) of those who have potentially moved into employment.

The report also examines the views of Jobcentre Plus service among customers after ending a claim for benefit.

In more detail, the findings from this survey of customers are being used to provide input on the following:

- the accuracy of the OPtE measure – i.e. identifying the proportion of customers classed as OPtE who actually entered paid employment;
- the nature and sustainability of any employment OPtE customers entered;
- the appropriateness of any new benefits claimed, and the suitability of any work entered;
- views of Jobcentre Plus service among OPtE customers;
- whether any OPtE customers felt 'unreasonable' pressure was being placed on them to end their claim;
- a comparison of the proportions entering work or other destinations with the previous OPtE destination study undertaken in 2008.

It should be noted that this survey of customers was originally conceived as part of a project to investigate the impact of providing Jobcentre Plus districts with the numbers of customers recorded as OPtE as a supplement to the Job Outcome Target (JOT) measure. The original objectives were to compare the outcomes and views of service among those customers ending a benefit claim in three pilot districts with those among the same cohort of customers from three matched control districts. However, the aim of the project was altered, as the OPtE data in the three pilot districts was not being used as planned at the time the customers who constitute the sample for the study ended their claims (in April – May 2009). Although advisers had had access to previous months' OPtE figures, these figures were not being treated as targets. In future it is hoped that a 'post' wave of research can be conducted to compare the outcomes and views of these customers with those who end claims if the OPtE data is used as a target, and also act as a continued validation of the OPtE data.

1.2 Report structure

Reflecting that the survey objectives require discussion of different cohorts of customers, each chapter in the report focuses on a particular group. The chapters are split as below and the reader should be aware that the report is not one chronological narrative but rather structured to report on a series of issues in the following way.

OPtE customers from both pilot and control sites, analysed as a whole

- Chapter 2 covers the immediate destinations of all those classed as OPtE in April – May 2009.
- Appendices C and D then follow up these customers, looking at later destinations and the nature of the employment taken up by those OPtE customers who entered paid work either immediately or at some point since ending their claim, looking for evidence of sustainability.
- Appendix B compares outcomes of this current cohort with those from earlier OPtE outcome studies.

OPtE customers from pilot sites only

- Chapter 3 examines the suitability of outcome (whether a job or moving onto a new benefit claim) reported by OPtE customers.
- Chapter 4 considers the views of Jobcentre Plus service, and reasons for ending claims among OPtE customers in 'pilot' areas only where advisers have been made aware of OPtE data.

Comparing OPtE customers from pilot and control sites

- Chapter 5 examines the level of pressure OPtE customers ending claims in 'pilot' areas felt compared to those in control areas where advisers have not been made aware of OPtE data.

All Off Flow customers (OPtE and other off flows), from both pilot and control sites, analysed as a whole

- Appendix A shows the destinations of all customers leaving benefits in these districts in April – May 2009.

1.3 Decimal places

Findings are reported as whole percentages in the text throughout the report.

However, findings on charts and figures are presented to one decimal place to assist improvement of the OPtE code.

It should be borne in mind when looking at and interpreting these charts that the 'true' finding could vary by up to one percentage point in either direction. Findings for sub groups (e.g. by benefit type) have larger standard error rates of up to two percentage points. The decimal points are, therefore, shown as a presentational advice, rather than as indicating the level of statistical accuracy in findings.

2 OPtE accuracy: immediate destination on ending claim

2.1 Defining immediate destinations

To check whether Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) customers moved into paid work they were asked whether they had ended their claims for any of the following reasons:

- to enter self-employment or to freelance;
- to increase their pay or hours with an existing employer; or
- to return to work/start a new paid job.

If they had not entered paid work, customers were asked if they had entered any of the other 'main' destinations in turn:

- full-time education or training;
- retirement and/or starting claiming a pension/pension credit;
- part-time education or training;
- moving onto, or beginning to set up a claim for another benefit for people out of work (excluding retirement pension);
- working for an employer in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship

Each of these destinations are reviewed in turn below. If customers had not ended their claims to do any of the above they were classed as not entering a 'main' destination and their 'other' reasons for ending claims are also examined in this chapter.²

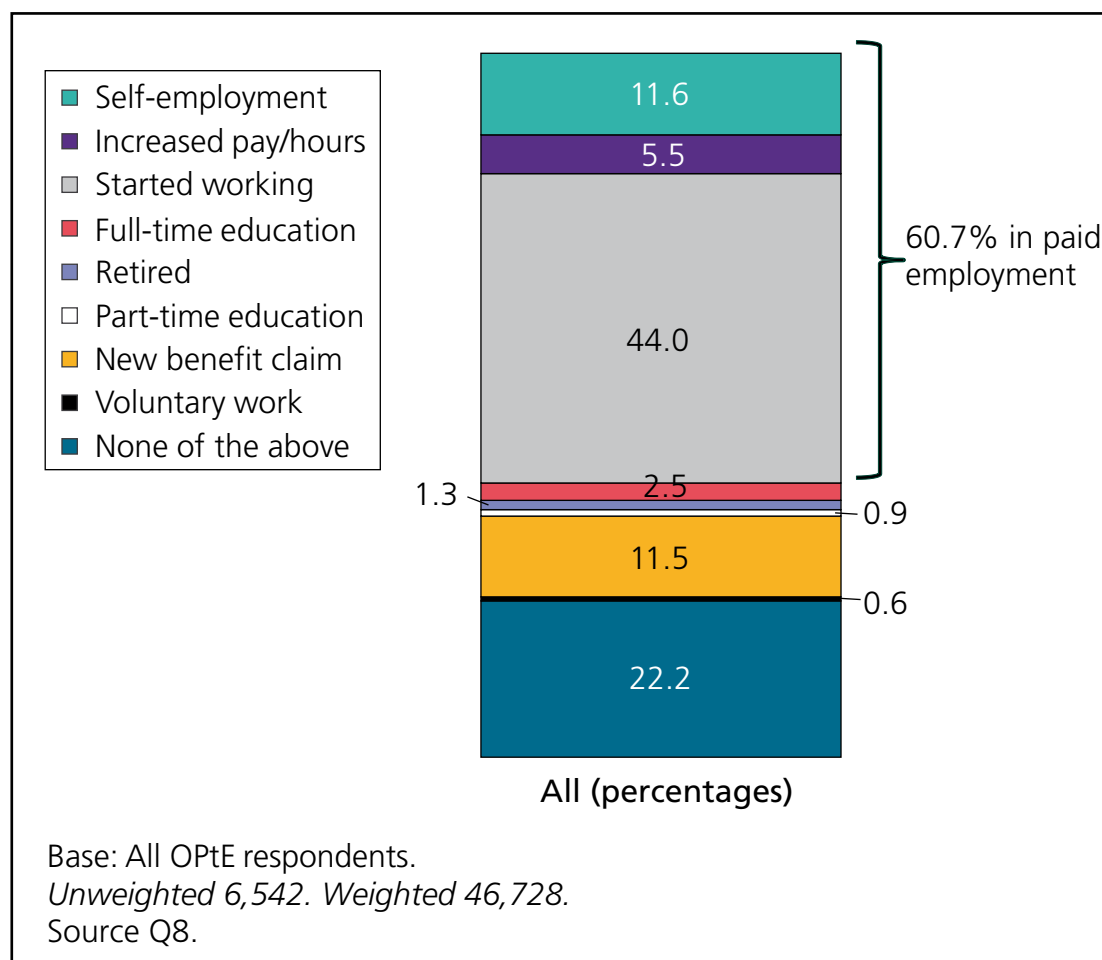
² Appendix C supplies further details of how destinations have been defined.

2.2 Entering paid work

The majority of customers identified as OPtE (61 per cent) did indeed report that they entered work immediately upon ending their benefit claim, as shown in Figure 2.1. Most of those that entered work either returned to or started a new job with an employer (44 per cent). A small number increased their pay and/or hours with an existing employer (six per cent), and just over one in eight (12 per cent) became self-employed or were freelancing.

However, almost two-fifths (39 per cent) of OPtE customers did **not** move into paid employment immediately after ending their claim for benefit.

Figure 2.1 Initial destination on ending benefit claim – main destinations³



³ Findings are displayed to one decimal point to assist improvement of the OPtE code, but it should be borne in mind that the 'true' finding could vary by up to one percentage point in either direction. Findings for sub groups (e.g. by benefit type) have larger standard error rates of up to two percentage points. Decimal points are shown as a presentational advice, rather than as indicating the level of statistical accuracy in findings. Please refer to Section 1.3 and the Appendices E and F for further details.

There are significant differences in destination by the type of benefit claim ended. Those ending short-term Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) claims were significantly more likely to report entering paid work (either with an employer as on a self-employed basis) than those ending other benefit claims (68 per cent for short-term JSA compared to 46 per cent for Income Support (IS), 43 per cent for Incapacity Benefit (IB)/Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and 42 per cent for long-term JSA). IB/ESA customers were significantly more likely to have entered or returned to self-employment or freelancing (16 per cent had done so compared to 13 per cent of short-term JSA, eight per cent of long-term JSA and five per cent of IS), leaving them as likely as long-term JSA customers to have entered some form of paid work immediately.

Table 2.1 Initial destination on ending benefit claim – main destinations, by benefit type

	Short-term JSA %	Long-term JSA %	IS %	IB/ESA %
Self-employment	13	8	5	16
Increased pay/hours	6	2	5	3
Started working	49	32	36	25
In paid employment	68	42	46	43
Full-time education	2	6	2	1
Retired	1	2	1	5
Part-time education	1	2	*	1
New benefit claim	8	15	26	29
Voluntary work	1	1	*	*
None of the above	20	31	24	21
<i>Unweighted</i>	1,633	1,634	1,636	1,639
<i>Weighted</i>	32,969	7,729	3,976	2,504

Base: All OPtE customers.

Source: Q8.

* Refers to less than 0.5%.

2.3 Entering training or education

Only three per cent of OPtE customers said they initially moved into training or education (three per cent full-time and one per cent part-time). This rises to nine per cent among long-term JSA customers though, with six per cent entering full-time training or education.

2.4 Taking up voluntary (unpaid) work or an internship

As one might expect, ending a benefit claim to take up voluntary or unpaid work is not a common destination, with only one per cent of customers overall ending their claim for this reason. It is possible that some of these customers are on placements arranged via Jobcentre Plus and if it is likely that this type of support will increase in future it may be worth examining how to deal with this group of customers. If not, this may be an outcome that the OPtE measure is not developed to exclude, and it could be taken into account as part of a known 'error' rate.

2.5 Retiring

Overall, just one per cent reported ending their claim to retire or to start claiming a pension or pension credit. The OPtE measure is meant to exclude these customers and this discrepancy could be due to customer recall (perhaps they did not immediately retire, but ended a claim a few weeks earlier); either way a one per cent error rate **overall** may be acceptable.

Among those ending IB/ESA claims, however, the proportion reporting that they had retired rose to five per cent, so this may indicate not so much that the OPtE measure is correctly excluding most retirees, but rather that the proportion ending a claim to enter retirement overall is low. OPtE excludes those reaching State Pension age and classes this exclusion as 'retirement'. Customers reporting 'retirement' as their main destination after ending a claim for benefit may not have reached State Pension age, but may be claiming a private pension or be supporting themselves financially by other means in their 'retirement' and no longer need to claim benefit. This could potentially explain the customers who claim to have retired, but have not been excluded for this reason. This group should be treated slightly differently in OPtE, as they do have the potential to return to benefit at some point, rather than those who reach State Pension age, will no longer be eligible to claim in-work benefits.

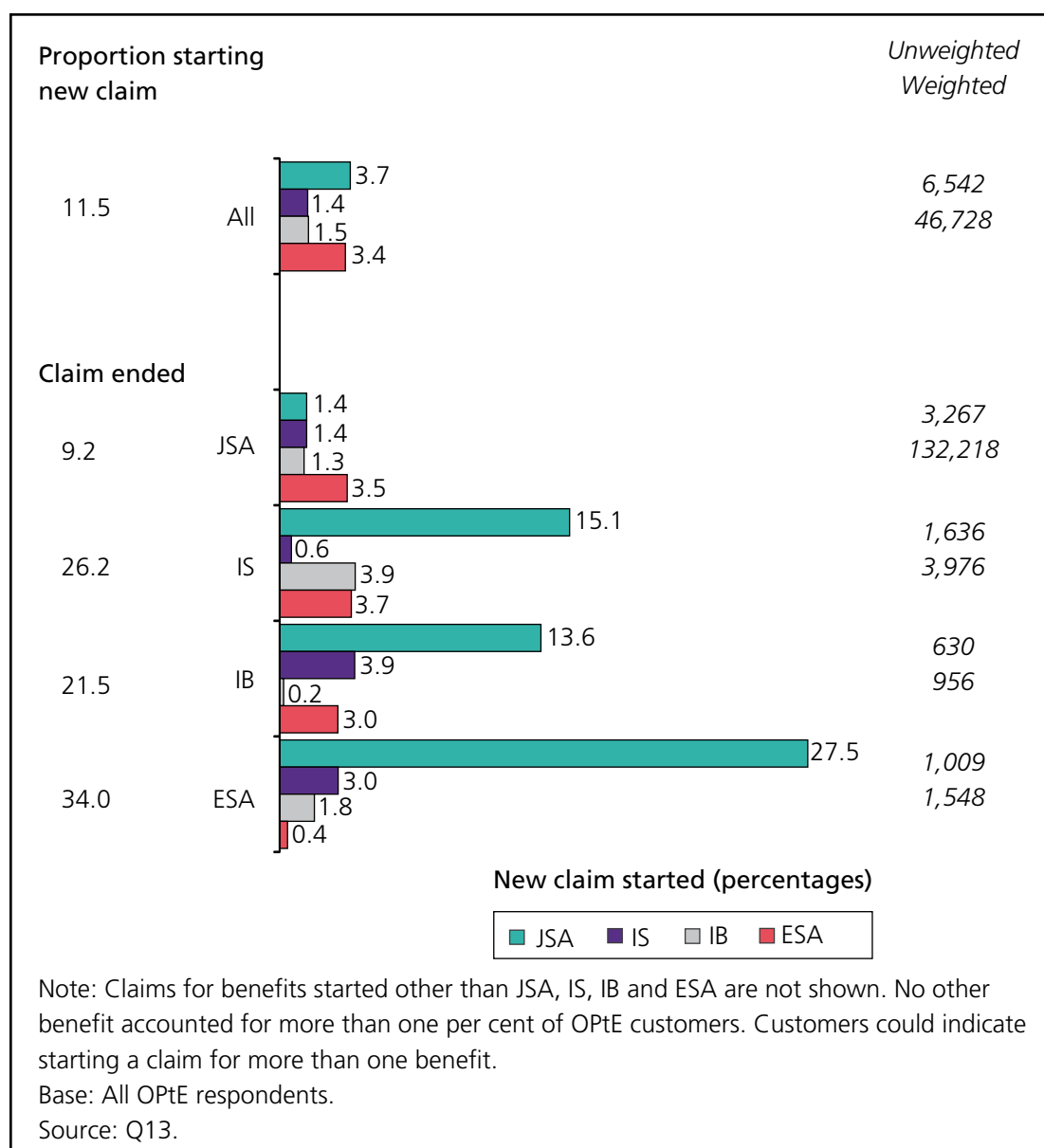
2.6 Starting a new benefit claim

The OPtE measure seeks to screen out both those customers who begin a new claim for the same benefit within one week and those that start a new benefit. However, overall, 12 per cent of OPtE customers reported moving onto or beginning to set up a new claim for an out-of-work benefit; this indicates that these customers have not been successfully excluded from OPtE.

Overall, only one per cent of customers indicated that they began a new claim for the same benefit, and the majority said they did have a break (which perhaps was longer than a week). This leaves only around 0.3 per cent reporting that they immediately began a new claim for the same benefit, which seems an acceptable 'error' rate, or may be due to customer recall.

Similarly, once we turn to those starting a claim for a different benefit there are only small proportions (under five per cent of those ending a claim for any benefit type) reporting moving on to start new claims for IS, IB or ESA. However, there does seem to be a potential issue with not excluding those starting a new JSA claim: up to one in six of those ending IS or IB claims and more than one in four of those ending ESA claims started a new JSA claim.

Figure 2.2 New benefit claims started, by benefit type



Short-term JSA customers are least likely to have started a new benefit claim, only eight per cent had done so, compared to around one in seven (15 per cent) of those ending long-term JSA claims, and over a quarter of those ending IS and IB/ESA claims (26 per cent and 29 per cent respectively). As the majority of OPtE customers are customers leaving JSA (86 per cent in these months), and very few

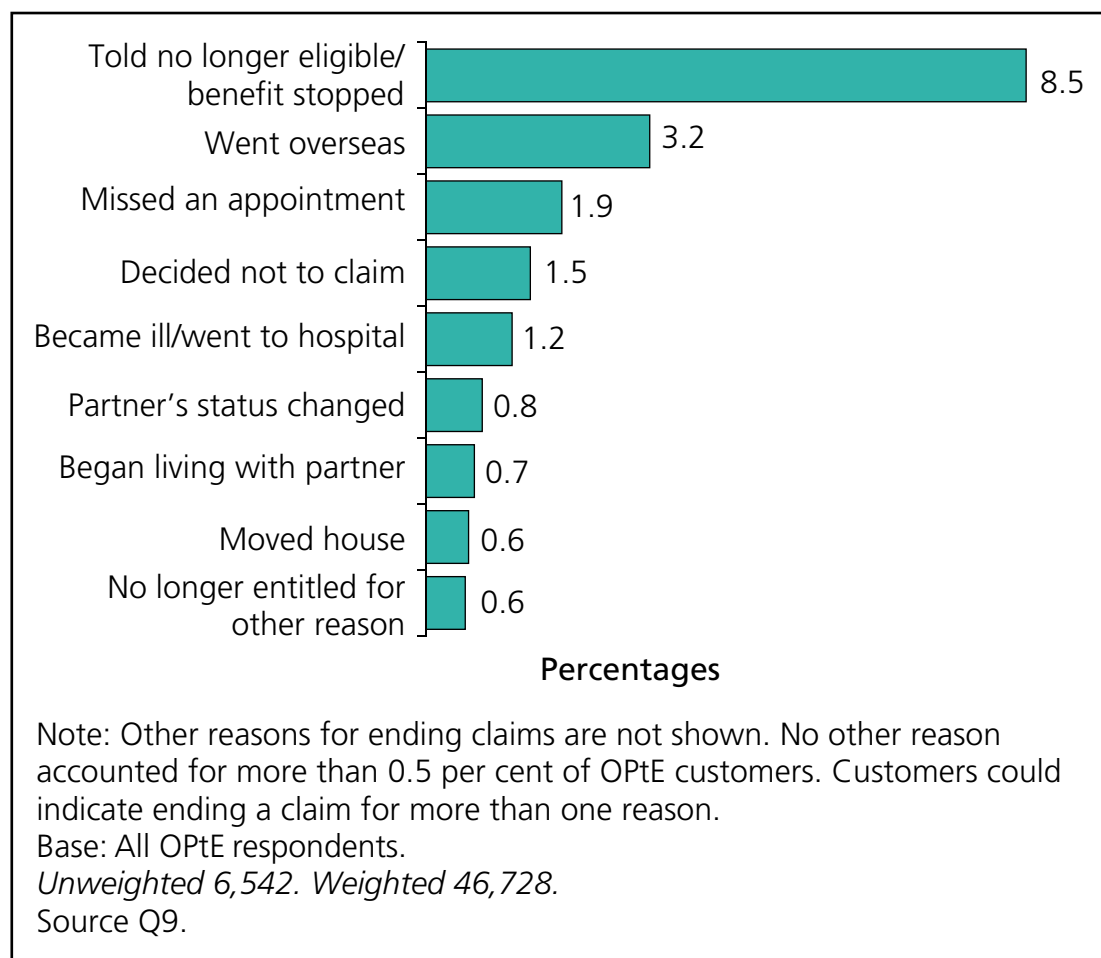
from this group are reclaiming the same benefit, this results in only four per cent of OPtE customers overall ending their claim and then starting or returning to JSA.

So, even if this error rate among those ending IS, IB and ESA claims to move onto JSA was greatly reduced, it may not hugely reduce the overall proportion of OPtE customers seen moving onto a new benefit. It is the accuracy with which the destinations of those ending JSA claims are recorded that really drives the measure. Increasing the accuracy of recording of those ending JSA claims to move onto IS, IB/ESA would substantially reduce the proportions of those classed as OPtE who actually move onto new claims.

2.7 'Other' reasons for ending claims

Almost a quarter (22 per cent) of OPtE customers had not initially moved into one of the 'main destinations (paid or unpaid work, started training or education, retired or a new benefit claim). These customers, therefore, ended their claims for 'other' reasons. They fall into destination categories not excluded by OPtE, and it may be worth exploring how these circumstances could be identified.

Figure 2.3 Reason for ending claim – those who did not initially enter a main destination



Half of these customers were seeking paid work once their claim ended (those ending IS, IB or ESA claims, and those who faced barriers in returning to work such as having a health condition or disability, and lone parents were less likely to be doing so – perhaps those who considered they were not able to work).

The most common ‘other’ reason for ending a claim was that the customer was told they were no longer eligible or their benefit payments were stopped as shown in Figure 2.3.

Table 2.2 details other reasons for ending claims by benefit type, including those accounting for less than one per cent of customers in any group.

Table 2.2 All reasons for ending claim – those who did not initially enter a main destination

	Short-term	Long-term	IS %	IB %
	JSA %	JSA %		
Told no longer eligible/benefit stopped	7.8	11.8	5.8	10.1
Went overseas	3.9	2.3	0.4	0.2
Missed an appointment with Jobcentre Plus	2.2	2.0	0.3	0.5
Decided not to claim	1.6	1.7	0.3	1.2
Became ill/went to hospital	0.8	2.1	1.3	3.2
Partner's status changed	0.4	1.2	3.2	0.4
Began living with partner	0.0	0.4	7.1	0.2
Moved house	0.6	0.8	0.3	0.0
No longer entitled for other reason	0.4	1.0	0.7	1.0
Full-time caring for another	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.0
Went to prison	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.7
Was about to start a training/ employment that didn't materialise	0.2	1.2	0.1	0.0
Partner started claiming on respondent's behalf	0.1	0.3	1.8	0.5
Change in family/parental/financial status	0.1	0.5	1.1	0.1
Did not like Jobcentre Plus service	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0
Pregnancy/maternity leave	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Started 'New Deal' program	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.0
Jobcentre made an error in processing claim	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.3
Felt better	0.0	0.0	0.4	1.8
Have not received any benefits/cash	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
Other	0.8	1.7	0.5	0.5
Don't know	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.6
<i>Unweighted</i>	1,633	1,634	1,636	1,639
<i>Weighted</i>	32,969	7,729	3,976	2,504

Base: All OPtE customers.

2.8 Conclusion: Improving the accuracy of OPtE in capturing immediate destinations

If the OPtE measure is to solely reflect immediate destinations then it was 61 per cent accurate at the time the sample was selected as OPtE for the survey in July 2009 (among those who ended a claim April – May 2009 in the six districts covered).

We can break these OPtE customers down into three groups to illustrate the accuracy (and potential future accuracy of the measure).

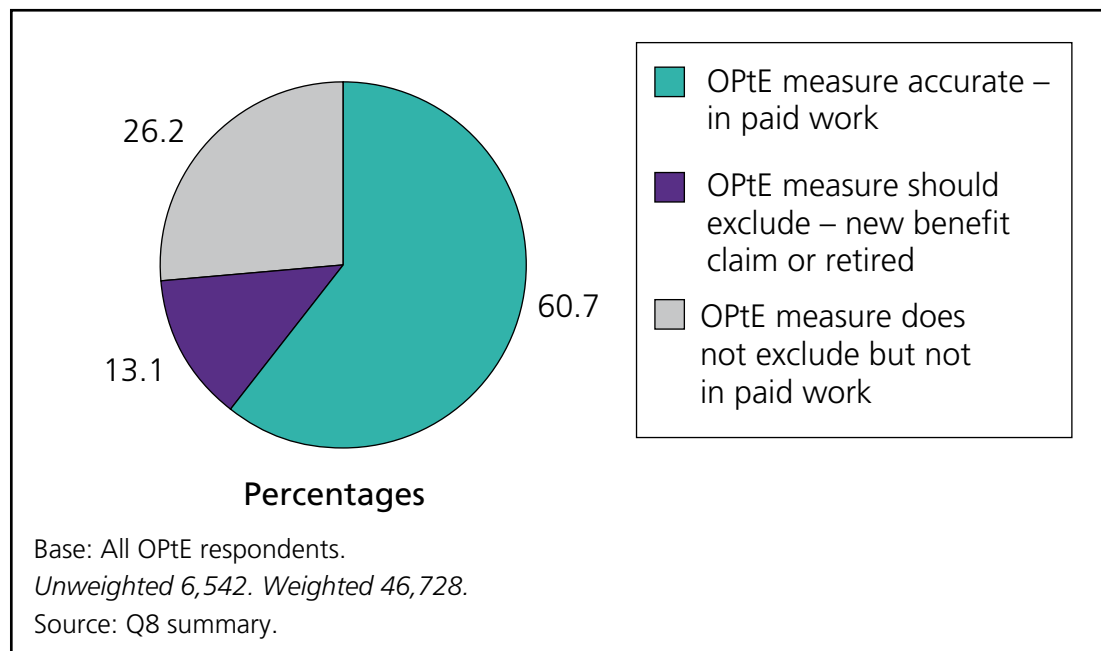
- A. Sixty-one per cent entered work immediately after ending their claim.
- B. Thirteen per cent did not enter paid work immediately, but started a new benefit claim or retired immediately – so should have been excluded from OPtE.
- C. Twenty-six per cent did not immediately enter paid work, start a new benefit claim or retire, but entered education or training, went overseas or to prison or ended their claim for another reason.⁴ There are no specific plans to exclude these customers from OPtE. Once the measure is refined to ensure those starting a new benefit claim or retiring are excluded, this remaining 26 per cent who did not enter work constitute the 'error' rate.

To reduce the numbers falling into group B above it may be worth considering extending the one week exclusion period to two weeks (so also excluding from OPtE those who begin a new claim within two weeks of a previous claim), especially given current claimant levels which may have led to delays in new claims being processed.

However, it is group C above who may be of most concern. This group is made up of the three per cent who entered full-time education/training, the one per cent who entered part-time education/training, the one per cent who entered voluntary or unpaid work and the 22 per cent who entered an 'other' destination. The majority of 'others' are those who were told they were no longer eligible to claim, missed an appointment or decided not to claim – so these customers essentially ended a claim but did not move onto another immediate destination.

⁴ Those who remained overseas or in prison at the time of fieldwork are not included here, only those interviewed who must therefore have returned home.

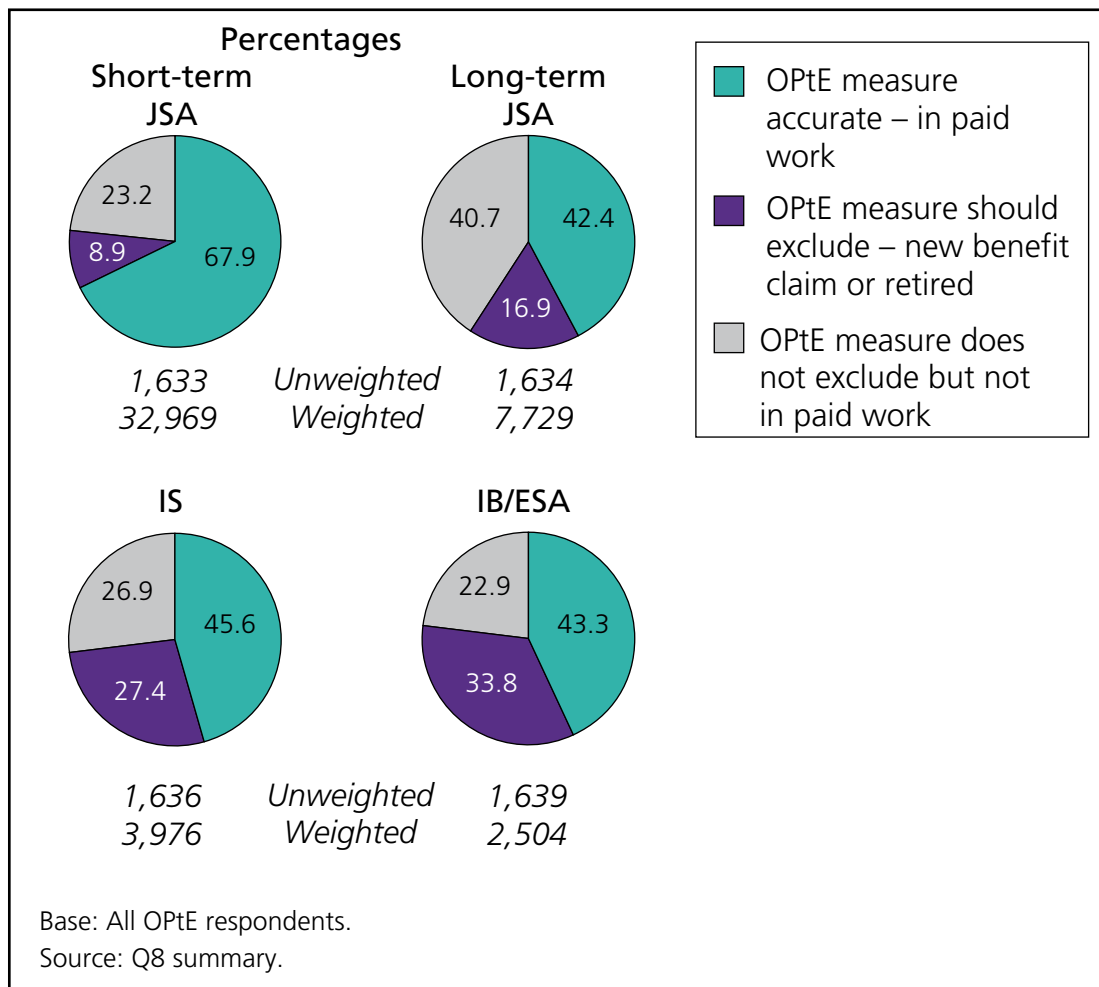
Figure 2.4 Accuracy of OPtE based on immediate destinations



As short-term JSA customers constitute the majority of OPtE customers in these particular months and districts (71 per cent), it is to be welcomed that the measure is most accurate among this group, 68 per cent of whom entered paid work as shown in Figure 2.5. However, this also hides, to some extent, that OPtE seems less accurate among other groups (who are less likely to have moved into paid work), and therefore the accuracy of the measure may shift according to the makeup of customers leaving benefits at any given time.

Short-term JSA customers will always be most likely to end a claim to return to work (whether captured as a 'definite' or a 'potential' by Jobcentre Plus systems) and therefore, if the proportion of those leaving benefits who were short-term JSA customers reduced and the proportion of long-term JSA customers increased (as may be the case as the economic situation improves), then there would be a concern that the accuracy of the measure would reduce further.

Figure 2.5 Accuracy of OPtE based on immediate destinations – by benefit type



In conclusion, to lower the proportion that **should** be excluded but are not (group B above), the exclusion period could be increased to two weeks. If those whose circumstances changed making them no longer eligible to claim and those who missed an appointment could also be identified and excluded it would considerably reduce the numbers in group C (who currently are neither excluded nor in paid work). Although in allocating definite destinations for these customers later outcomes may also be of interest. As there is such variation by benefit type, it may be more useful to present OPtE figures at benefit type level rather than combined.

To continue with the OPtE measure operating as it does would mean accepting an 'error rate' of 39 per cent – almost two in five of those classed as OPtE not entering paid work. If the measure was improved to cut out those starting new benefit claims and retiring this would still result in an error rate of 26 per cent, so just over one in four of those classed as OPtE not entering paid work.

3 OPtE pilot districts: suitability of outcome

This chapter covers only those Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) customers in districts classed as 'pilots', where advisers have had access to previous months' OPtE figures, although they are not treated as targets as yet.⁵ The intention is that these findings could be used as a baseline if further research was conducted after OPtE targets are in operation.

Overall destinations are reported in the previous chapter, but here we will look at how suited to the needs and circumstances of OPtE customers the destinations in these areas were.

3.1 Starting a new claim for a different benefit

Nine per cent of OPtE customers from pilot districts had initially ended their claim to start a claim for a different, new benefit. These customers should not be classed as OPtE, although it may be interesting to note their thoughts on service and the extent to which they were happy to move benefits.

They were asked how appropriate this new benefit was to their situation and around seven out of ten customers who had started a new claim (71 per cent) agreed that it was more appropriate for their needs and circumstances than the benefit they were leaving, with over half agreeing strongly (53 per cent), as shown in Figure 3.1. Only 15 per cent of pilot area OPtE customers who had started a new claim disagreed that the new benefit was more appropriate.

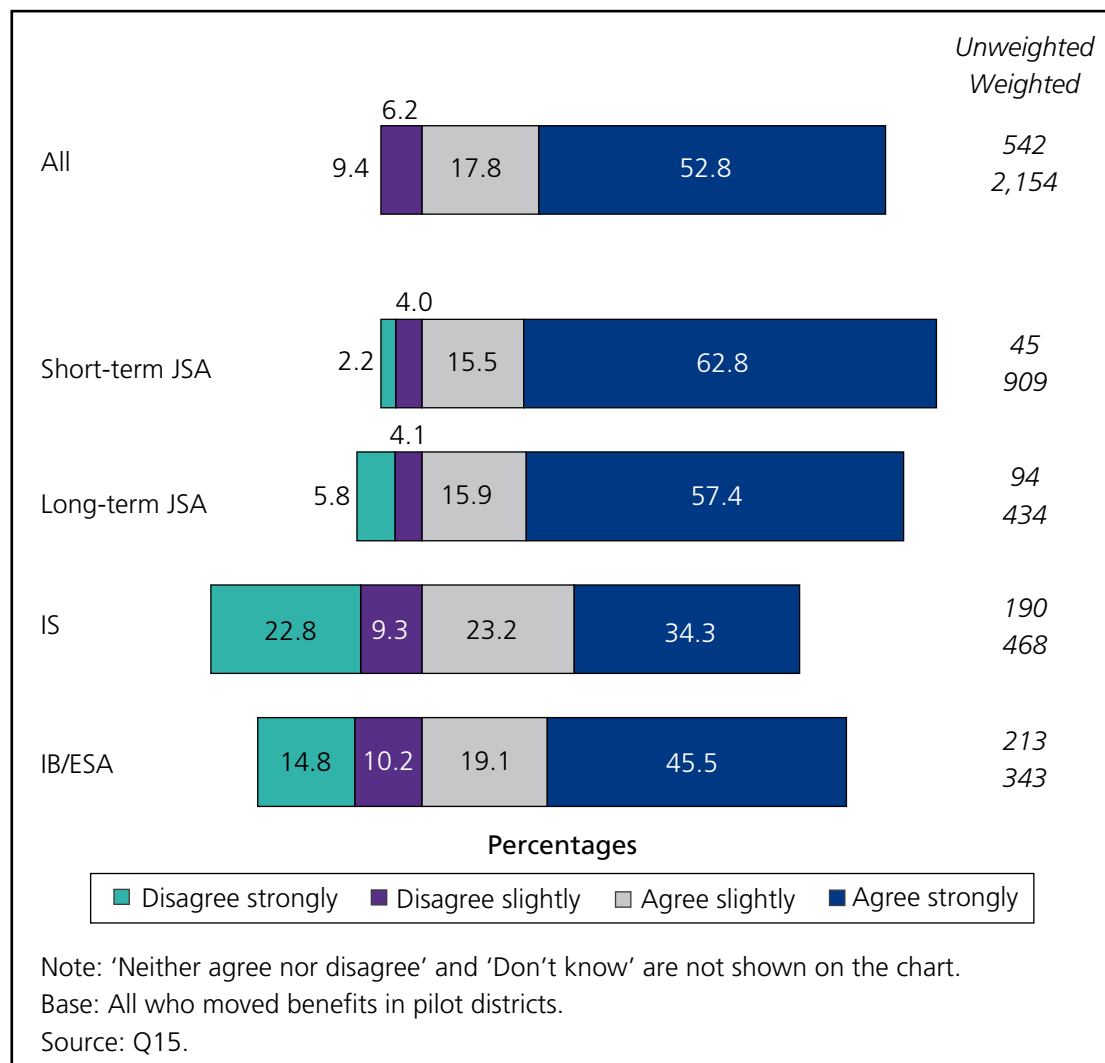
As seen in Chapter 2, the most common changes in benefit were for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) customers to move onto Incapacity Benefit (IB)/Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and for those ending both Income Support (IS) and IB/ESA claims to move onto JSA. Customers who had previously been claiming short-term JSA (who were most likely to have moved onto IB/ESA) were the most likely to agree the new benefit was more appropriate to their situation, with

⁵ Previous chapters cover OPtE customers in both pilot and control areas.

nearly two in three customers (63 per cent) agreeing strongly and only six per cent disagreeing. Previous long-term JSA claimants were also positive about their new benefit, with nearly three in five customers (57 per cent) agreeing strongly that the new benefit type was more appropriate.

IS claimants (most commonly moving to JSA) were the least likely to agree that their new benefits were more appropriate for their circumstances, with around a quarter of customers in strong disagreement (23 per cent) and around a third overall (32 per cent) in some way disagreeing.

Figure 3.1 Extent to which OPtE customers in pilot areas agree that new benefits claim started was appropriate by claim ended



Although the majority were positive, customers ending IB/ESA claims (again, most commonly moving to JSA) tended to be more negative about the new benefits they had moved onto than those ending other claims, with a quarter (25 per cent) disagreeing that their new benefits were more appropriate for their situation.

Overall, three in ten (30 per cent) of those starting a new JSA claim disagreed it was appropriate for them, compared to less than half this proportion of those starting new claims for any other benefits (14 per cent IB, eight per cent ESA and seven per cent IS).

These findings are not unexpected, with those moving onto JSA which features increased conditionality less happy than those moving to IS or IB/ESA where there will be a reduced emphasis on them moving into paid work.

Younger customers were significantly more likely to agree that the new benefit was more appropriate, with 79 per cent of those aged under 35 agreeing compared to 63 per cent of those aged 35 or older. This is mainly a result of younger people being more likely to be moving off JSA while older people were more likely to be moving off IB or ESA.

Parents of children under 16 (but not single parents) were significantly less likely to **strongly** agree their new benefit was more appropriate, with only 44 per cent saying this, compared to 54 per cent of non-parents and 57 per cent of single parents. Again though, this is mainly driven by single parents being most likely to move onto IS, while parents and non-parents were significantly more likely to move onto JSA and ESA respectively.

3.2 Starting new employment

Sixty-three per cent of OPTe customers from pilot districts had ended their claim and entered paid work either immediately or at some point after ending their claim. These customers were asked how appropriate they felt this work was and how much they agreed the job was a good match for their experience, skills and interests.

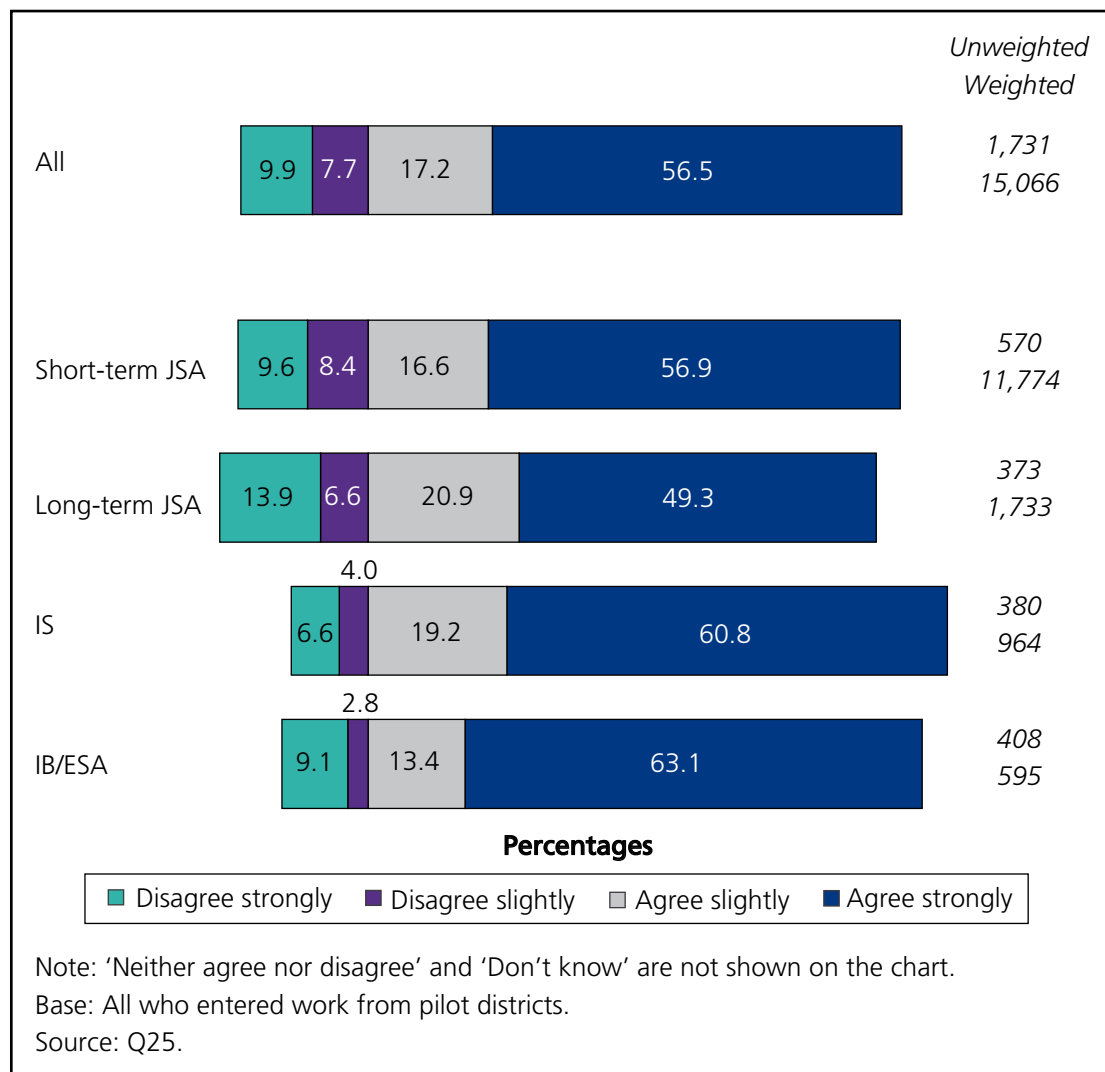
On the whole, customers agreed that the employment they entered was a good match for their experience, skills and interests, with 57 per cent in strong agreement and 17 per cent in slight agreement as shown in Figure 3.2.

However, taking up employment regardless of it being a good match for experience, skills and interests may not be solely due to the conditions of the jobseeker regime. Customers may widen their job search out of necessity, rather than just to meet conditionality.

Former IS and IB/ESA claimants were more positive than JSA claimants about the work they had entered, with over three-fifths of customers in both of these groups in strong agreement that the work was appropriate (61 per cent for IS and 63 per cent IB/ESA). Only around a tenth of customers previously on IS or IB/ESA **disagreed** the work was not a good match (11 per cent and 12 per cent respectively).

Long-term JSA claimants were more negative with just over one in five customers **disagreeing** that the work was a good match for their experience, skills and interests. These customers would have not been able to limit their jobsearch after claiming for 26 weeks, so would be expected to take up employment that was not necessarily ideally matched to their needs.

Figure 3.2 Extent to which OPtE customers in pilot areas agree that work entered matched skills, interests and experience



Younger customers were more likely than older customers to disagree that the role taken up was appropriate, with 21 per cent of those under 35 disagreeing (and up to 31 per cent of those under 20) compared to 14 per cent of those 35 or over. This could indicate that younger people are being put under more pressure to take up roles that are not entirely appropriate, but is also a reflection that they are less likely to have ended IB/ESA claims than other customers.

Four out of five single parents (80 per cent) and a similar proportion of parents (78 per cent) agreed that the work they had taken up matched their experience, skills and interests, significantly more than non-parents (only 72 per cent), possibly a reflection of there being less pressure to enter work on those claiming IS.

Those who have a health condition or disability were also more likely to disagree that the role matched their experience, skills and interests, 21 per cent did so compared to 17 per cent of those without.

Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of those who had left the employment they had entered disagreed that the role they had entered was a good match, compared to around a sixth of those who remained in the role (16 per cent) – indicating that entering inappropriate jobs is not sustainable.

4 OPtE pilot districts: views on Jobcentre Plus service and reasons for ending claim

In this chapter, as in the previous chapter, we cover only those Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) customers in districts classed as 'pilots' where advisers had had access to previous months' OPtE figures (although they were not being treated as targets). Again, the intention is that these findings could be used as a baseline if further research was conducted after OPtE targets are in operation.

This chapter looks at how customers rated the level of assistance they received from Jobcentre Plus and the extent to which they felt Jobcentre Plus was responsible for them ending their claim (whether for positive or negative reasons).

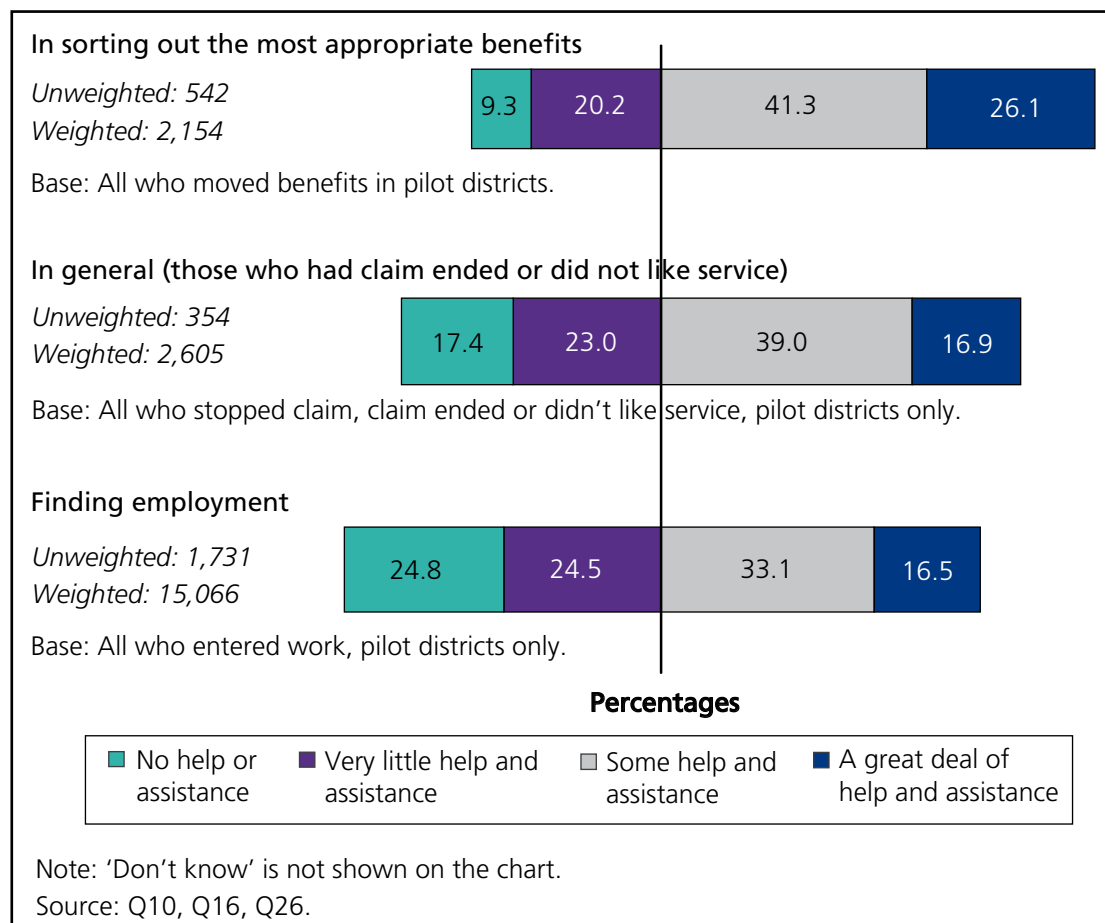
Views from three different groups of OPtE pilot customers are compared. This takes into account that customers who ended claims for very different reasons will perceive Jobcentre Plus support differently. Customers' views are presented according to their destination.

- Those who ended the claim to enter paid work (either immediately or at some point after the claim ended) – 63 per cent of OPtE customers in pilot districts.
- Those who started a claim for a different benefit immediately – nine per cent of OPtE customers in pilot districts.
- Those who ended the claim because they decided not to claim, they did not like the service or had their benefit stopped because they were told they were no longer eligible/had not met the requirements – 11 per cent of OPtE customers in pilot districts.

4.1 Level of help and assistance from Jobcentre Plus staff

Customers were asked how they would rate the level of help and assistance from Jobcentre Plus. Customers who had started a new benefit claim were more likely than customers ending claims for other reasons to agree that they received a great deal or some help and assistance. As shown in Figure 4.1 around two-thirds of these customers (67 per cent) felt that they had received sufficient help and assistance from the Jobcentre Plus in finding the most appropriate benefits for their needs and circumstances, although almost one in ten felt they received no help or assistance at all (nine per cent).

Figure 4.1 Level of help and assistance provided by the Jobcentre Plus staff



As base sizes are relatively low among these sub groups there are no statistically significant differences either by benefit type previously claimed or by the benefit moved onto.

Most customers (56 per cent) who left benefits because they did not like the service, decided not to claim, or had their benefit stopped felt that Jobcentre Plus staff provided 'a great deal' or 'some' help and assistance. This still leaves two in five of these pilot customers (40 per cent) feeling that they had received very little or no help and assistance in general while claiming.

Customers who had been claiming IS but ended the claim because they did not like the service, decided not to claim, or had their benefit stopped, were most likely to feel that they had received sufficient help and support during their claim. Nearly a third (31 per cent) felt that they had received a great deal of help, which was significantly higher than short-term or long-term JSA claimants (16 per cent and 15 per cent respectively). Accordingly, single parents were significantly more likely to feel that they received a great deal of help and assistance in comparison with non-parents (28 per cent in comparison with 15 per cent respectively).

Despite making up the majority of IS customers, female customers as a whole who had ended their claim because they did not like the service, decided not to claim, or had their benefit stopped were significantly less happy with the level of help than male customers. Nearly half felt that they received either very little help or none at all (47 per cent women compared with 38 per cent men).

IB/ESA customers were least likely to feel that they had received help from Jobcentre Plus while claiming, with a third (33 per cent) feeling they had received no help or assistance at all. This was again significantly higher than short-term or long-term JSA claimants (17 per cent and 15 per cent respectively).

Younger OPTe customers who left benefits because they did not like the service, decided not to claim, or had their benefit stopped, were typically more positive about the level of assistance from Jobcentre Plus staff than older customers who had ended claims in the same way. Significantly, more 16-19 years olds felt that they had received 'some' help and assistance than 35-50 year olds (51 per cent compared with 33 per cent respectively), while significantly more 20-34 year olds felt that they had received 'a great deal' of help and support in comparison with customers in the 50+ age group (21 per cent compared with ten per cent respectively).

It is perhaps unexpected though that this group of customers as a whole, would be more positive than those that ended their claims to enter paid work. However, the question put to those customers who left benefits to enter paid work was slightly more specific than that put to those who entered work as they were asked about the level of assistance they received from Jobcentre Plus in **helping them to find employment** rather than in general.

Turning to the views of those who entered paid work, a quarter of these customers (25 per cent) felt that they received no help or support and a further quarter (25 per cent) felt they received very little help and support. This leaves only half (50 per cent) of those who entered paid work feeling that Jobcentre Plus gave them some or a great deal of help and assistance in terms of finding them employment.

Those who were ending IS claims were significantly more positive than those entering work after ending other claims, with almost two-thirds (64 per cent) reporting a great deal or some assistance from Jobcentre Plus staff in finding employment compared to 56 per cent of long-term JSA customers, 48 per cent of short-term JSA customers and just 35 per cent of IB/ESA customers.

Regardless of benefit type, the longer the claim had lasted the more help and assistance in finding work was reported. Seventy-two per cent of those who had claimed for three years or longer and entered paid work receiving a great deal or some help and assistance compared to 44 per cent of those who had claimed for less than three months and then entered work. As those who claimed for a shorter time were presumably closer to the labour market it appears that those who need more support are receiving it, and recognising that they are being helped.

Those who had entered or returned to self-employment or freelancing were significantly more likely to have received a great deal of help and assistance in finding employment (21 per cent) than those increasing their pay or hours (18 per cent – who presumably did not need the same level of help) or those who took up a role with an employer (15 per cent).

Younger customers who had entered work were significantly more likely to have received help and assistance than older customers (52 per cent of those under 35 got a great deal or some compared to 47 per cent of those 35 or over). Men who entered work were also likely to be more positive than women, 51 per cent reporting some or a great deal of help and assistance compared to 47 per cent of women.

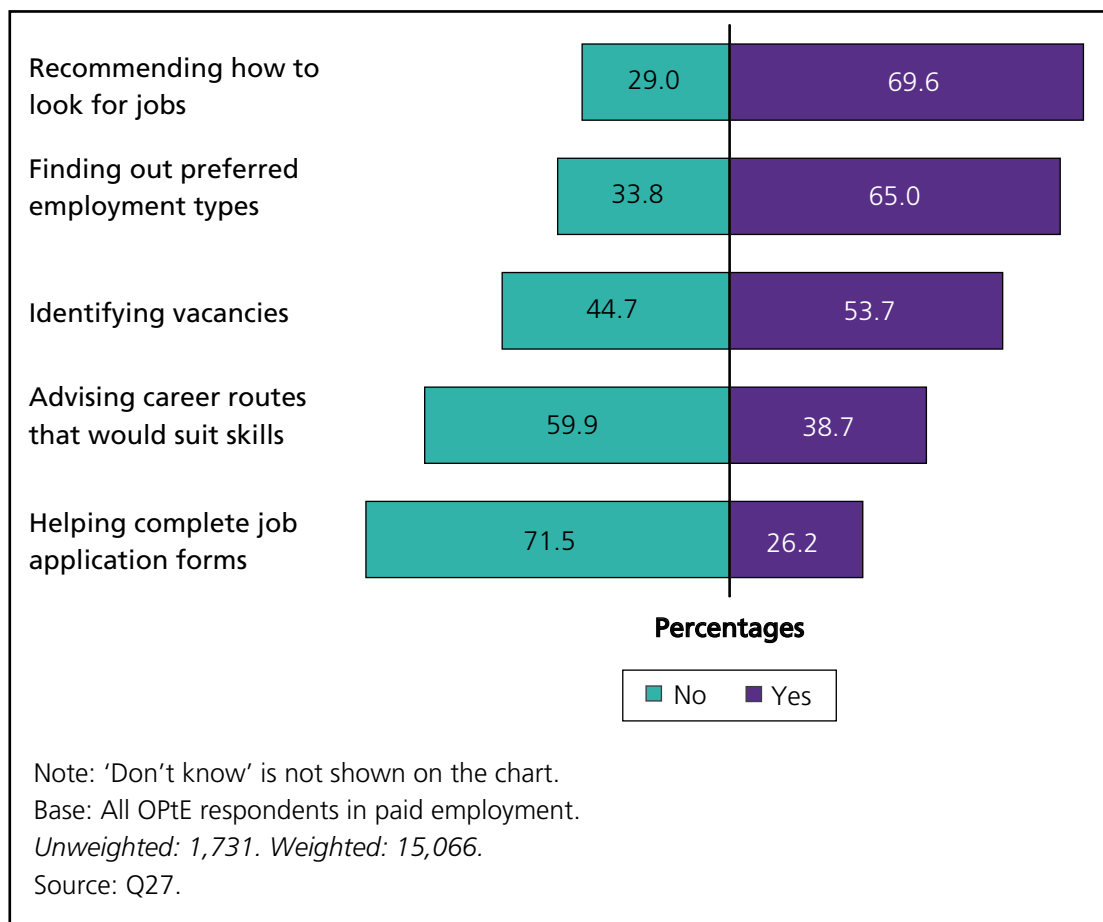
Those without a disability or health condition who entered paid employment were more likely to report help and assistance (50 per cent compared to 42 per cent with) as were single parents (58 per cent compared to 47 per cent of non-single parents and 50 per cent of those without children under 16) – this is a reflection that IB/ESA customers were least positive and IS customers most positive as mentioned above.

Those who felt the work they entered was a good match for their skills, interests and experience were significantly more likely to agree they had been given a great deal or some help and assistance in finding employment (52 per cent compared to 41 per cent of those who felt the work taken up was not a good match). This seems to indicate that Jobcentre Plus is successfully helping most people into appropriate roles, and it is those who do not receive sufficient help who are more likely to find themselves in an unsuitable role.

4.2 Specific forms of help

OPtE customers who entered paid work were also asked a series of questions to ascertain if they felt they received sufficient help from Jobcentre Plus in a number of specific ways, shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Whether received sufficient help from Jobcentre Plus in specific ways



The most common way that customers who entered work felt they received sufficient help was Jobcentre Plus staff recommending how to look for jobs, with seven out of ten customers who entered paid work (70 per cent) reporting this. Sufficient help and support in finding out preferred employment types was mentioned by around two in three customers (65 per cent), while just over half felt they received sufficient help in identifying vacancies (54 per cent). The areas that customers felt they received least help with were advising on which career routes might suit their skills and helping to complete job application forms (39 per cent and 26 per cent respectively of those who entered work had sufficient help). Neither of these forms of assistance are the role of Jobcentre Plus so customers do not necessarily receive these types of help.

Those ending claims for IB/ESA were consistently significantly more likely to report not receiving sufficient assistance compared to those ending claims for other benefits – presumably a reflection of these customers having less contact with Jobcentre Plus staff and there being less emphasis on a return to work for them.

Regardless of benefit type, those who had claimed for longer were significantly more likely to have received sufficient assistance and did so on three out of five of the measures listed on Figure 4.2.

Those entering self-employment were more likely to have received sufficient assistance across all measures than those who entered work with an employer, except in recommendations on how to look for jobs (which presumably they did not need to approach in the same way as those trying to find work with an employer).

In terms of demographics, younger customers (those aged 19 or under), those without a disability or health condition and single parents who had entered work were all significantly more likely to report receiving sufficient help from Jobcentre Plus staff in all the listed ways on Figure 4.2 than customers entering work in general.

Customers who entered work that was a good match for their skills, interests and experience were significantly more likely to have said that they received sufficient assistance across all these measures listed on Figure 4.2 than those who entered work that was not a good match.

Those who entered work and reported feeling under some pressure to end their claim, but agreed that this pressure was reasonable, were also consistently significantly more likely to have said they received sufficient assistance. This perhaps reflects that the pressure they may have felt under was a constant emphasis on finding work (and how to go about doing this) rather than a more direct pressure simply to enter work.

Both of these findings seem to indicate that where Jobcentre Plus is perceived to be providing higher levels of assistance it leads to customers being more likely to enter appropriate work and also to customers not feeling under unreasonable pressure. However, this does leave a group of customers who felt they entered work that was not a good match after receiving insufficient help from Jobcentre Plus and perhaps as a consequence of unreasonable pressure. Coupling a high level of assistance with reasonable pressure seems the route most likely to yield sustainable job outcomes.

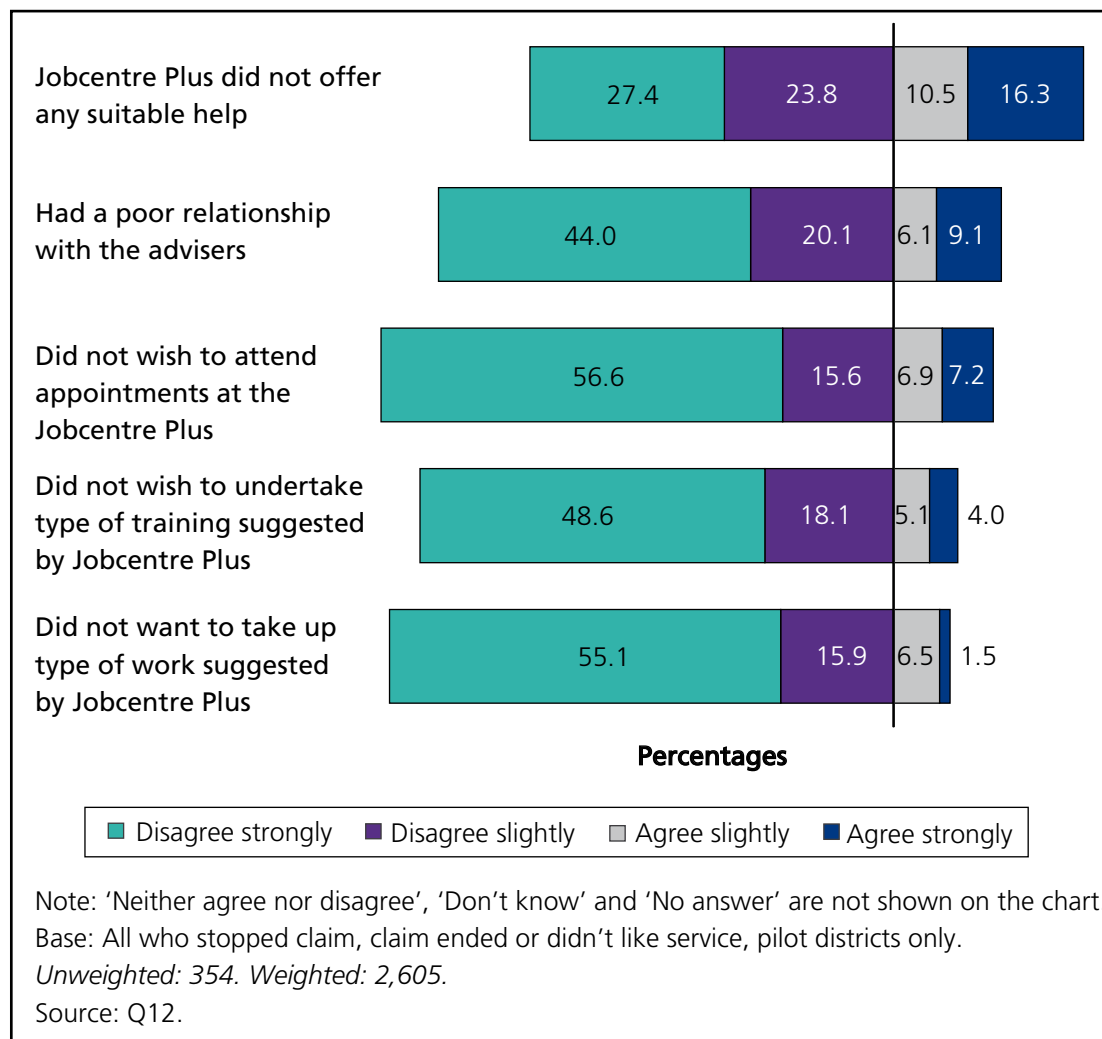
4.3 Reasons for ending claim

Customers who had ended their claim because they did not like the service, had their claim ended, or decided to end the claim themselves, were asked whether they agreed they had negative reasons for doing so.

Positively for Jobcentre Plus, the majority of these customers **disagreed** with each of the statements listed in Figure 4.3. However, there were small cohorts agreeing with each statement, and the factor that most customers agreed with was that Jobcentre Plus had ‘not offered any suitable help’, with over a quarter (27 per cent) of customers who had ended their claim in these slightly hazier circumstances agreeing this had been a reason.

Around one in six of these customers agreed that having a poor relationship with the adviser contributed to them deciding (or the Jobcentre Plus deciding) to end their claim – here perhaps an indication of advisers pressuring people to end claims, although it should be borne in mind that this a very small proportion of all OPTe pilot customers (only two per cent).

Figure 4.3 Contributing reasons for ending JSA claim



Customers were less likely to agree they were not willing to undertake suggested training or types of job. Although around one in ten of those ending their claims because they did not like the service, had their claim ended, or decided to end it themselves did not want to take up work suggested or training suggested by

Jobcentre Plus. Not wanting to take up the type of work may also reflect some pressure being put on these customers to end claims. Although, given that it is the role of the Jobcentre Plus to help people move into work, it is unclear if this was inappropriate or not.

The factor these customers most clearly **disagreed** was a contributing reason was 'not wanting to attend appointments at Jobcentre Plus', with nearly three-quarters disagreeing that this was a factor (73 per cent), although seven per cent strongly agreed this was the case and a further seven per cent slightly. This could potentially indicate a poor relationship with an adviser for this small group, perhaps an unwillingness to follow the regime or that the customer felt appointments did not benefit them. As these are customers ending claims in spring 2009, when Jobcentre Plus was seeing increased numbers of customers claiming for the first time, who may perhaps have been more critical of the service not meeting their needs, been less willing to conform to the rules of claiming and ultimately decided they did not want to continue claiming rather than being 'pushed' in any way.

When broken down by customer type some clear trends appear, with some customers consistently more likely to **disagree** that they ended claims for most of the negative reasons listed in Figure 4.3. The following customers were, therefore, less likely to have ended their claims because they did not wish to take up suggested work or training, attend appointments or because they felt Jobcentre Plus did not offer suitable help:

- those aged 20-34;
- those who went on to start a new benefit claim (perhaps as they were moving benefits they ended their claim due to a change in circumstance rather than because they had not complied with the benefit regime);
- short-term JSA customers.

In addition, customers aged under 19 were less likely to end their claim because they thought Jobcentre Plus did not offer suitable help.

Those who reported feeling under more pressure to end their claim were also significantly more likely to disagree they ended their claim because they did not wish to take up work or training or to attend appointments. Women too were more likely to disagree they had ended claims for any of these reasons, although here the difference is not significant.

Parents, however, were consistently slightly **more** likely to agree that these were reasons (more so than single parents and those without children under 16).

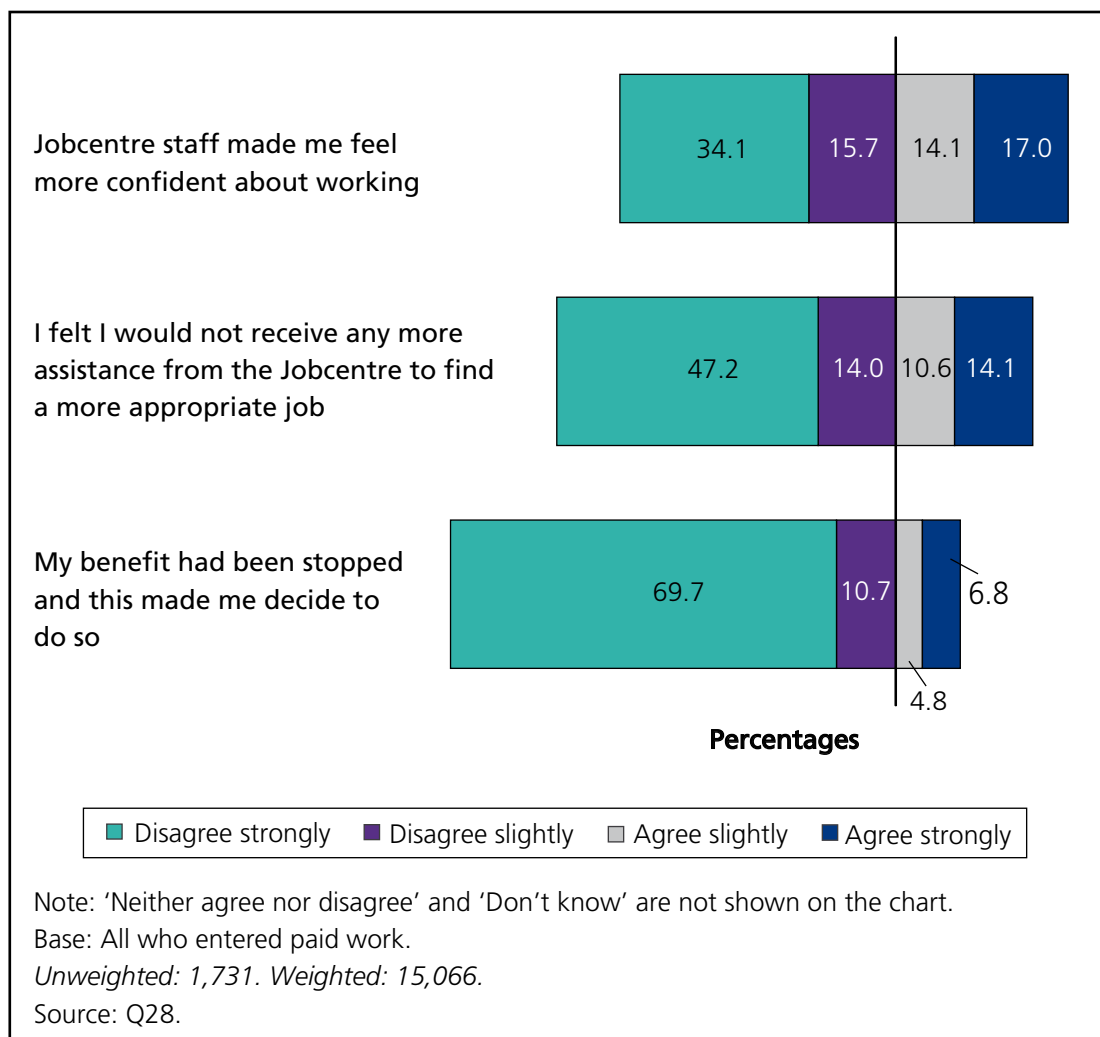
The pattern changes markedly when looking at whether customers had poor relationships with their advisers though. Many of those customers significantly more likely to **disagree** with the other causes listed above were significantly more likely to **agree** they had a poor relationship (those aged under 34, those who felt under high pressure to end their claims, women, and parents). As these customers had a poor relationship with their adviser they are perhaps more likely to see this

as the sole reason for having to end their claim and do not consider they were unwilling to take up Jobcentre Plus support if it had been offered differently.

4.4 Reasons for ending claim and entering work

OPTe customers who entered paid work either immediately or at some point after their claim ended were also asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of factors (both positive and negative) contributing to them ending their claim. Encouragingly it was the positive factor of Jobcentre Plus staff making customers feel more confident that was the one these customers were most likely to agree with, a reason for nearly a third (31 per cent).

Figure 4.4 Contributing reasons for entering work



The majority of customers disagreed with the statement that they would not receive any more assistance from Jobcentre Plus to find a more appropriate job (61 per cent), but there is around one in four (25 per cent) who agreed with the statement and thought they would not receive any more help.

Relatively few customers, less than one in six, agreed that their benefit had been stopped. Those that did agree this happened should possibly be considered in the same bracket as those who ended their claims but remained unemployed. They too may perhaps have been pressured slightly to end a claim. However, as the group of customers discussed here did enter work at some point it is certainly possible to conclude that ending their claim was a positive move.

When analysed by claim details those who were leaving IS or long-term JSA to enter work were significantly more likely than those leaving IB/ESA or short-term JSA to agree that Jobcentre Plus staff had made them feel more confident about working, as were those who had claimed for a longer time. This seems to indicate that Jobcentre Plus resources are being used well, with those further from the labour market more likely to have their confidence boosted through more frequent contact with Jobcentre Plus.

Younger customers (19 or under) were more likely to report increased confidence, as were single parents – these were perhaps those at a lower starting point who were more in need of a confidence boost.

Those who reported feeling under pressure to end their claim, but that it was reasonable, and those who took work that was a good match for their experience, skills and interests, were also significantly more likely to have seen their confidence increase. Again, reflecting the positivity of some pressure coupled with support to find the right type of job.

Turning to the more negative reasons for ending claims, like believing there would be no further assistance from Jobcentre Plus staff to find a more appropriate role and indeed having a claim stopped, we see that long-term JSA customers were significantly more likely to report either of these outcomes, as were younger customers on the whole.

Those who entered paid work and were not parents were more likely to think there would be no assistance to find a more suitable role than single parents or those without children under 16. Single parents were more likely to have had their benefit stopped than those who were not single parents (presumably because of a change in family circumstances).

In terms of pressure, those who felt under unreasonable pressure at some point were more likely than other customers who entered work to have done so because they felt there would be no further assistance to find a more suitable role. Those who felt the pressure they were under was reasonable (even if high) were more likely to have had their benefit stopped – possibly these are customers whose circumstances changed so felt the ‘pressure’ they were under to end their claim was reasonable and that they would be able to return to or enter work.

5 OPtE pilot compared to control districts: whether customers felt under pressure to end claim

Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) customers (who entered paid work, who started a claim for a new benefit and who ended the claim because they decided not to claim, did not like the service or had their benefit stopped) were all asked how much pressure they felt they were under to either enter work, move onto the new benefit or end their claim. They were asked to indicate on a scale of one to five how much pressure they had felt under, with one indicating no pressure at all and five indicating extreme pressure. All those that said they felt some pressure (i.e. those that said two to five) were then asked to what extent they thought the pressure was reasonable, **given that Jobcentre Plus aims to help people move into work.**

In this chapter we are also comparing findings from OPtE customers in the pilot districts with those in the control districts, testing for any differences in opinion between the two which could indicate that advisers in pilot areas are treating customers any differently.

5.1 OPtE customers who entered paid work

Almost half (46 per cent) of OPtE customers in pilot districts who entered paid work said they felt under no pressure at all to end their claim and enter employment. Over one in ten (11 per cent) said they felt under extreme pressure, with the remainder feeling some level of pressure. Over half (56 per cent) of those feeling any pressure did agree that this was reasonable – though leaving a fifth either slightly (nine per cent) or strongly (12 per cent) disagreeing.

Long-term Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) customers were those most negative, and were more likely to report being under higher pressure (15 per cent reported extreme pressure compared to 11 per cent of Income Support (IS) customers, and ten per cent of Incapacity (IB)/Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and short-term JSA customers). This could potentially be due to the increased conditionality for job seekers as time on benefit increases. Those who returned to or entered self-employment were more likely to report being under no pressure at all (66 per cent compared to 50 per cent or less for all other benefit types).

Pressure seems to increase according to length of claim until it reaches those who have claimed for a very long time (over three years), after which point pressure seems to reduce.

Customers who entered work and were significantly more likely to feel both under pressure and that the pressure was unreasonable were:

- women;
- those with a disability or health problem;
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME).

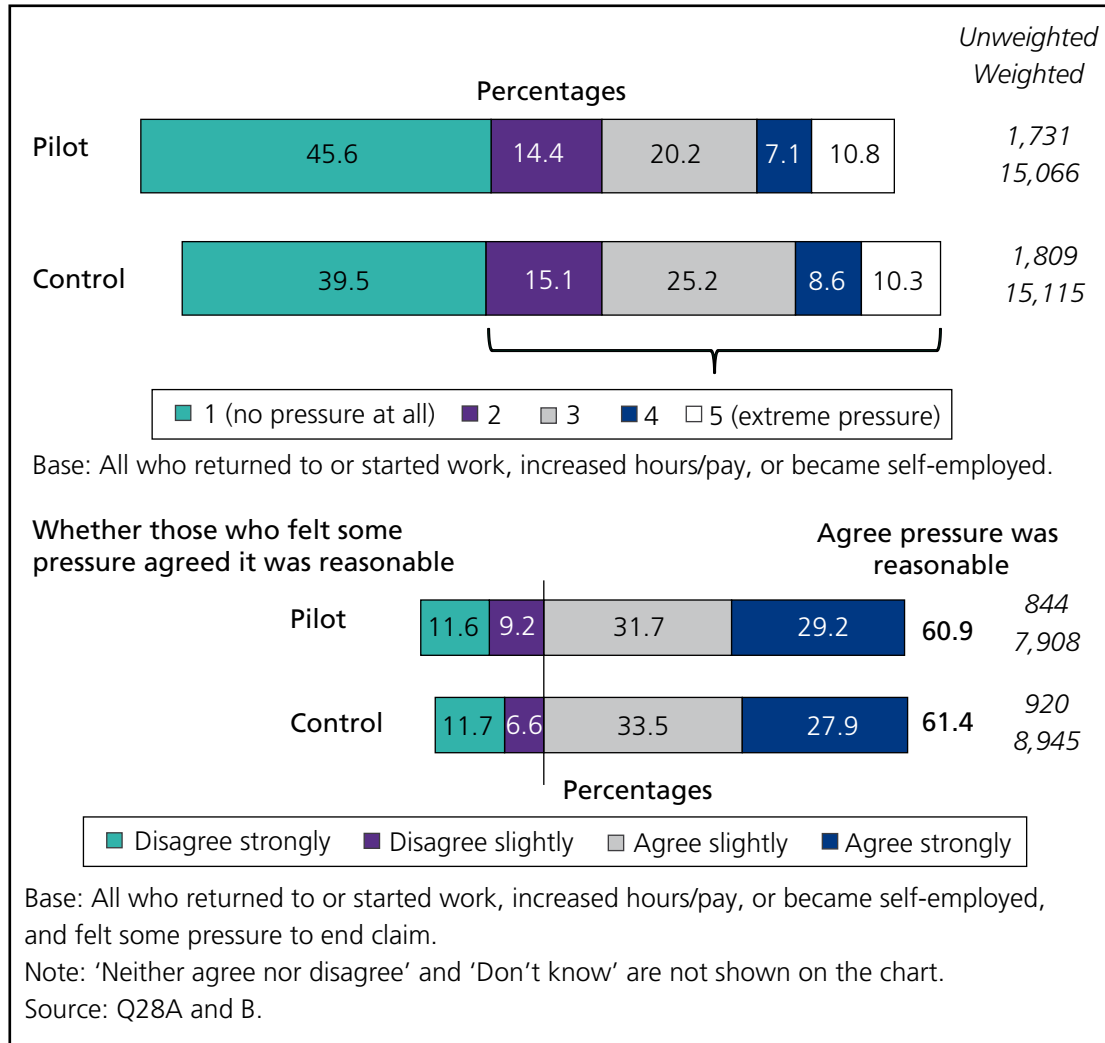
Older customers were also more likely to report being under unreasonable pressure than younger customers, although it is the 35-50 age group who were most likely to report being under higher pressure (not 50 plus customers).

Those entering work after ending an IB/ESA claim or who felt the work they entered was not a good match were also more likely than other customers to feel that the pressure they were under was unreasonable.

Compared to OPtE customers who had entered paid work in control districts pilot customers were significantly more likely to report feeling under no pressure at all (46 per cent compared to 40 per cent in control areas).

Equal majorities of those feeling under pressure thought it was reasonable in both pilot and control areas (61 per cent in each).

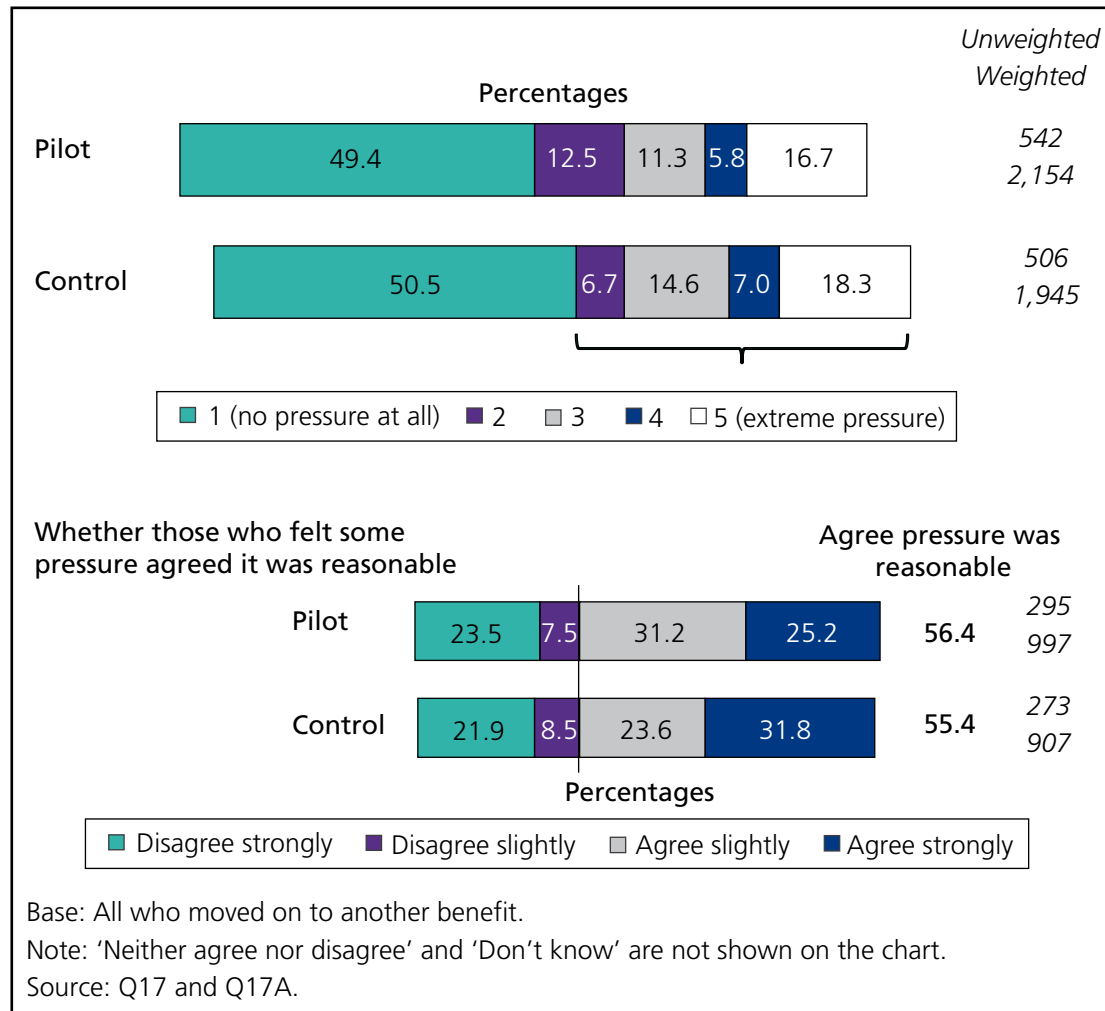
Figure 5.1 Whether customers who entered work felt under pressure to do so and if the pressure was reasonable



5.2 OPtE who started a claim for a new benefit

Turning to OPtE customers who moved benefits we see a similar picture, although views here were more polarised with slightly more customers from pilot areas saying they felt under no pressure at all (49 per cent) compared to those who had entered paid work in pilot areas (46 per cent), and significantly more reporting extreme pressure (17 per cent of those who moved benefits compared to 11 per cent of those entering paid work). However, the proportion of those who had started a new claim and felt under pressure, but agreed it was reasonable, was almost the same across pilot and control areas (56 per cent and 55 per cent respectively).

Figure 5.2 Whether customers changing benefits felt under pressure to do so and if the pressure was reasonable



However, it should be considered here that this is a destination more under Jobcentre Plus control and if a customer is told they are no longer eligible for one benefit and will be moving to another there may be little they can do about it. Whether this is 'pressure' is debatable although these customers have reported it as such. Indeed those most likely to report being under any pressure were those ending claims for IS or IB/ESA, the vast majority of whom were being moved onto JSA which may not have been what they wished, but may not have been a choice as such. Those who reported being single parents were more likely to report being under pressure, perhaps being no longer eligible for IS and moving to JSA. Those who had claimed for longer were also more likely to feel under pressure.

Bases are too small to report significant differences in terms of whether that pressure was reasonable, but JSA customers were most likely to agree that it was and those ending IS and IB/ESA claims least likely.

Pilot customers on the whole were again slightly less likely to report pressure than control customers – but there are no significant differences.

5.3 OPtE customers who ended their claim because they decided not to claim, they did not like the service or had their benefit stopped

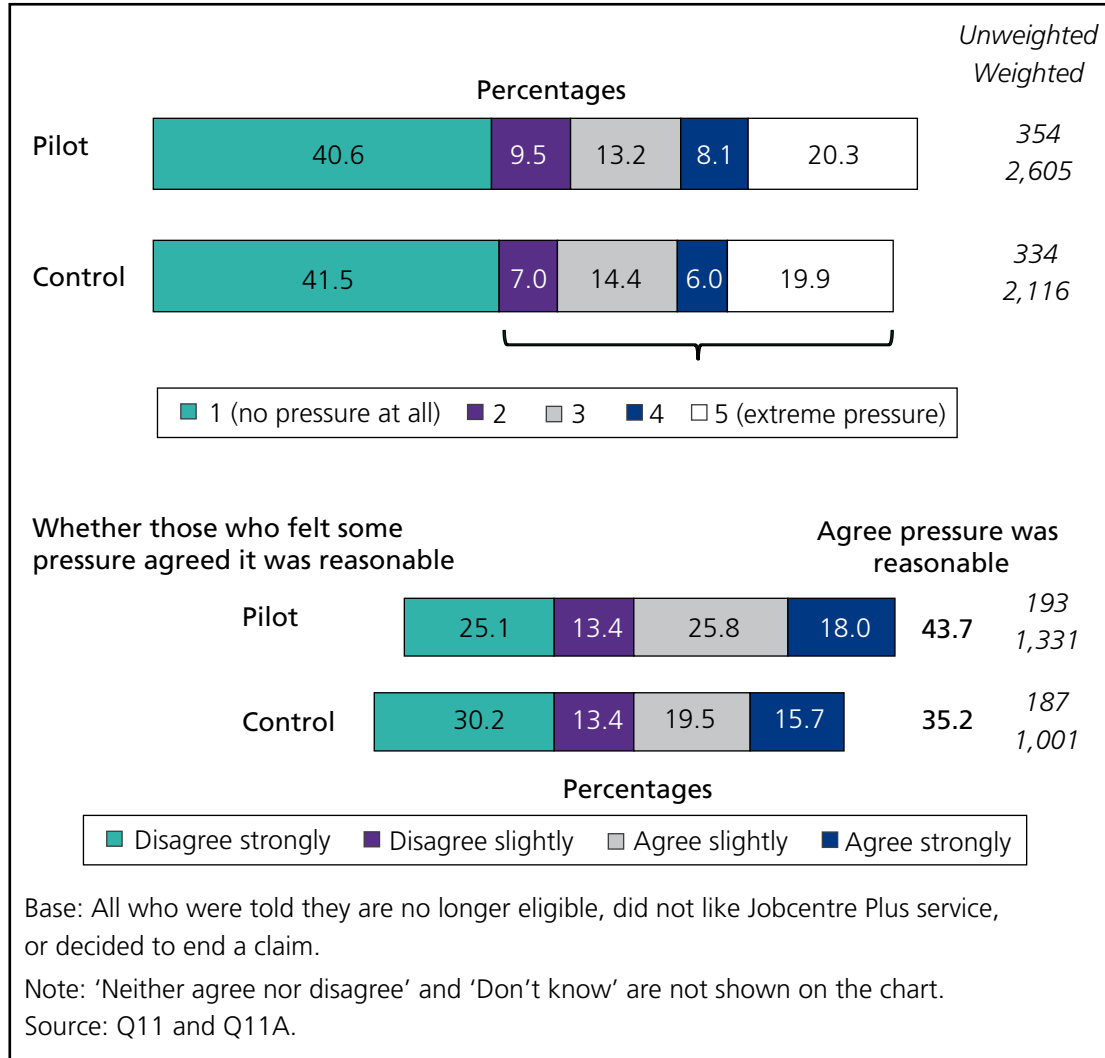
Finally we turn to the group who ended their claim in slightly obscure circumstances, here again there is more polarity in views than among those who had entered work with just over two-fifths (41 per cent) reporting no pressure at all in pilot areas and a fifth (20 per cent) reporting extreme pressure. This group were less likely than the others discussed above to think that the pressure was reasonable though. Over one in three of those feeling under pressure thought it was unreasonable.

Within this group, those who left JSA were significantly more likely to report being under pressure than those ending other claims with over half rating it as five or four compared to only a quarter of IS customers and a third of IB/ESA customers. Customers with shorter claims were also more likely to report higher levels of pressure than those who had claimed for longer.

Those at either end of the age scale (under 20 or over 50), BAME customers and those without a disability or health condition who had ended their claim because they decided not to claim, they did not like the service or had their benefit stopped were also more likely to report higher pressure than other customers although it was those with a health condition or disability who were significantly more likely to **disagree** that the pressure was reasonable.

There are no significant differences when the views of the same group of customers in control areas are compared to these.

Figure 5.3 Whether customers leaving benefits felt under pressure to end their claim and if the pressure was reasonable



Appendix A

Destinations of all off flows

As an extra check, interviews were also conducted with customers who were off flows in pilot and control areas in April and May 2009 but not classed as Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE), and the findings among this group were combined with findings among OPtE customers to produce destinations for 'All Off Flows', as shown in Figure A.1⁶.

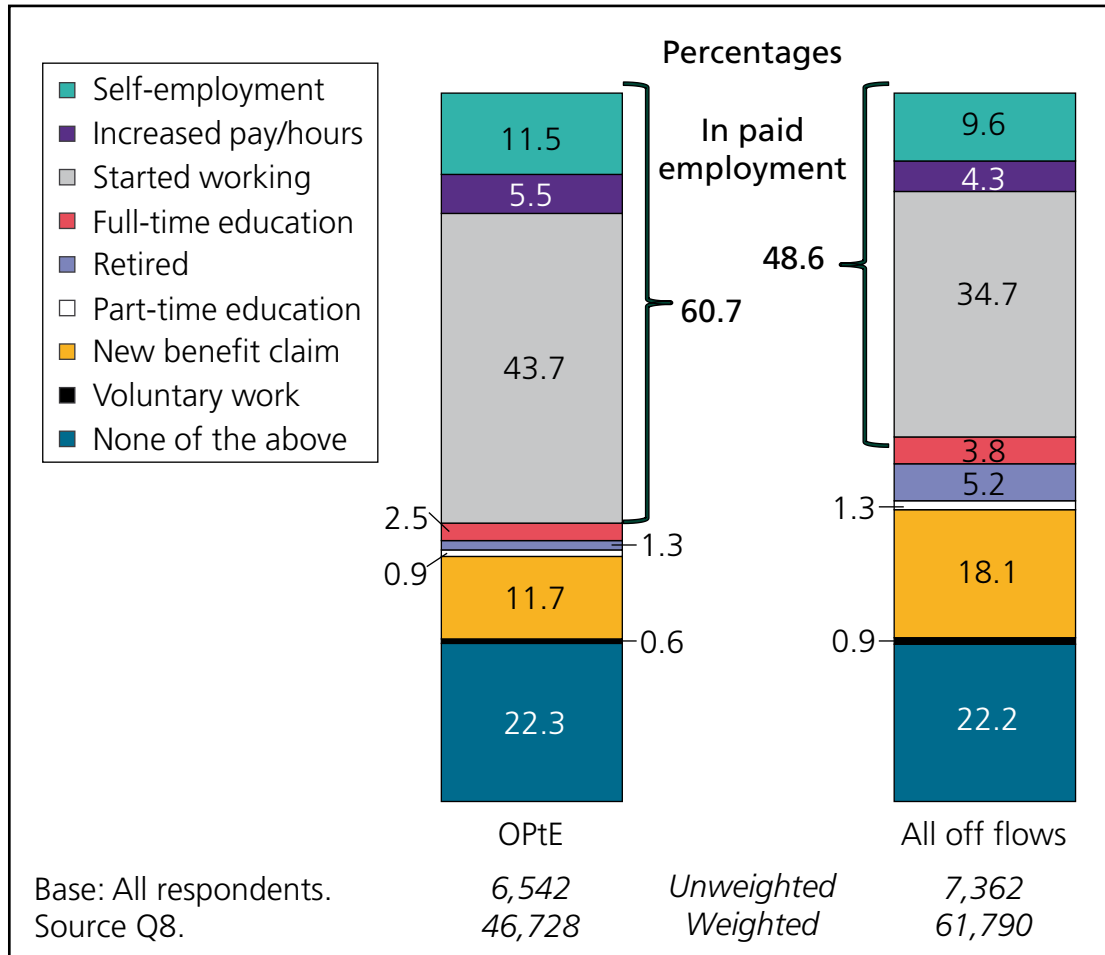
When widened out to include All Off Flows the proportion entering paid employment decreases to 49 per cent, as shown in Figure A.1 showing that the OPtE measure is successfully reducing the number of customers included who have not entered paid work.

The proportion among All Off Flows starting a new benefit claim rises to 18 per cent, and five per cent were retired – this indicates that the OPtE measure successfully excluding some of those customers starting new benefit claims and the majority of those retiring. It also seems to be screening out a small proportion of those entering full-time education – possibly these are customers going onto some form of New Deal.

The proportions ending claims for 'other' reasons (i.e. none of the destinations listed on the chart above) remains the same, as do the numbers taking up voluntary work, or part-time education although these latter only account for one per cent each in either group.

⁶ All flows here exclude deceased.

Figure A.1 Initial destination on ending benefit claim – main destinations, OPtE and All Off Flows



Appendix B

Previous destinations studies

An earlier study among Off-Flow Potentially to Employment (OPtE) customers who ended claims in February – April 2008 was undertaken in autumn 2008 and here we compare the immediate destinations of those customers with OPtE customers included in this recent study who ended claims in April – May 2009 and were interviewed in August 2009. There are some variations in the two studies which should be taken into account when comparing the results and these findings included here are for interest only rather than as a rigorous comparison⁷.

As the base sizes in both surveys are substantial, all the differences that can be seen between the two cohorts in Figure B.1 are all statistically significant, meaning that more OPtE customers in 2008 had actually entered employment immediately than in 2009⁸.

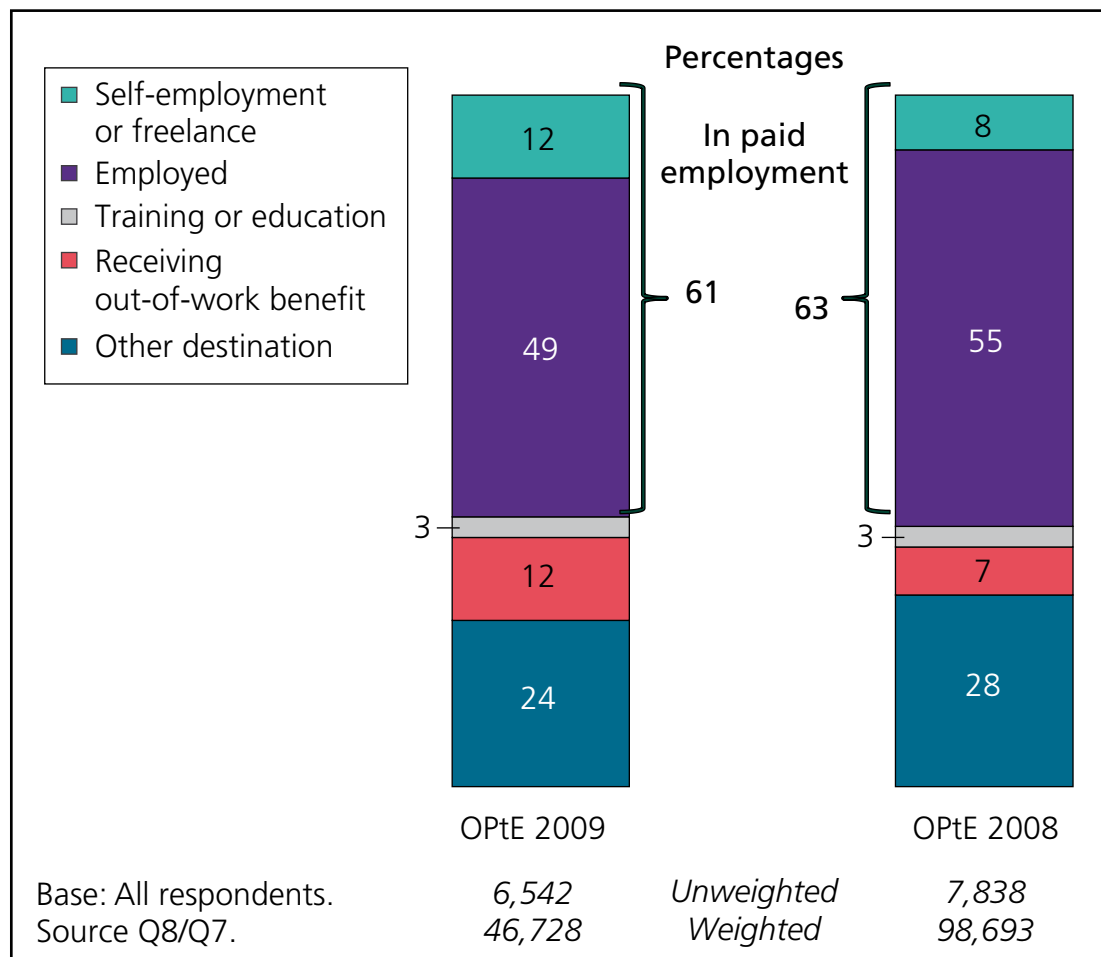
Fewer customers in 2009 had entered an ‘other destination’ but more had started a new benefit claim⁹.

⁷ The 2008 study was weighted by Priority Group (PG) and due to DWP data restrictions it has not been possible to re-weight it by benefit type which would give a more accurate comparison of sub groups. The 2008 study also excluded customers outside of PG 1.1, 1.2, 2 and 3, but these customers were included (in small numbers) in the 2009 study. Two of the six districts included in studies also varied.

⁸ We show summarised destinations, reflecting the structure of the 2008 questionnaire.

⁹ Here we combine retirement, voluntary work and ‘other’ destinations all into ‘other’ as per the 2008 study.

Figure B.1 Initial destination on ending benefit claim – main destinations comparing OPtE 2009 and 2008



The earlier OPtE study was analysed by PG and only included PG 1.1 (Lone Parents), PG 1.2 (People with a health condition or disability (PHCD)), PG 2 (long-term Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)) and PG 3 (short-term JSA). Using a rough comparison of benefit type (Income Support (IS), Incapacity Benefit/ Employment and Support Allowance (IB/ESA), long-term JSA and short-term JSA respectively) the greatest changes that emerge are those in the most recent 2009 study:

- short-term JSA customers are less likely to have entered work (68 per cent compared to 77 per cent) and more likely to have ended their claim for an 'other' reason (22 per cent compared to 19 per cent) or to have started a new benefit claim (eight per cent compared to three per cent) than their PG 3 counterparts in 2008.
- long-term JSA customers are less likely to have entered paid work (42 per cent compared to 60 per cent), and more likely to have ended their claim for an 'other' reason (34 per cent compared to 29 per cent) or to have started a new benefit claim (15 per cent compared to six per cent) than their PG 2 counterparts in 2008.

- IS customers are less likely to have entered paid work (46 per cent compared to 64 per cent), and more likely to have started a new benefit claim (26 per cent compared to eight per cent) than their PG 1.1 counterparts in 2008.
- IB/ESA customers are more likely to have entered paid work (43 per cent compared to 32 per cent), and much less likely to have ended their claim for an 'other' reason (26 per cent compared to 50 per cent) but also more likely to have started a new benefit claim (29 per cent compared to 16 per cent) than their PG 3 counterparts in 2008.

So OPtE measure accuracy has improved amongst IB/ESA customers, although even here the proportion starting a new claim has risen.

Appendix C

OPtE accuracy: later destinations after ending claim

Defining later destinations among those who did not immediately enter paid work

It was checked whether those classed as Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) who had not entered paid work immediately after ending their claim did so later. Customers were asked whether they had done any of the following since ending their claims (in the same manner that immediate destinations were established):

- entered self-employment or to freelance;
- increased their pay or hours with an existing employer;
- returned to/started a new paid job.

If they had not entered paid work at any point since ending their claim, customers were asked if they had entered any of the other 'main' destinations in turn (if they had not done so immediately):

- full-time education or training;
- retirement and/or starting claiming a pension/pension credit;
- part-time education or training;
- moving onto, or beginning to set up a claim for another benefit for people out of work (excluding retirement pension);
- working for an employer in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship.

As in Chapter 2, each of these destinations are reviewed in turn below. If customers had not done any of the above since ending their claim they were classed as not entering a 'main' destination and their 'other' destinations since ending claims are also examined in this chapter¹⁰.

Entering paid work

Small numbers of customers identified as OPtE did not enter work immediately upon leaving benefits, but had done so by the time the research was conducted. The time between end of claim and interview was a minimum of 11 weeks and a maximum of 22 weeks (customers involved in the study could have ended their claim at any point between the first week of April and the last week of May and interviewing took place from the second to the last week in August).

As we have already seen, 61 per cent of customers had entered work immediately on leaving off-job benefits; of the remainder, ten per cent entered work at some stage between leaving benefits and being interviewed – so a total of 65 per cent overall had entered work at some point since ending their claim. Twelve per cent were or had been self-employed and 52 per cent working for an employer. This makes the OPtE measure appear more accurate, although still one in three customers had not entered paid work at any point since ending their claim (11 to 22 weeks afterwards).

Almost one in six (14 per cent) of those who had been told they were ineligible to continue with their benefit claim had entered paid work at some point since ending their claim.

The same pattern can be seen when broken down by benefit type – more customers leaving benefit have entered work at some point within this period, and fewer have not entered any of the main destinations, but more have started a new benefit claim.

¹⁰ Appendix C supplies further details how destinations have been defined.

Figure C.1 Destination since ending benefit claim – main destinations

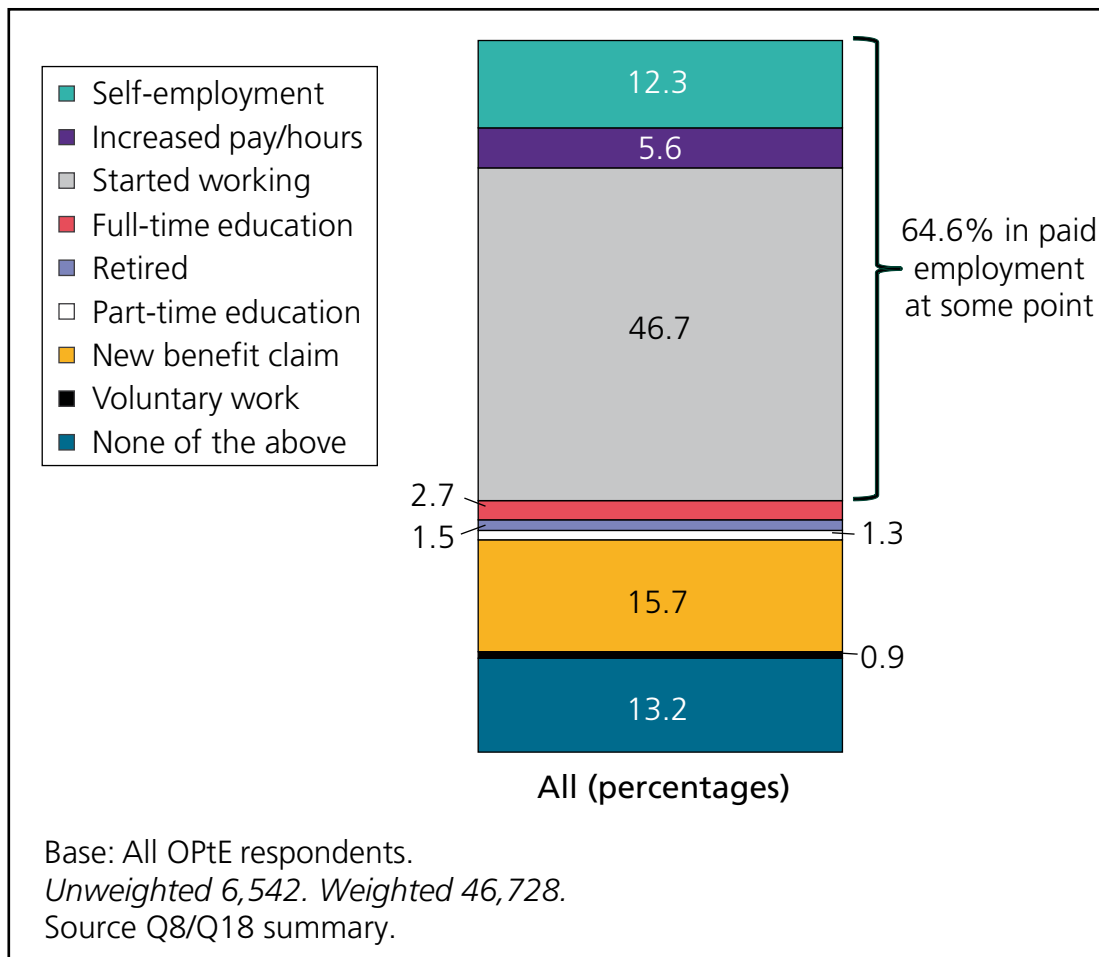


Table C.1 Destination since ending benefit claim – main destinations, by benefit type

	Short-term JSA %	Long-term JSA %	IS %	IB %
Self-employment	13	10	6	18
Increased pay/ hours	7	3	5	3
Started working	52	35	38	28
In paid employment	72	47	49	48
Full-time education	2	7	3	1
Retired	1	3	1	5
Part-time education	1	3	1	2
New benefit claim	12	20	29	32
Voluntary work	1	2	*	*
None of the above	12	19	16	11
<i>Unweighted</i>	<i>1,633</i>	<i>1,634</i>	<i>1,636</i>	<i>1,639</i>
<i>Weighted</i>	<i>32,969</i>	<i>7,729</i>	<i>3,976</i>	<i>2,504</i>

Base: All OPtE customers.

Source: Q8/Q18.

* refers to less than 0.5%.

Entering training or education

There was little change in this category – three per cent said they initially moved into training or education (two per cent full-time and one per cent part-time), and after a few months this had only risen to four per cent (three per cent in full-time and one per cent part-time). Five per cent of those told they were ineligible had entered training or education.

Taking up voluntary (unpaid) work or an internship

The proportion entering voluntary work had not increased over this period and remained at one per cent of OPtE customers, although it was two per cent among those told they were ineligible to claim.

Retiring

Just one per cent reported ending their claim to immediately retire, start claiming a pension or pension credit but this had risen to two per cent within 11 to 22 weeks.

Starting a new benefit claim

More people had moved on to start a new benefit claim (an increase from 12 per cent to 16 per cent), and few of those that had immediately started a new benefit claim had gone on to enter work later. Those who (either initially or at a later point up to 11 to 22 weeks after ending their claim) had entered paid employment, training/education, or retirement would not be included here (as they are in their respective categories), so this increase mainly consists of those who initially ended their claim for an 'other' reason, the most common being told they were no longer eligible. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of those told they were ineligible for the benefit they left went on to start a new benefit claim.

For these customers who did not immediately start a new benefit claim, but did so later, we do not know the exact time lapse between ending the original claim (due to ineligibility) and starting a new claim, and some of those who initially had a claim ended did go on to enter paid work rather than start a new claim, so accounting for this group in the OPtE measure would be complicated.

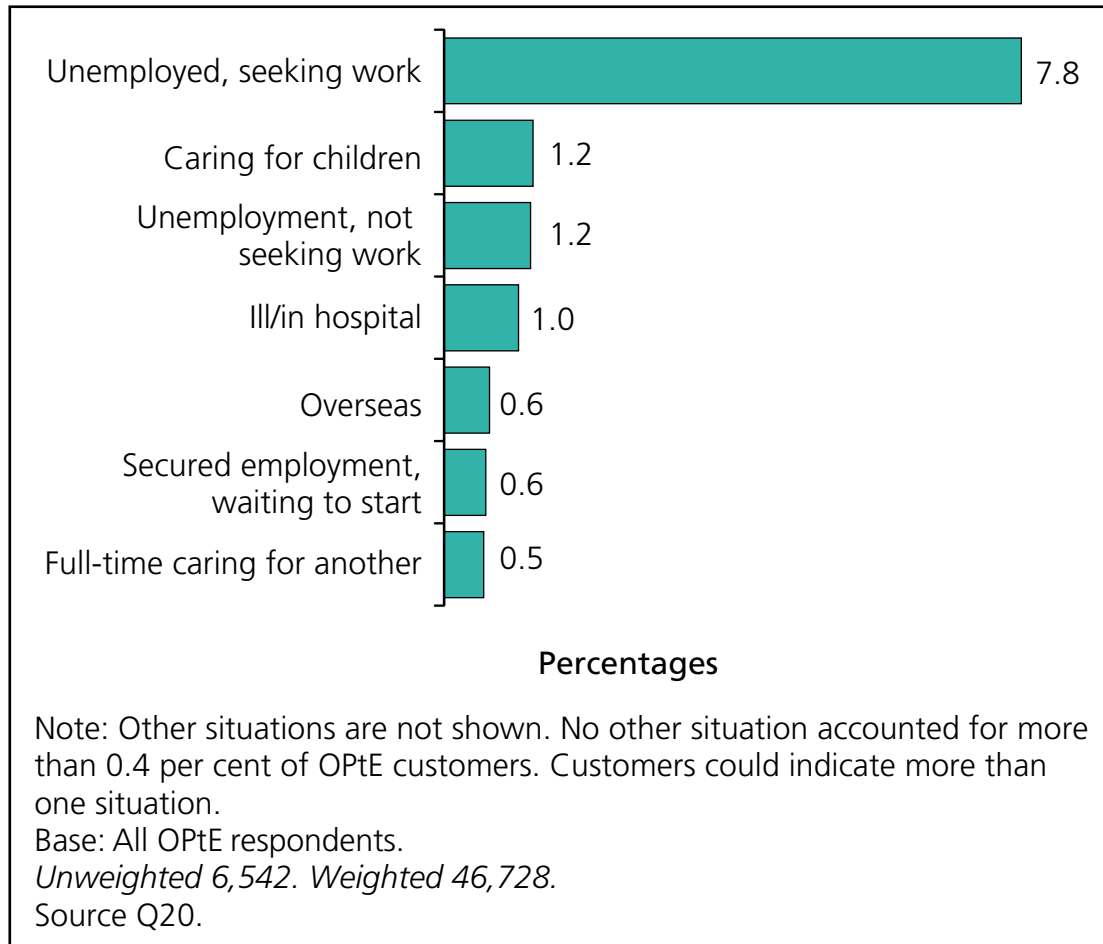
'Other' reasons for ending claims

Lower proportions had an 'other' destination (13 per cent compared to 22 per cent) after this time – indicating that if a longer timeframe was used for OPtE anomalies would reduce.

The reduction in 'other' reasons is greatest among long-term Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) customers – 31 per cent did not end their claim to enter any of the main destinations initially, but this dropped to 19 per cent within 11 to 22 weeks. These customers were redistributed fairly evenly between paid employment and new benefit claims. Over half (55 per cent) of those who ended the claim because it was stopped or because they were told they were no longer eligible continued to be in this 'other' group.

Among the 13 per cent who had not entered paid or unpaid work, training or education, retirement or started a new benefit claim within the 11 to 22 week period between end of claim and the interview, most were seeking paid work. Others were caring for children, ill or in hospital, with no one situation dominating. It may be difficult for the OPtE measure to distinguish these customers, the majority of whom are in limbo of looking for work, but are not claiming either due to ineligibility or not wishing to. So, the accuracy of the measure may continue to be limited here.

Figure C.2 Situation – those who did not enter a main destination at any point since ending claim



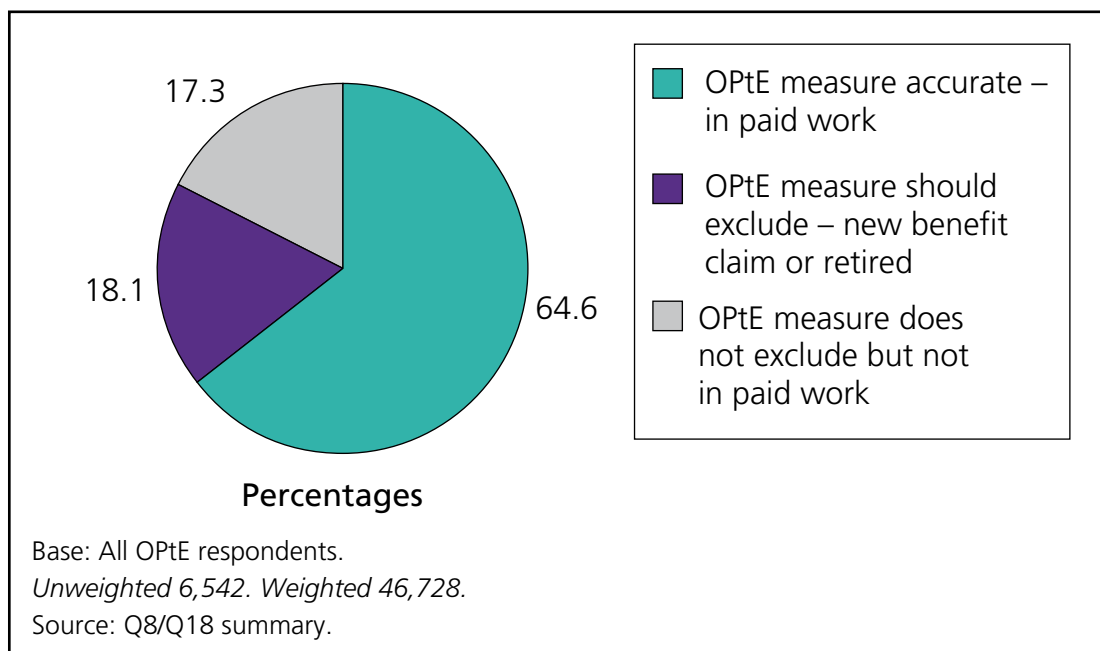
Conclusion: Improving the accuracy of OPtE in capturing later destinations

If the OPtE measure is to reflect destinations other than just the most immediate, then accuracy is improved as more people enter work and fewer remain in 'other' circumstances. The current study results in OPtE customers breaking down into three groups when taking non-immediate destinations into account:

- A. 65 per cent entered work at some point after ending their claim;
- B. 18 per cent did not enter paid work at any point but started a new benefit claim or retired either immediately or at some point after ending their claim;
- C. 17 per cent did not enter paid work, start a new benefit claim or retire at any point but were in education or training, went overseas or to prison (and returned) at some point after ending their claim or entered another destination.¹¹

¹¹ As mentioned previously, those who remained overseas or in prison at the time of fieldwork are not included here, only those interviewed.

Figure C.3 Accuracy of OPtE based on non-immediate destinations

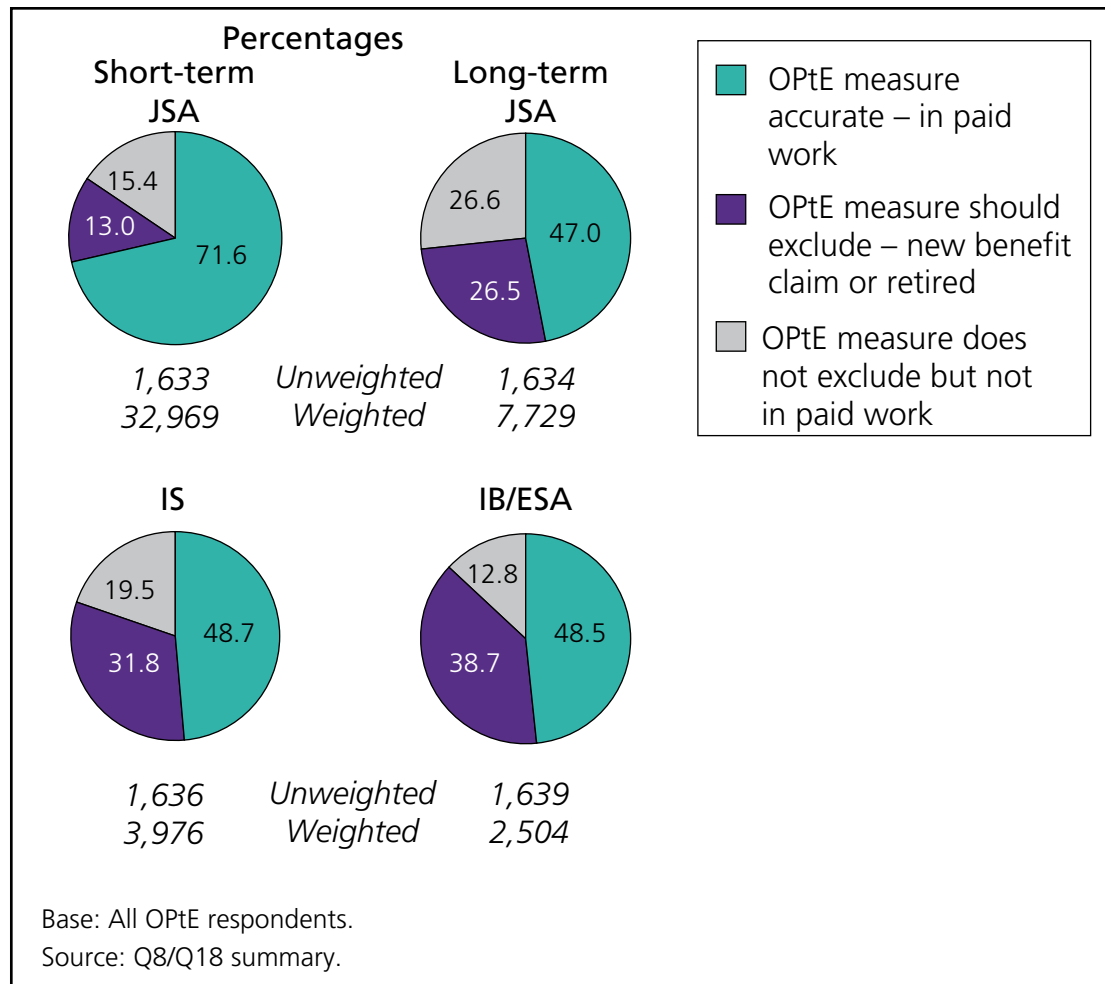


These groups take into account entering paid work immediately or at any point up until a maximum of 11 weeks for some customers and 22 for others, but among those who entered paid work a third (33 per cent) did so on the same day they ended their claim and over five out of six who would enter work had done so within two weeks. The vast majority (92 per cent) of those who entered work had done so within six weeks, and there was little change after that point.

Of the 26 per cent of customers who did not immediately enter paid work, start a new benefit claim, or retire, around a third did so at some point after ending their claim.

The majority of the 17 per cent who remain classed as OPtE but not have entered paid work were those who had originally been told they were no longer eligible to claim, and were unemployed and seeking work.

Figure C.4 Accuracy of OPtE based on non-immediate destinations – by benefit type



In conclusion, if the OPtE measure was improved to cut out those starting new benefit claims and retiring, and also took into account the later destinations of those who did not immediately enter work, there would be an 'error rate' of 17 per cent, with around one in six of those classed as OPtE not entering paid work. The destinations of this 17 per cent would be harder to pin down exactly as most were unemployed and seeking work, but if the reason their claim was ended in the first place was identified (i.e. because they were no longer eligible to claim but had not entered paid work) and they were excluded earlier, then the proportion left in group C at this point would also drop significantly.

Appendix D

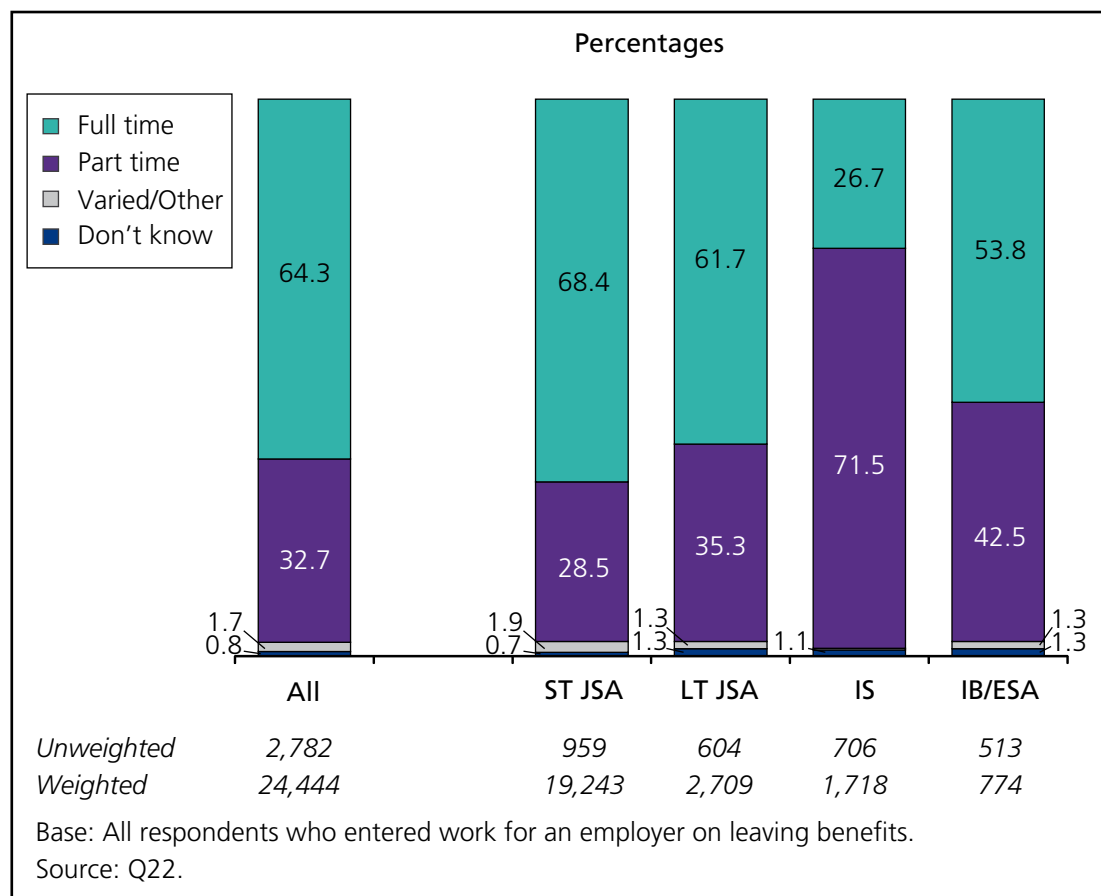
Adding to OPtE: details of employment

This chapter looks at the nature of work secured by those entering employment after ending their claim – covering all those Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) customers starting paid work, increasing their hours or pay, or who became self-employed or freelance. We include those who entered paid work some time after ending their claim, as well as those who did so immediately after ending their claim. As discussed in Appendix C of the report, this accounted for two-thirds (65 per cent) of OPtE customers.

Basis of employment

Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of customers classed as OPtE who entered work with an employer were working full-time (more than 30 hours per week), while a third (33 per cent) began working part-time (less than 30 hours per week).

Figure D.1 Employment basis



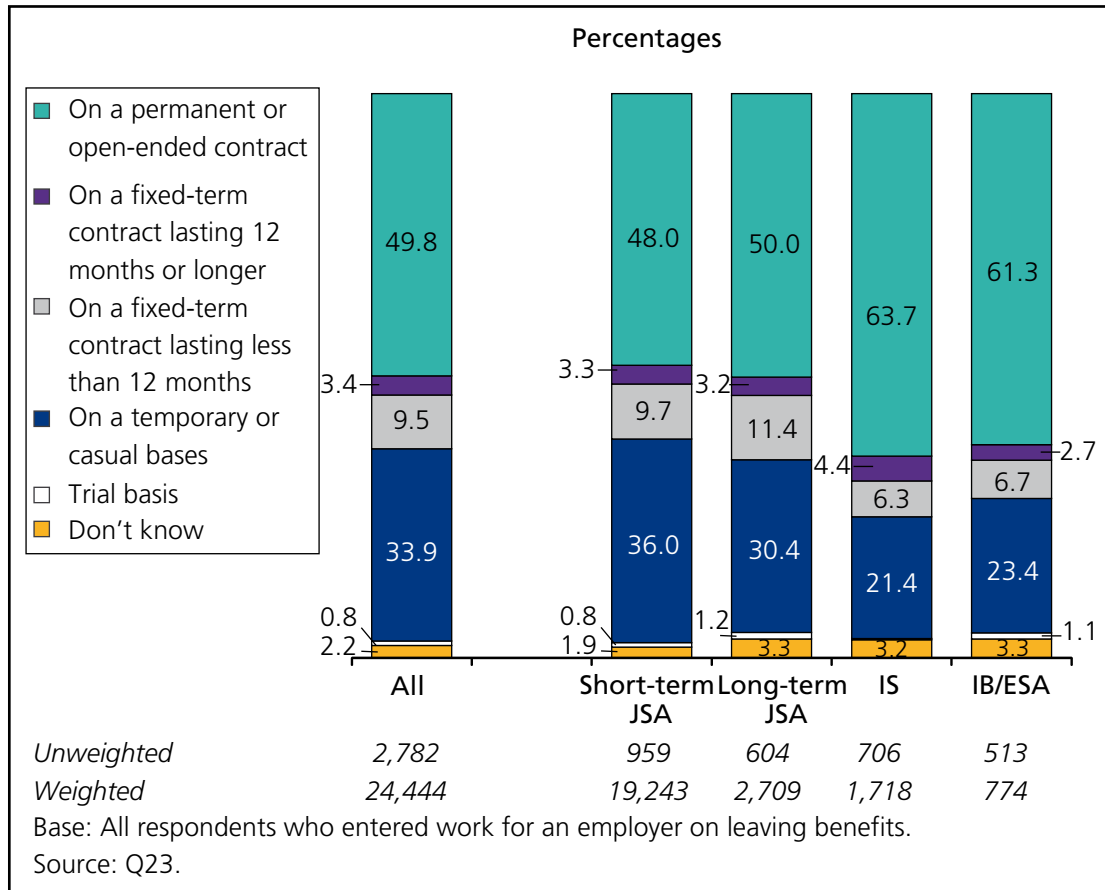
Those who had increased pay or hours with an existing employer (as opposed to returning to or starting a new job) were also more likely to remain part-time, 54 per cent were and only 40 per cent had ended their claim because they were now working full-time. Those who were under 19 or over 50 were also significantly more likely to enter part-time work (46 per cent under 19, 39 per cent over 50s compared to 30 per cent of those aged 20-50).

Contracts

Half of all OPtE customers who entered work did so on a permanent or open ended contract (50 per cent) whilst just over a third took up work on a temporary or casual basis (34 per cent).

Permanent contracts were the most common form of contract being taken up by those OPtE customers moving into paid work with an employer, although the likelihood of having this type of contract did vary by benefit type.

Figure D.2 Type of contract



Those who had increased their pay or hours with an existing employer were more likely to be on a temporary or casual contract than those taking up a new job (39 per cent compared to 33 per cent), possibly indicating insecure work of a fluctuating nature that means they move on and off benefits frequently, or perhaps working for an employer who is not financially able to offer permanent contracts.

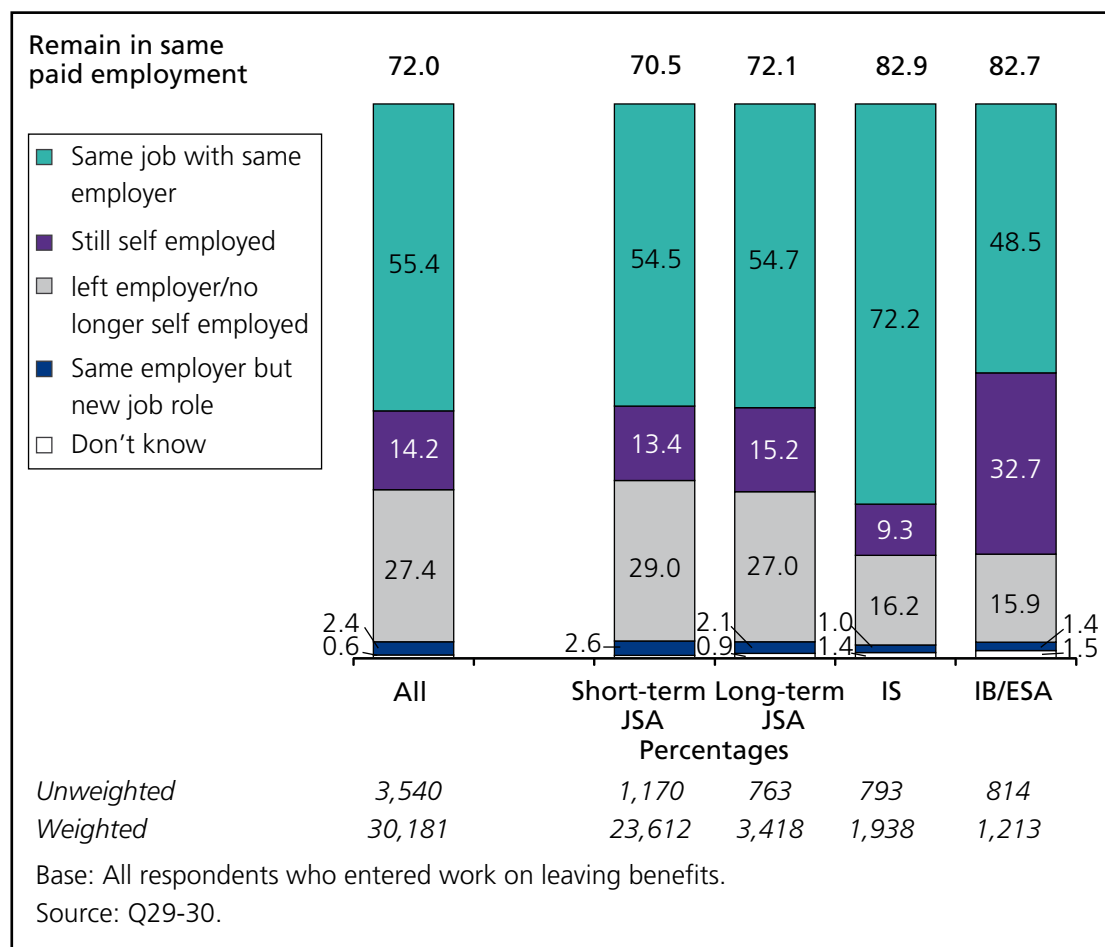
Customers who had claimed for longer were more likely to move onto a permanent contract, and those who had claimed for a shorter time more likely to take up a temporary, casual or fixed short-term post. This may reflect that those who have been claiming for longer are waiting for a job they feel will be long-term and secure while those who have not claimed for long are happier to take any role so they can end their claim. It would seem to show that those who have claimed for longer are under less pressure to move into work than those who recently started claiming, but the variation is probably more linked to benefit type (and the associated levels of stress on entering work) than length of claim *per se*.

Remaining in the same employment

The majority of OPtE customers who entered work upon leaving benefits are still in the same role. Over two-thirds (72 per cent) of those working for an employer were still doing so and three-quarters (75 per cent) of those who had ended their claim to enter or return to self-employment remained in self-employment. However, this leaves over a quarter (27 per cent) of customers who had entered paid work either leaving their employer or no longer being self-employed¹².

Similarly, those who had claimed for a shorter time (and were more likely to have had temporary contracts) were more likely to not be in the same employment (28 per cent of those who had claimed for less than 12 months did not remain in the same employment compared to 17 per cent of those who had claimed for longer).

Figure D.3 Whether customer is still with the same employer or still self-employed



¹² It was not within the scope of the study to ascertain how long this employment had lasted, although they could have entered the role shortly before the interview we know that virtually all who entered work did so within six weeks (and the vast majority within two weeks) of ending their claim so employment for most would have lasted around four months (April – May to mid August) so far.

Reasons for leaving employment

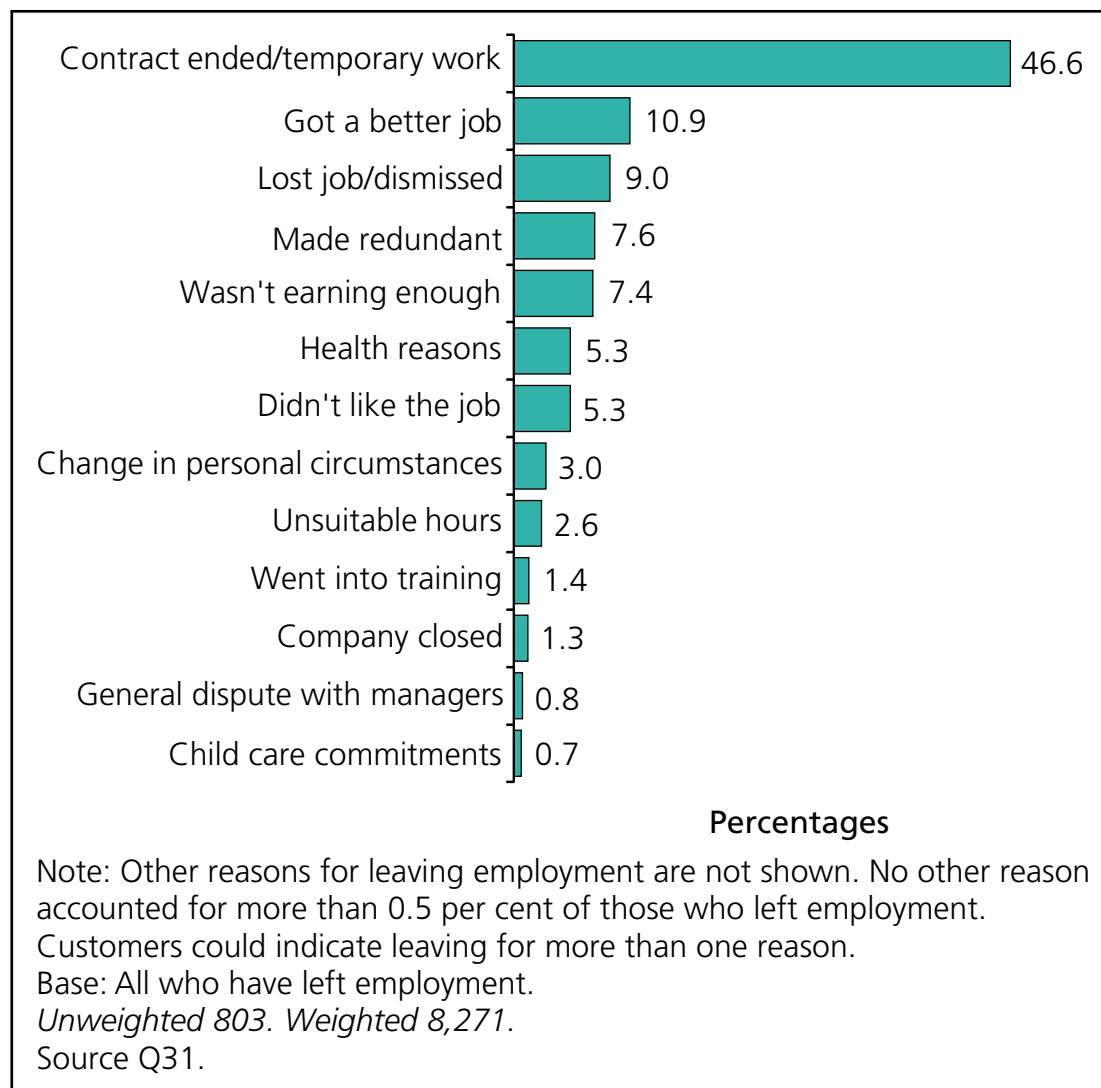
By far the most common reason OPtE customers gave for ending their employment was that the contract had ended or it had been temporary work. This was mentioned by nearly half of customers who had left employment (47 per cent), tying in with the fact that 44 per cent of those working for an employer had a temporary contract or a fixed term contract lasting less than 12 months. Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants (who were more likely than others to have these short-term contracts) were significantly more likely to have ended their employment for this reason (48 per cent short-term JSA, 46 per cent long-term JSA, compared with 23 per cent Income Support (IS), 29 per cent Incapacity Benefit/Employment and Support Allowance (IB/ESA)).

Around a tenth (11 per cent) of those who had left employment said they had done so because they got a better job, although it was not within the remit of the study to find out any detail about what customers actually did go on to do, so it is unclear what proportion of those that had left employment by the time of the interview returned to claiming benefit or went on to other paid work.

There is some evidence of jobs not being suited to customers with nine per cent of those no longer in the role reporting that they left or were dismissed from the job, five per cent that they didn't like it, and one per cent reporting a dispute with management. Insufficient pay and unsuitable hours were also reported by seven per cent and three per cent respectively.

A few seem to have been victim to the economic climate with eight per cent being made redundant and one per cent seeing their company close.

Other reasons were mainly related to personal circumstances (health or child care commitments).

Figure D.4 Reasons for leaving employment

Sustainability of work entered

Half of all OPtE customers who entered work (either immediately or at some point after ending their claim) did so on a permanent or open ended contract (50 per cent) but just over a third took up work on a temporary or casual basis (34 per cent).

Over a quarter of OPtE customers who entered work had left their employer or were no longer self-employed (27 per cent) by the time the study was conducted around four months after their claim ended. By far the most common reason customers gave for ending their employment was that the contract had ended or it had been temporary work (47 per cent of those entering paid work). Other common reasons included leaving for a better job (11 per cent), being dismissed from the job (nine per cent), being made redundant (eight per cent), or that they weren't earning enough (seven per cent) – all possible indications that the job initially taken was not particularly secure or sustainable.

However, just a small majority were still in the same job with the same employer (55 per cent), and a further one in seven were still self-employed (14 per cent).

The majority of OPtE customers entered full-time paid work with an employer (64 per cent), on a permanent contract (50 per cent) and remain in this employment (71 per cent). However, this is quite a slim majority and significant numbers entered roles that seem less secure and indeed are no longer in that employment.

If any group is being placed under pressure to end claims and enter paid work that is perhaps not sustainable then it is younger people and JSA customers, who were more likely than other customers to have entered full-time, but shorter term, employment and most likely to have now left this employment.

Appendix E

Methodology, sampling, fieldwork and weighting

E.1 Sampling approach – OPtE survey

The sample for the survey was those who were recorded as Off Flows Potentially into Employment (OPtE) in April – May 2009. Interviewing was conducted in August 2009 (i.e. around four months after the end of a claim). Six districts were covered by the research as shown in Table E.1.

Table E.1 Districts included in OPtE study

	Pilot/Control	Matched pair
South London	Pilot	1
South Yorkshire	Pilot	2
The Marches	Pilot	3
West London	Control	1
Lancashire	Control	2
Coventry and Warwickshire	Control	3

Quotas were set to ensure a minimum sample size for each benefit type (short-term Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), long-term JSA, Income Support (IS) and Incapacity Benefit/Employment Allowance (IB/ESA)) within each district with the intention of ensuring that findings had a maximum standard error of +/- five per cent at the 90 per cent confidence level.

The findings have all been weighted to reflect the actual proportion of customers from each benefit type within each district who were identified as OPtE for April – May 2009.

E.2 Opt-out exercise

As in a destinations study of this nature it is important to ensure there is no sample selection bias (either through the process of selecting or contacting customers) in this section we cover all opt-out and fieldwork outcomes.

Where possible, records were randomly selected by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for each cell of the sampling matrix in a ratio of 7:1 sample to target interviews. Ninety per cent of those drawn (31,965 customers) had sufficient contact details (a valid postal address and telephone number) to be included in the study.

All contactable customers were given the opportunity to opt-out of the study prior to being contacted by telephone. Letters were sent out which gave a dedicated phone number at IFF Research Ltd that they could call if they did not wish to be contacted further. This introductory letter was worded carefully to allay any concerns that customers might have that this was an exercise to 'check up on them'. We stated simply that the aims of the study were to update DWP records to help the Department understand what happens to people when they leave benefits.

Overall, three per cent of those drawn informed us they did not want to participate following their receipt of the opt out letter – long-term JSA customers were most likely to opt out (six per cent of those mailed), and IS customers least likely to (one per cent of those mailed), as shown in Table E.2. This resulted in 30,853 records being available for inclusion in the study.

E.3 Fieldwork outcomes and response rates

Around a fifth of those included in the final telephone sample turned out to be unreachable via the telephone number supplied as shown in Table E.2. Long-term JSA claimants were more likely to be unreachable with supplied contact details. The majority of these no longer lived at the same address, the number was invalid, or were not available during the fieldwork period. In one per cent of calls we were told the customer was in prison, and in less than one per cent that they had gone overseas.

We were informed that five people were deceased.

The initial stage of the questionnaire was designed to determine whether the customer concurred with the records supplied by the DWP – that is whether they agreed they had stopped a claim for the benefit indicated, in the month indicated. If they had ended a claim for either JSA, IS, IB or ESA within one month either side of the month held by the DWP, the interview continued (even if the benefit and date indicated did not exactly match the DWP data). Customers were prompted using the information held by the DWP and overall only four per cent of those who began an interview disagreed that they had ended a benefit claim within a month of the DWP record. They were screened out, and the interview terminated.

Table E.2 Response rates for OPtE customers

	Number	Population in scope of study %	Population in scope of fieldwork %
Number sampled	37,095		
Invalid cases (insufficient contact details)	5,510		
Ineligible cases (disagreed ended claim)	740		
In scope of study	30,845	100	
Cases not issued to interviewers (opt outs)	728	2	
Invalid cases (not contactable on number given)	5,123	17	
In scope of fieldwork	24,994	81	100
Not approached	6,621	21	26
Not able to speak to/no definite outcome	10,324	33	41
Refused	1,355	4	5
Other reason for not interviewing	152	0	1
Response Rate			
Interviews achieved	6,542	21	26

Those claiming IB/ESA were most likely to disagree that the details of their claim were correct – this varied by district with nearly one in ten IB/ESA customers (nine per cent) in West London saying the information was wrong compared to only four per cent of those in South Yorkshire. Some of the apparent discrepancies with the data could be attributed to recall, given the length of time since the claim was ended (a gap of up to four months).

Overall, less than a tenth of those eligible refused to participate in the research when spoken to, resulting in a very good response rate of 83 per cent, as shown in Table E.2. As the survey data is based on an excellent response rate and a substantial number of interviews it is very reliable.

Refusal rates were highest amongst IB customers (eight per cent of those spoken to and eligible), compared with six per cent of those spoken to and eligible for all other benefit types. Response rates were the highest among IS customers (85 per cent).

Overall 6,542 interviews were achieved with OPtE customers, a minimum of 816 among those ending claims for each benefit type in both pilot and control areas. This has provided robust data (the maximum standard error on the sample for each group is in the region of +/- 2.5 per cent). This has allowed for sub-group analysis within each benefit type. Findings when reported based on all OPtE customers have a maximum standard error of around +/- 1.0%, and analysis by benefit type (e.g. short-term JSA customers) around +/- 2.0%.

Table E.3 Confidence intervals at 90% level

Percentage	Unweighted base of 6,542 (all OPtE customers)	Unweighted base of 3,274 (OPtE customers in pilot areas)	Unweighted base of 1,634 (each benefit type)
5	0.4	0.6	0.9
10	0.6	0.9	1.2
15	0.7	1.0	1.4
20	0.8	1.1	1.6
25	0.9	1.2	1.8
30	0.9	1.3	1.9
35	1.0	1.4	1.9
40	1.0	1.4	2.0
45	1.0	1.4	2.0
50	1.0	1.4	2.0
55	1.0	1.4	2.0
60	1.0	1.4	2.0
65	1.0	1.4	1.9
70	0.9	1.3	1.9
75	0.9	1.2	1.8
80	0.8	1.1	1.6
85	0.7	1.0	1.4
90	0.6	0.9	1.2
95	0.4	0.6	0.9

As outlined in the introduction, these confidence levels mean that findings shown to one decimal place in charts are not robust. At the overall OPtE level the 'true' finding could vary by one percentage point, and on analysis by benefit type by two percentage points.

E.4 Weighting and customer profile

In addition to the overall quotas on benefit types within Jobcentre Plus districts, we set broad monitoring quotas by age, gender and ethnicity within each benefit type to ensure that the overall sample was representative of the profile of individuals within each benefit type.

Demographic information was not present on the sample supplied by DWP, and was collected during the interview. The demographics presented in Table E.4 therefore are all based on responses collected during the interview rather than on DWP records. District was appended by the DWP to each record, so this is based on DWP records.

The data is weighted by benefit type within pilot and control areas to match the actual profile by benefit type of OPtE customers within both pilot and control areas. This design weight corrected the under-sampling of short-term JSA customers (who account for over two-thirds of OPtE customers) and the over-sampling of all other benefit types who account for less than a fifth of OPtE customers.

Once the weighting was applied, the demographic profile of customers in both pilot and control areas within each benefit type was checked against the OPtE population figures to ensure the weighting had not skewed the profile by gender or age. No further weighting was required as the achieved sample closely matched the population on these variables.

Table E.4 OPtE weighted sample profile

	All %	Short-term JSA %	Long-term JSA %	IS %	IB/ESA %
Age					
16-24	30	32	32	23	15
25-49	52	51	47	68	51
50+	18	17	21	9	34
Gender					
Male	63	67	72	19	62
Female	37	33	28	81	38
Ethnicity					
White British	77	78	76	72	77
BAME	22	22	23	27	21
District					
South London	22	22	22	22	21
West London	16	17	15	17	16
South Yorkshire	17	17	18	19	17
Lancashire	22	22	22	23	26
The Marches	13	13	12	11	12
Coventry and Warwickshire	10	10	11	9	9
<i>Weighted</i>	46,728	32,969	7,279	3,976	2,504

Base: All.

Some benefit types by their definition include more customers with particular demographic aspects. Those ending claims for IS were far more likely to be female and far less likely to be in the oldest age group. Only around a third (31 per cent) of those interviewed who had ended a claim for IB were in the youngest age band compared to at least half for all other benefit types, as shown in Table E.4.

Appendix F

Defining destinations

F.1 Questionnaire

As the questionnaire used for the study was not solely designed to check Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) accuracy there are a few limitations. If further investigation is needed subsequently the questionnaire could be refined to exactly capture outcomes which should be included and excluded from OPtE.

The questionnaire was structured with the primary aim of identifying whether customers had ended their claims to enter paid work, and if not whether they entered paid work at any point since ending their claim.

Only if they did not end their claim to enter paid work were other destinations (education/training, retirement, new benefit claims or voluntary work) were checked and these are reported in the 'immediate destinations' chapter.

Again, only if they did not enter paid work at any point after ending their claim were other later destinations checked, and these only if they had not been reasons for ending the claim initially (i.e. if they had entered full-time education initially it would not be checked if they had done so later).

Multiple destinations (e.g. entering education as well as work) are not captured once it is established the customer entered paid work.

F.2 Identifying whether entered paid work immediately

A hierarchy of paid work was applied to ensure the nature of any work entered was identified. Once customers indicated they had taken up any form of paid work this was classed as their destination and no further destinations were checked. If customers reported any of these three destinations they were classed as having entered paid work immediately:

1. Became self-employed or freelance.
2. Increase pay and/or hours with existing employer in a paid role.
3. Return to or start a new paid job.

If did not enter paid work immediately – identifying whether entered education/training, retired, started a new benefit claim or took up voluntary work immediately

A similar hierarchy was then used to identify other destinations entered when the claim was ended. Only customers who had not entered paid work were asked if they had entered any of the following destinations, again once a destination was reported this was classed as the destination and those further down the list were not checked:

4. Returned to or started full-time training or education.
5. Retired and/or started claiming a pension/pension credit.
6. Returned to or started part-time training or education.
7. Moved on to, or began to set up, a claim for another benefit for people out of work but not including retirement pension.
8. Working for an employer in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship.

If the customer had done none of the above they are classed as having not entered any main destination immediately, and ending the claim for an 'other reason'.

If did not enter paid work immediately – identifying whether entered paid work at any point after ending claim

All those who had not entered paid work immediately were asked if they had done so at any point after ending their claim. The same hierarchy of paid work as above was used so again once customers indicated they had taken up any form of paid work this was classed as their destination and no further destinations were checked. If customers reported any of these three destinations they were classed as having entered paid work at some point after ending their claim:

9. Became self-employed or freelance.
10. Increase pay and/or hours with existing employer in a paid role.
11. Return to or start a new paid job.

If did not enter paid work at any point – identifying whether entered education/training, retired, started a new benefit claim or took up voluntary work at any point after ending claim

Those who had not entered paid work at any point after ending their claim were asked if they had entered any of the following destinations if they had not done so immediately. Again once a destination was reported this was classed as the

destination and those further down the list were not checked so if the customer had reported immediately entering full-time training or education other later destinations were not checked:

12. Returned to or started full-time training or education.
13. Retired and/or started claiming a pension/pension credit.
14. Returned to or started part-time training or education.
15. Moved on to, or began to set up a claim for another benefit for people out of work but not including retirement pension.
16. Working for an employer in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship.

If the customer had done none of the above they are classed as having not entered any main destination at any point, and ending the claim for an 'other reason'.

This research was commissioned by the Labour Market Measures Project within Performance Measurement and Analysis Division. The research aims to test the accuracy of the Off-Flows Potentially to Employment (OPtE) measure in identifying customers who have flowed off benefit and into work. A secondary aim of the research was to assess whether utilising an off-flow rate-based measure would encourage advisers to place unreasonable pressure on customers to leave the register. The research also covers an early destinations survey which was carried out on the wave one OPtE data, before revisions to the code were made.

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