



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme

Pathfinder evaluation

December 2016

Research Report No 932

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

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Summary

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

The research involved 43 in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders across the six areas, including:

- Jobcentre Plus schools advisers;
- key local partners including Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP, coalition organisations formed of local businesses) and the Careers and Enterprise Company's (CEC) Employer Advisor Network (EAN, a network set up to facilitate stronger links between businesses and schools and colleges) staff;
- careers leads from both participating and non-participating schools; and
- employers connected to the programme.

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List of abbreviations

CEC	Careers and Enterprise Company
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EA	Enterprise Advisers
EAN	Enterprise Advisor Network
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnerships
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SfS	Support for Schools

Executive summary

This summary outlines key findings from an evaluation of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme across six pathfinder areas. The research involved 43 in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders across the six areas, including Jobcentre Plus advisers, key local partners including Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) – coalition organisations formed of local businesses – and Enterprise Advisor Network (EAN) – a network set up to facilitate stronger links between businesses and schools and colleges – staff, careers leads from both participating and non-participating schools, and employers connected to the programme. A further stage of research is planned to evaluate the full programme, following national roll out in 2017.

Key findings

- Prior to the Support for Schools programme, participants described generally limited experience or knowledge of previous Jobcentre Plus activity in schools. This meant that networks with schools and demand for support had to be built from scratch.
- Once school careers leads became aware of the programme, demand for the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme was high, with drivers of demand tending to outweigh inhibitors. Overall, ensuring a clear understanding of the programme was a key factor in establishing demand.
- Jobcentre Plus advisers' relationship with their primary local partner (generally EAN/LEP) was the primary factor affecting the way in which the Support for Schools programme was provided to schools – resulting in three different models of delivery: close collaboration between Jobcentre Plus and EAN/LEP; EAN/LEP leading on developing relationships with schools; or, Jobcentre Plus staff approaching schools through other means.
- Methods of selecting schools to participate in the programme varied, with a range of more or less targeted approaches. Following the selection process, there was more consistent use of channels to engage schools, including face-to-face networking, email, phone calls and third-party networking. The interventions delivered to schools varied considerably, reflecting the demand-led nature of the programme.
- A variety of demand led support was provided to schools. Examples of support included facilitating work experience placements, employer visits to schools, careers fairs, pupils visiting employers, and advice for financial management. Schools found participation in the programme to be a positive experience. The programme added value to their careers curriculum and filled gaps in schools' provision as it was flexible and demand led.

Overall, it is clear that the Support for Schools programme has been well-received by schools and other stakeholders. Once they become aware and properly understand the offer, there is high demand from schools, who value the flexible and tailored approach of the programme, as well as the skills, experience and employer networks provided by Jobcentre Plus. Opportunities to learn from and improve the programme centre on ensuring clarity about the offer to stakeholders, and offering further tailoring of support and follow-up for students.

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Key recommendations for a national rollout were focused on communication, intervention and implementation. It is recommended:

- There is clear early cooperation between LEP/EAN and other local partners and face-to-face communication with schools where possible.
- There is a need to give consideration to how resource is deployed in order to meet the programme's objectives, and to share learnings across Districts about how resource can be best prioritised.
- There should be additional training to support JCP advisers.
- Learnings are shared across districts and programmes.
- The programme should be tailored to support local school needs, drawing on existing careers networks.

1 Introduction

This report outlines findings from an evaluation of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme across six pathfinder areas. A further stage of research is planned to evaluate the full programme, following national roll out in 2017.

1.1 Background to the research

Youth unemployment statistics show that 16 to 24-year-olds are disproportionately more likely to be unemployed than the general population¹. Tackling barriers to work before young people leave education will help reduce unemployment and economic inactivity, with associated individual and societal benefits.²

A range of initiatives exist to address this issue, including local and national interventions through the National Careers Service, the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) and now Jobcentre Plus through the Support for Schools programme.

The CEC is an organisation set up to reduce the youth unemployment rate by helping young people prepare for employment. Its Enterprise Advisor (EA) Network has been set up to build lasting connections between local businesses and their surrounding schools and colleges. Enterprise Advisers (EAs) are volunteers from local businesses who are assigned to a school. They work with leadership teams to develop plans to engage young people with employers and equip them with the skills they need to join the workforce. EAs are supported by a full-time Enterprise Co-ordinator in their local area. Enterprise Co-ordinators are employed by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP). LEPs are formed of local organisations working together to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area.

Plans for Jobcentre Plus advisers to work within schools delivering 'high quality and impartial careers advice' were announced during the Conservative Party conference in 2015 and formalised within the 2015 Summer Budget. The demand-led provision, rolled out in 10 pathfinder districts between February and July 2016, intended to support schools in engaging young people (aged 12-18) identified as being at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) or who face potential disadvantage in the labour market (for example, due to their ethnicity or to a health/disability issue). The pathfinder programme involved establishing at least one full-time equivalent Jobcentre Plus Programme Adviser (a Band C Executive Officer level staff member) in each area to work within schools to provide students with information on traineeships and apprenticeships, accessing work experience, the local labour market and soft skills that employers expect (such as team working, punctuality, etc.).

¹ For example from June to August 2016, the UK unemployment rate for 16 to 24-year-olds was 13.7 per cent compared with 4.9 per cent for the national average during the same period. Source: UK Labour Market Report (October 2016), Office of National Statistics. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/october2016#young-people-in-the-labour-market>.

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/305327/briefing-paper-oecd-report-england_skills_beyond-schools.pdf

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This support aims to facilitate more effective transition from school into work, training or further study. Following the pathfinder soft launch, a national roll-out of the programme is planned to take place across England between November 2016 and March 2017.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) commissioned Kantar Public (formerly TNS BMRB) to conduct a qualitative evaluation of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme, covering both the pathfinder and national roll-out.

1.2 Aims of the research

The overarching aim of the pathfinder evaluation was to inform the design, delivery and operation of the national roll-out of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme.

Specific objectives for this stage of the evaluation were to:

- Explore demand for the support offered through the programme, and the best use of resource to meet this demand;
- Explore the nature and scope of support wanted by schools;
- Identify ways in which the service level of support delivered to schools can be improved; and,
- Provide guidance about best practice on effective delivery between Jobcentre Plus, intermediaries, schools and employers.

1.3 Overview of the research methodology

The pathfinder evaluation involved a case study approach, focusing on six of the ten pathfinder districts. This approach sought to generate a depth of insight into how the programme was being delivered and the perceived value of the support provided, by drawing on perspectives of all parties involved in the programme. Each case study therefore involved a mix of stakeholder interviews, including with Jobcentre Plus advisers in each district, as well as LEP/EAN staff³, careers leads from both participating and non-participating schools, and employers connected to the programme. A total of 43 participants were interviewed (see Table 1.1 below).

³ These interviewees represented the key local partner involved in coordinating the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme, as identified by the primary point of contact for each district. These staff included CECs; representatives of the local Enterprise Advisor Network; and representatives of the district's LEP.

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Table 1.1 Overview of interviews conducted within each district

	Birmingham	Durham and Tees	Cumbria and Lancs	Essex	Merseyside	Yorkshire	Total
Jobcentre Plus Adviser	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
LEP/EAN	1	1	1	1	1	-	5
Participating school	3	3	3	3	2	-	14
Employer	4	2	2	2	-	-	10
Non-participating school	2	2	2	1	1	-	8
Total	11	9	9	8	5	1	43

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

Districts were selected following a review of available management information about each of the Pathfinder districts. The Districts chosen were selected in order to ensure coverage across a range of key variables:

- Nature of relationship with LEP/EAN.
- Number of schools contacted to date.
- Number of activities delivered to date.
- Geographical location.

Participants were recruited through the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools Programme Co-ordinator contacts in each district. All interviews were conducted by telephone, lasting between 45-60 minutes. Interviews were structured using a topic guide – an aide memoire indicating the range of topics and sub-topics to be covered in the interview (see the appendices).

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

1.4 Structure of the report

This report begins by exploring the context of Jobcentre Plus advisers' activity in schools prior to the programme. The following sections then focus on specific aspects of the programme – demand, partnership working, engaging schools, and experiences of programme delivery. The final section considers key findings in relation to the aims of the evaluation, and explores learnings for the national roll out of the programme.

2 Context of pre-programme activity

Prior to the Support for Schools programme, participants typically described limited experience or knowledge of previous Jobcentre Plus activity in schools. This meant that school networks and demand for support had to be built from scratch.

The degree to which Jobcentre Plus staff had been engaged in careers education support prior to the initiation of the Support for Schools programme was typically limited. Prior to the programme starting there was no national resource for Jobcentre Plus districts to work with schools. There was a broad perception across most districts that this was new territory for Jobcentre Plus. Where Jobcentre Plus staff had delivered careers education support or worked with young people previously, this was more commonly related to their personal interests and experiences rather than through Jobcentre Plus activity.

Three primary sources of Jobcentre Plus staff experience of working with young people and delivering careers education support were reported – the Community 10,000 programme; ad hoc volunteering activities; and staff with a professional careers education background.

Community 10,000 programme: In several districts, Jobcentre Plus staff had previously delivered support to schools through the Community 10,000 volunteering programme. This had involved a mixture of network building as well as delivery of direct support, such as CV-writing training and mock interviews. These districts generally had the most systematic and substantive historical experience of working with schools. Some staff suggested that the kinds of activities they had undertaken as part of the Community 10,000 scheme aligned well with the activities they were offering as part of the Support for Schools programme – although they acknowledged that the Community 10,000 scheme did not operate at the same scale as the Support for Schools programme.

‘DWP has a commitment of providing volunteers, and it’s called the Community 10,000, and that’s something that had been going on for a long time ... So, we volunteer at various schools in the area. That’s the only [work with schools] that I’m aware of.’

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District E)

Individual Jobcentre Plus staff with volunteering background: In some districts, Jobcentre Plus advisers had previously volunteered within schools on a more personal, ad hoc basis. This included part-time staff who also undertook voluntary careers support roles within schools in their free time, as well as some staff who had undertaken a voluntary placement as part of their role as a Jobcentre Plus Adviser. These staff drew on their previous experiences when interacting with schools to identify the best points of contact within schools to approach, or to inform their delivery of support to young people.

‘I was a school governor and if I had to leave work early to get to school governor meetings or events, then ... they would ... allow us to ... claim that allowance back – be paid for that time. But they hadn’t done anything at this level [Support for Schools programme] before.’

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District A)

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Individual Jobcentre Plus staff with professional careers education background: Some Jobcentre Plus advisers involved in the programme had previous professional experience of working with young people and delivering careers education in schools. Generally this experience had been separate to their role at Jobcentre Plus. Where staff had this experience, they used it to inform the way in which they worked with young people and the kinds of support that they offered to schools.

‘[Earlier in my career] I took on various outreach programmes to reach the most excluded ... we had a community-based programme which was the precursor to Troubled Families ... ending youth violence. [And] when I first joined [Jobcentre Plus], we had a tradition of year 10 pupils, age 14, coming in to Jobcentres for a period of work experience.’

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District C)

The key implication of the limits of previous experience for the implementation of the programme was that Jobcentre Plus staff generally lacked formal connections with schools in their districts. These networks had to be developed from scratch, and formal relationships developed between Jobcentre Plus and schools in a way that had not been done previously. Therefore, a substantial amount of effort by Jobcentre Plus advisers had gone into the development of these connections, and this activity is covered extensively in the following sections.

3 Demand for the programme

Demand for the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme was high, with drivers of demand tending to outweigh inhibitors. Overall, ensuring a clear understanding of the programme was a key factor in establishing demand.

3.1 Drivers of demand

Once schools had been informed about the Support for Schools programme, either by Jobcentre Plus staff or through another channel (see Chapter 5 for further details), there was typically a high level of demand for the support available through the programme. Schools were enthusiastic about the support that was on offer, and were keen to build this into lesson plans either in the same term that the support was offered, or as part of future plans. Several non-participating school careers leads also spoke about their intention to make use of the programme in the next academic year.

Five key drivers of this demand for the programme were identified across interviews with Jobcentre Plus advisers and school leads – specifically: Jobcentre Plus’s local labour market expertise; Jobcentre Plus’s employer networks; the need for in-depth, tailored careers support; the need for exposure to non-academic paths; and, knowledge that the programme is free.

Jobcentre Plus’s local labour market expertise: A common theme across interviews was the value that schools were able to draw from Jobcentre Plus’s local labour market expertise. Schools valued the fact that Jobcentre Plus were able to provide specific details about the types of vacancies available in the local area, and the specific skills that their students would need to develop. This expertise was particularly valuable when Jobcentre Plus staff offered to work directly with students as part of the programme – for example, when providing CV advice or interview preparation guidance.

‘A lot of other companies that are out there don’t have the knowledge of job vacancies that [Jobcentre Plus] have. So therefore, to me, [Jobcentre Plus] are in a better position to provide the advice.’

(Participating School Lead, District E)

Jobcentre Plus’s employer networks: School careers leads also identified Jobcentre Plus’s network of employers as a key benefit, driving demand for the programme. Schools were enthusiastic about the ability of Jobcentre Plus to put them in contact with employers and potential providers of work experience or apprenticeships who they would not otherwise have known. Jobcentre Plus advisers gave examples of how they used their employer connections in order to identify employers who were relevant to the interests of students within a school and subsequently arrange a workplace visit or work experience placement for students.

‘I’ve got the network of people; I’ve got the labour market knowledge and, you know, I can easily coordinate [school visits or work experience placements from employers] whereas for [teachers] it might be something that gets put off.’

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District A)

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Need for in-depth, tailored careers support: Schools with students in need of particularly in-depth support (for example, those with special educational needs, or identified as being most at-risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET)) were particularly keen for tailored support that could be targeted at these students. For example, a school in District A sought guidance about the most appropriate work experience placements for students with special needs.

‘When you work with special needs students, and particularly, I think, with young people with autism ... it’s very, very difficult to find appropriate work experience placements ... So having [Jobcentre Plus] work with us has been a huge help, really.’

(Participating School Lead, District A)

Need for exposure to non-academic paths: Some school careers leads felt that existing post-16 provision at their school was focused primarily on encouraging students to move into academic routes, either Further Education or Higher Education. In these circumstances, careers leads welcomed any provision that could provide students with a clearer understanding of the alternative routes available. The Support for Schools programme was widely perceived to be targeted at these kinds of students, and an effective way of introducing students to non-academic career options that teaching staff might have less awareness of, or confidence in explaining.

‘[The Jobcentre Plus] programme [is designed] to get into schools and start ... targeting, you know, everyone but, in particular ... those vulnerable groups that might not have the aspirations from family or might not have the desire and the drive to ... think about their futures in the sense of a career or a job.’

(Participating School Lead, District D)

Knowledge that the programme is free: Once schools realised they would not be charged for the support offered by Jobcentre Plus, this became a strong driver of demand. Schools were often used to paying for careers guidance and enthusiastic about any service that would be offered free of charge. Careers leads who raised this frequently presented this point in the context of tightening school budgets and the broader pressures on their school’s resources.

‘A lot of organisations are offering services to schools, but a lot of organisations are sort of promising the earth that they can deliver stuff to schools and I think people are sort of sceptical that at some point they are going to have to part with some money’

(Enterprise Coordinator, District A)

3.2 Constraints on demand

In the districts where take-up of the programme had been slowest (such as District B and District E), this was typically due to a lack of awareness or capacity, rather than explicit lack of demand. With a few exceptions, non-participating schools in these districts generally remained enthusiastic about the programme. Across all districts there were non-participating schools that were keen to engage with the programme in the future.

Where demand was slowest to grow, there were four key factors inhibiting engagement with the programme – lack of awareness; reliance on third parties for referrals; school calendar and capacity limitations; and limits of Jobcentre Plus capacity.

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Lack of awareness: The most frequently cited barrier to demand for the programme was that some non-participating schools were simply unaware of the programme's existence. The key factors that were driving demand for Jobcentre Plus's support all rely on school careers leads having an awareness of these attributes and knowing to approach Jobcentre Plus about Support for Schools. In some instances this lack of awareness was an intentional result of the way in which the programme was implemented and communicated. For example, in District A, Jobcentre Plus advisers began by approaching only four schools about participation in the programme. Demand for the programme increased substantially once they began communication with a wider range of schools.

'[Non-participating schools are probably] so busy focusing on their own particular primary function [that] careers probably isn't high up on their agenda.'

(Participating School Lead, District D)

Reliance on third-parties for referrals: Closely linked to lack of awareness about the programme, in districts where Jobcentre Plus staff were reliant on third parties to promote the programme this sometimes resulted in a comparatively slow-moving referral process. For example, in District B, Jobcentre Plus advisers were reliant on the Enterprise Adviser (EA) to visit schools and conduct a diagnostic prior to any referrals being made. This was often seen to be because third parties generally had other reasons for contacting schools in addition to promoting Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (for example, the local Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)/Enterprise Advisor Network (EAN) staff building their own school networks).

'The schools ... aren't aware of [the programme] because the Careers and Enterprise Companies (CECs) are still establishing links with the schools – so they're probably not aware of Support for Schools.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District E)

School calendar and capacity limitations: Where schools were informed about the programme towards the end of their term, it was difficult for them to find space in their curriculum to arrange any activities before the end of the school term. Equally, some non-participating schools reported a wider challenge with making time for Jobcentre Plus staff to come into schools, explaining that their schedules had already been planned months in advance, and feeling it would always be a challenge to fit in an hour or more of support from Jobcentre Plus staff.

'[Jobcentre Plus] offered mentoring and interviews with the students which is all well and good but that requires time to get the students out of their lessons ... [The challenge] is just the time [required]; it's getting the students out of school, because obviously you've got all the exam pressures.'

(Non-participating School Lead, District A)

Limits of Jobcentre Plus capacity: In areas where the programme had seen high levels of demand, Jobcentre Plus staff were sometimes unable to meet all of the requests that had been made of them. For example, in District D the initial contacts with schools generated a far higher number of leads than anticipated, resulting in the need to decline some requests.

'I took on too much ... I started saying we've got to say no.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District D)

3.3 Absence of demand

For those non-participating schools (including some of those interviewed directly, and some of those spoken about by Jobcentre Plus advisers) where there was a genuine absence of demand, this was driven by either a perceived absence of need, an assumption that the programme will be expensive, or misunderstanding of the programmes' aims.

Perceived absence of need: Some schools had chosen not to participate in the programme as a result of a perceived lack of need for Jobcentre Plus's support. Some schools felt their existing careers provision was sufficient to support their students, and did not feel that they needed any additional support or resources to supplement this provision. In other schools this lack of need was perceived to stem from the school's ethos. For example, where the school's aspiration was for all students to move into higher education rather than directly into employment, there was felt to be less need for Jobcentre Plus's support.

'I'm not going to use Jobcentre Plus in every single school if a couple of those schools have got lots and lots of support.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District E)

Assumption that the programme will be expensive: Some schools assumed that any externally-provided careers education support would require payment, which was seen to be a major disincentive for participation in the programme. This misperception was felt to be driven by the broader context of careers education support, where the primary providers tended to be private companies that charged for their services.

'There seems to be a lot of misapprehension – that either that we charge or we're going to make them sign up to something that they have to commit to.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District A)

Misunderstanding of the programme's aims: Some non-participating schools had not yet fully grasped the purpose of the programme and the nature of the support available. In some circumstances, Jobcentre Plus advisers needed to have several conversations with school staff before the exact nature of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools offer was properly understood.

'The [Jobcentre Plus Adviser] had some difficulty in explaining their specific remit to schools ... It takes a couple of times to see them for the penny to drop what you are actually there for and what your role is.'

(Enterprise Coordinator, District A)

4 Partnership working

Jobcentre Plus advisers' relationship with the local Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)/ Enterprise Advisor Network (EAN) staff was the primary factor affecting the way in which the Support for Schools programme was provided to schools – resulting in three different models of delivery: close collaboration between Jobcentre Plus and the local LEP/EAN; the local LEP/EAN leading on developing relationships with schools; or, Jobcentre Plus staff approaching schools directly and through other means. Relationships with employers and other partners were more consistent across the pathfinder case studies.

4.1 Working with local LEP/EAN

The relationship with the local LEP/EAN was the partnership that most influenced the implementation of the Support for Schools programme within districts. In general, partnerships between Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN were perceived to have developed positively. In some districts there had initially been misunderstandings about the remit and purpose of the Support for Schools programme. However, most districts had come to a point where LEP/EAN and Jobcentre Plus staff had clarity about each other's roles and responsibilities.

Where there had not initially been a clear understanding about the respective remits of Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN, this had led to some tensions. For example, staff in one district reported a joint visit to a school (nominally to introduce the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (SfS) programme) at which the local Enterprise Coordinator had primarily promoted their own resources and support. In districts where Jobcentre Plus staff were relying on LEP/EAN for referrals, initial misunderstandings had contributed to delays in referring appropriate schools to Jobcentre Plus.

'It didn't work so well at the beginning. I just felt as though she was pushing some of the more difficult schools onto me.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District B)

Once clarity about roles and remits had been established, most districts reported a positive working relationship between LEP/EAN and Jobcentre Plus, with both organisations able to make referrals to one another. For example, in District A the Enterprise Coordinator and Jobcentre Plus coordinators agreed which schools they intended to approach, and which sessions were best run by Jobcentre Plus staff and which by the Enterprise Coordinator, in order to avoid any conflicts or duplication of effort. Face-to-face meetings for Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN staff to meet and discuss their respective remits were felt to be extremely helpful in establishing a productive relationship between the two organisations.

'We both see the point and the necessity of each other's programmes and how they complement each other.'

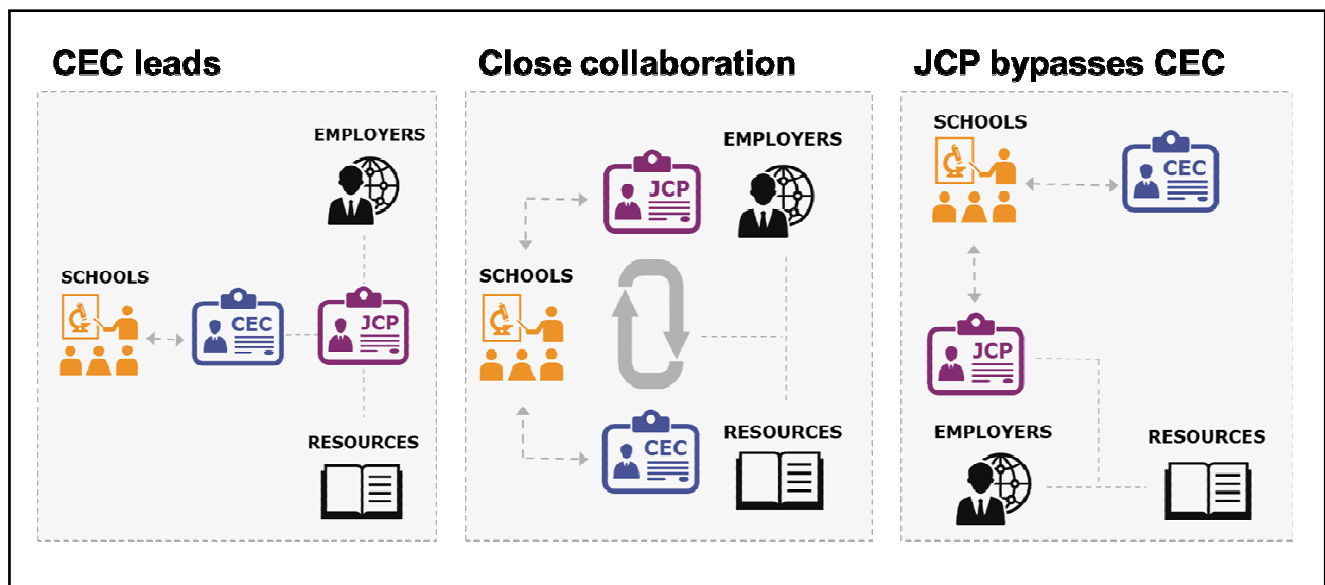
(Enterprise Coordinator, District A)

The different relationships between Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN across each of the case study districts had the most direct impact on the model used for introducing the programme to schools. The nature of this relationship often depended on how established the local LEP/EAN was. In many areas the local Enterprise Coordinators had not yet been introduced or

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was in the very early stages of development, and this led to a wide variation in practice in order to accommodate this. The following three models of delivery were observed across the case study districts: LEP/EAN leading on developing relationships with schools; close collaboration between Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN; and, Jobcentre Plus staff approaching schools directly (see diagram and further detail below).⁴

Figure 4.1 Different models operating in the Pathfinder areas



LEP/EAN leading on development of relationships with schools: The local Enterprise Coordinator was best established in District B. In this district Jobcentre Plus staff had agreed to rely on the Enterprise Coordinator to establish the initial connection with schools and make referrals to Jobcentre Plus staff. However, this was one of the districts in which slowest progress had been made in arranging delivery of support to schools. In part, this was perceived to be due to the fact that the Enterprise Coordinator’s diagnostic visits could be time consuming and also due to initial uncertainty from the Enterprise Coordinator about the exact nature of Jobcentre Plus’s remit. As Jobcentre Plus staff became more familiar with the Enterprise Coordinator and their processes in District B, this had begun to improve the referral process.

‘It means we have got a joined up approach rather than a confusing message to schools which there could be.’

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District B)

Collaborative relationship with LEP/EAN: In Districts A and E, both the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools advisers and the local LEP/EAN coordinator were relatively new in post. Because neither organisation had an established network of schools to work with, staff from both organisations worked collaboratively in order to develop connections with schools, introducing both organisations at once and signposting schools to both LEP/EAN and/or Jobcentre Plus SfS depending on which support was felt to be most appropriate.

⁴ One outlying location followed a model where the Jobcentre Adviser was seconded to be the Enterprise Coordinator.

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'We'd been into schools; [their Coordinator] was still trying to get into schools ... So it was a bit like ... if you go in and speak to a school ... can you mention us within your conversation. It's really like two projects are kicking off at the same time.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District E)

Working without or bypassing LEP/EAN: In District D, the local EAN was initially involved in the identification of schools to receive Jobcentre Plus support, but Jobcentre Plus advisers perceived this to be a slow and time consuming process, due to the fact that the EAN did not initially have a coordinator in place and were focusing on establishing themselves rather than signposting towards Jobcentre Plus. Because of this, in this district the Jobcentre Plus began contacting schools directly without going through the EAN.

In District C, the local EAN was not yet in place, and so Jobcentre Plus staff established their processes in the absence of an EAN. Instead, in this district the Jobcentre Plus worked more closely with the National Careers Service to establish connections with schools, as well as making use of existing school networks (for example, a local head teacher consortium).

'None of that structure was in place ... [the Enterprise Coordinators] weren't moving fast enough ... It's a shame because we don't want to step on anybody's toes.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District D)

4.2 Working with employers

Partnership relationships with employers were more consistent across districts, and almost all Jobcentre Plus advisers reported positive relationships with local employers involved in the programme. In most instances these relationships had been developed by drawing on the Jobcentre Plus Adviser's existing employer networks and connections. For example, in District A, the Jobcentre Plus Adviser was able to identify employers from their existing network that would best meet the needs of the schools in their district – such as, arranging a school visit by a construction firm for students interested in that industry as a potential career route.

'And then Jobcentre Plus got me in contact with more local businesses rather than just generic-type businesses, with which I was then able to communicate and get them on board as well.'

(Participating School Lead, District D)

District E was the only district in which partnerships with employers had proved more challenging. In this district, no employers had yet been involved with the programme. This was attributed to the fact that the Jobcentre Plus Adviser in this district had not previously had direct contact with employers as part of their historical role. Instead, they were reliant on the cooperation of the district's Jobcentre Plus Employment Advisers to provide links to employers. These Employment Advisers had not been specifically briefed on the remit of the Support for Schools programme, and had not yet been able to share details of potential contacts.

“Unless [JCP Employment Advisers] understand [what we need from them] we’re not going to get their support. [We don’t want to] duplicate their work by contacting an employer when they’ve already got that relationship.”

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District E)

4.3 Working with other partners

In districts where the local LEP/EAN was less well established (or not present, as in District C), Jobcentre Plus advisers also made use of other local partner organisations. These included:

- National Careers Service
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Local Authority children’s services (e.g. Troubled Families/Looked After Children teams)
- Local Learning Provider networks

These organisations were able to offer a range of expertise to the Jobcentre Plus in their district, including suggestions of employers to approach; materials for use in sessions with schools; and advice about how best to engage with young people (sometimes including specific advice about working with those most at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET), or with Special Educational Needs (SEN)).

These partner organisations were also useful for driving demand, spreading information about the programme and putting schools in touch with Jobcentre Plus advisers.

‘When we’ve engaged with other partners, they were in the career-sort of the careers field. They’ve actually gone out and promoted us as well. And we’ve had a couple of leads asking us to contact schools through them ... So it’s been, really, partners who’ve sort of been aware of what’s been going on, and making that introduction.’

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District E)

5 Relationships with schools

Methods of selecting schools to participate in the programme varied across each of the pathfinder case studies – with a range of more or less targeted approaches. Following the selection process, there was more consistent use of channels to engage schools, including face-to-face networking, email, phone calls and third-party networking. The exact nature and combination of support delivered to schools varied considerably, reflecting the demand-led nature of the programme.

5.1 Selecting schools for participation

As highlighted in the previous section, there were different models for introducing the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme to schools: close collaboration between Jobcentre Plus and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)/Enterprise Advisor Network (EAN); LEP/EAN leading on developing relations with schools; or, Jobcentre Plus staff approaching schools directly. The responsibility for selection of schools was driven by the organisation leading the relationship building with schools. Where districts had adopted a collaborative approach, decisions on selection were discussed and agreed between Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN. In some cases this was informed by existing patterns of school engagement and information about gaps and needs for career support in the local area.

Across the districts, there were three main approaches to selection of schools – targeting schools that best met the programme criteria, taking a geographical approach in order to plan workloads, and using a blanket approach to contact all schools within the district. Each of these is outlined in more detail below.

Targeted approach: This was where schools were selected based on targeted criteria for the programme. This was typically driven by Jobcentre Plus/LEP/EAN's perception of the types of schools or pupils most likely to benefit from the programme. This included the targeted selection of schools with a high proportion of not in education, employment or training (NEET) students, or a high level of deprivation; or based on Ofsted performance or type of school, for example – targeting schools in special measures and specialist schools (for example, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)).

'So I thought, you know, [PRUs and alternative education providers] are essential to work with because if what we're trying to do is prevent long-term unemployment, then, you know, they are essential to work with.'

(Participating School Lead, District A)

Some districts were also proactively approached by good and outstanding performing schools where there was a cohort identified with a higher risk of becoming NEET.

'They've all been mainly schools that are in special measures or not doing very well ... I've got three outstanding academies wanting us to work with them. But that is in a way to work with, every school no matter how well they're doing has a small cohort of youngsters who are not flourishing as well as the others.'

(Participating School Lead, District C)

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Some districts engaged a number of targeted schools and then applied a further diagnostic approach to understand needs and gaps across the group. This meant that schools finally selected were those who were perceived to have the greatest need and least access to resource.

'We are rating the schools as red, amber, green. The green will be those that have either got a huge amount of activity already happening – don't need anything – down to your red ones, which will be the ones which will be our focus.'

(Participating School Lead, District F)

Geographical approach: In some districts (such as District A) the Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN chose to target schools within a particular geographical area of the district in order to start from a wide base of schools and from this to then prioritise final selection based on the level of interest, demand and pupil needs within the schools. This approach was also seen as a way of trying to ensure that the workload remained manageable for the adviser and covered a contained geographical area.

Although selection was based on location rather than targeted need (at least initially), schools found that demand within their geographical area was often driven by the specific needs of schools for additional support. Schools who were perceived as having the greatest need for support (for example, those with lower academic performance) were more likely to take up the offer of the programme.

'I started off being quite targeted and then realised, actually, to cover the area required, I needed to make a general offer. And then really it's a matter for me to prioritise after that. But the ones seen as sort of more proactive or, you know, what people think of as a better school have actually made the least requests anyway.'

(Participating School Lead, District A)

Blanket approach: In some districts (such as District D) the Jobcentre Plus/LEP/EAN did not target particular schools, but took an unstructured and blanket approach to engagement with schools. They simply tried to engage with as many schools as possible to raise the profile of the programme and ensure initial take up. These districts felt that as a pathfinder the best approach was to work closely with a wide variety of schools (for example, across school type – mainstream schools, academies, grammar schools and specialist schools) to understand gaps in provision and specialist needs to inform learning for later roll out.

'This is us being thrown in the deep end and trying to get at the different levels ourselves. So that was the only way we could learn. We wouldn't have wanted to go into the harder schools without covering everything first.'

(Participating School Lead, District D)

There was also variation within schools about how pupils were selected for involvement with the programme. This again was led by schools and their assessment of where there was most need. In some schools, specific students who were at risk of becoming NEET or with complex needs (e.g. Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities, behavioural needs, English as an Alternative Language) were identified for more intensive support options, such as smaller group activities focused on raising aspirations and developing employability skills. Some schools also asked for specific advice and guidance in sourcing careers advice and work experience for children with disabilities and SEN. In other districts, specific year groups were identified; for example, focusing on year groups making imminent choices about post-

16 and post-18 options. Schools also looked at pupil interest in subjects or industries when activities were tailored towards specific employment sectors.

'We said this is the group we are aiming at. This is what we really want to cover and they literally fitted it perfectly and the sixth formers that were involved in it, they seemed really engaged and I think, you know, seemed to have got a lot out of it.'

(Participating School Lead, District D)

5.2 Methods for engaging schools

Although the ways in which Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN identified and selected schools varied across districts, there were a consistent range of approaches used to approach schools and establish connections. This element of programme activity was seen to be comparatively straightforward and was not viewed as an area in need of particular alteration for the national rollout – although there were some learnings about the most effective channels to use.

Five primary channels were used to approach schools – face-to-face networking; telephone calls; email; co-ordination with local partners; and, referrals from other schools. Findings relating to each of these are considered below.

Face-to-face networking: Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN staff reported making use of existing school networks and contacts to arrange face-to-face meetings and introduce the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme. This was seen to be the most effective way of engaging schools, as it allowed for a clear and direct explanation of the programme. Effective relationships with schools often began with a face-to-face meeting to discuss the scope of the programme and begin the process of tailoring support to the schools' particular needs.

'I find it's always worked with a personal approach. So if there are any opportunities to meet careers leads face-to-face at meetings or anything like that, then I will do it ... Once you meet them face-to-face, they're really passionate about it.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District A)

Phone calls: In District D, Jobcentre Plus advisers introduced the programme to local schools by arranging introductory phone calls. This was felt to be successful in driving demand for and interest in the programme, but was not considered to be as effective as face-to-face contact in establishing a strong personal relationship.

Email: Although Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN staff from many Districts reported using email as a means of informing schools about the programme, it was widely viewed to be best as a preliminary contact or warm-up exercise. Several school leads mentioned that they would often delete emails that they did not immediately recognise, and Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN staff acknowledged that this channel generated few leads if used on its own.

'When you approach a school ... you know you're not at the top of the agenda. You're probably talking to the wrong person at school. An email gets deleted, because everybody is plagued with a deluge of emails.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District C)

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Coordination with local partners: In some districts, Jobcentre Plus staff made use of connections built up by other local organisations providing careers advice and support (such as attending workshops and sessions put on by a local training organisation in District A) in order to receive referrals and build up a network of contacts.

‘I’ve made sure I’ve got a massive network out there – And it’s matching them up as well. So, you know, you’re working with a school and they mention something and you say, oh, well, you know, do you know- I could get somebody to come in and do some budgeting sessions.’

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District A)

Positive referrals from other schools: In districts where the programme had successfully delivered support to schools, word of mouth began to act as a driver of demand, with other schools learning from their colleagues about the support available from Jobcentre Plus.

‘There are a lot of schools that I haven’t actually delivered in yet who say they do want things for next term.’

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District A)

5.3 Support delivered to school

Across districts, the differences in the types of support delivered were driven in part by the flexibility offered to Jobcentre Plus advisers in the implementation of the programme. The offer was not dictated by the programme leads but instead discussed and developed via initial discussions with schools. The demand-led nature of the programme meant that Jobcentre Plus staff were open to suggestions and requests from schools about what support would be most useful rather than beginning with a clearly defined offer.

‘It’s not that I have some sort of off-the-shelf products that I just wheel along and that’s what I deliver every time; it’s different every time.’

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District A)

Schools felt there were lots of opportunities to suggest ideas if the activities suggested were not suitable for the school or were covered elsewhere via existing provision and arrangements. Some schools identified gaps and areas where they wanted more specialist advice from Jobcentre Plus; for example, more opportunities to provide myth-busting around the benefits system, or provide training to staff about up-to-date local labour market trends and growth industries.

‘They made it very clear about the offer that the DWP could make. And ... I then decided what help I thought would be best for me personally in this school. But [Jobcentre Plus] gave me a whole offer of what they could do. [Jobcentre Plus staff member] said, ‘we could do assemblies; we could come into year 10 sessions; ... we can do CVs.’ They gave me a big offer and I chose the thing that ... at the time ... we needed.’

(Participating School Lead, District B)

Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme – Pathfinder evaluation

Despite some levels of variation, a broadly consistent set of support options and interventions were discussed by Jobcentre Plus staff. This was in part because of the central training that had been received when the Pathfinder programme was established. The Jobcentre Plus advisers were also able to draw on the shared skills base of their previous work within the Job Centre, particularly where they had worked within Partnership or Employer Coordination roles. Many advisers had worked across roles such as Lone Parent Adviser, Youth Adviser and Universal Credit Work Coaches.

'We're the experts on jobs and how to get a job and contacts with employers, and that's what we bring to the school.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District C)

Overall the key focus of delivery was support for work experience and skills and access to employers and industry, falling broadly into three categories of support:

- **Connecting support from employers:** The support on offer involved linking with employers through work experience placements, employer visits and careers fairs. The level of involvement of Jobcentre Plus/LEP/EAN in organising events varied with some just making initial contacts between employers and schools, and others developing content for and facilitating the organisation of events.
- **Delivering direct support for students:** Some forms of support involved Jobcentre Plus staff themselves delivering direct work with students, including skills workshops and CV development sessions.
- **Delivering broader support:** In a few instances schools also sought 'softer touch' interventions that were less intensive and required less time from employers or Jobcentre Plus staff. These included Jobcentre Plus/employer presence at assemblies, or provision of resources in schools.

The box below provides an illustration of the types of support delivered across these three broad categories.

Box 5.1 Examples of support delivered through the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme:

- **Facilitating work experience placements** – Jobcentre Plus staff used their established employer networks to facilitate student placements with employers in specific industries of interest. In District B, this included facilitating a structured work experience within the school for students who couldn't take up placements for various reasons; such as, SEN, parents not consenting for cultural reasons, and/or concerns regarding safeguarding from parents. Jobcentre Plus brought in employers and Jobcentre Plus staff into school to deliver opportunities as close to a work experience as possible.
- **Employer visits to schools** – employers visiting schools to lead sessions about skills and interviewing and career choices. In some schools this included work-based activities to demonstrate the skills and qualifications required, such as team building and problem solving.
- **Taster days in industry** – opportunities to visit and observe employers or sector specific training; for example, visiting a local college's construction and motor vehicle department.
- **Apprenticeship advice and guidance** – workshops and sessions looking at apprenticeship pathways, with information and presentations from local providers.
- **Skills workshops** – direct advice from Jobcentre Plus staff to small groups of students about specific skills, such as CV development, interviewing, how to present your personal brand, and key employability skills (e.g. team building, self-esteem).
- **Local labour market information** – discussions with staff and pupils about the breadth of local labour market opportunities, highlighting key local sectors and sectors with skills shortages within the local area. This included information about the different pathways into careers and range of environments in which young people could work in.
- **Careers fairs** – events with multiple employers attending to answer questions about their industries for students.
- **Assemblies** – delivering a presentation about skills/opportunities to a wider school assembly.
- **Resource development** – creating materials that can be used and kept by schools as careers guidance resources.
- **Financial management** – advice on budgeting and how to financially manage a salary.

6 Experiences of programme delivery

Stakeholders' experiences of the programme were generally positive. Schools and other partners particularly valued the tailored and flexible offer, combined with Jobcentre Plus's unique skills, experiences and employer networks. Suggestions for improving the programme focused on ensuring clarity about the offer upfront with stakeholders and providing further tailoring and follow-up for students.

6.1 Jobcentre Plus Advisers' experiences

Overall, Jobcentre Plus advisers felt that the programme had been well received by both schools and employers and that schools had benefited from the added value of receiving additional free resource and new opportunities for careers education activities. Schools had also reported positive feedback to Jobcentre Plus advisers regarding the initial views of pupils and parents on the activities delivered and increased engagement from the pupils within classes regarding career paths and interest in specific industries.

Jobcentre Plus advisers identified a range of facilitators to delivering quality experiences and activities to pupils and schools. These included: ensuring activities with students were engaging and tailored to their needs; school buy-in and flexibility; strong links with employers; and, engaging wider school staff and parents.

Engaging and tailored activities: It was important that Jobcentre Plus staff facilitated creative and interactive activities for students. This was helped by talking to schools about the best methods for engagement and delivery. Selecting an appropriate approach was particularly important when targeting specific groups of students; for example, ensuring an activity had a practical element for lower level learners and/or pupils with special educational needs, so they could observe and try first-hand the core skills required. In one school, the Jobcentre Plus adviser suggested the school put on a play about employability rather than a typical careers fair in order to better engage students and parents.

Information provided to schools also needed to be relatable to students and placed within the context of what it would be like for the young person to be employed in that industry. Jobcentre Plus advisers encouraged employers to draw on practical examples, host visits and use the experiences of new staff to their industry; for example, presentations by recent apprentices.

'You know, we said this is what we want, this is the kind of children that we are kind of aiming at, and they came up with different suggestions of what they could offer, so it was perfect.'

(Participating School Lead, District D)

School buy-in and flexibility: The success of the activities delivered was dependent on the buy-in and involvement of school staff in facilitating arrangements. The practical delivery of activities required considerable flexibility and commitment from schools to work around existing planning and timetables to organise activities in line with the availability of students and staff.

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'They have embraced what we've had to offer and they have turned on a sixpence to get things done because it's a very short turnaround ... And that requires a whole bunch of work on behalf of the school. Parental consent, media consent, making sure that the transport is arranged, that the children have their bus tickets, that they know where they're going ... Because these things are planned months in advance.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District C)

Strong links with employers: The programme's ability to involve employers was also reliant on strong links with employers available through the existing business networks of Jobcentre Plus and their partners. These links enabled Jobcentre Plus/LEP/EAN to identify employers potentially receptive to school engagement opportunities. Delivery was also facilitated by engaging a broad range of employers to provide multiple activities and workshops within schools. However, there were some concerns that in the future there would be limited time and resource within existing Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools teams to pursue contact with new employers if the programme expanded.

'It's something that I'm hoping to maybe cover, if I have any time, because there's a lot of other jobs already building up, during the summer, is contacting some of the old employers that I know and making them aware of what I'm doing and seeing if we can build up the employers that we've got.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District D)

Engaging school staff and parents: Some districts also stressed the importance of including parents and wider school staff within activities because of their potential influence and guidance on pupils' further education and career choices.

'But we also were aware that parents are possibly going to be making that final decision, along with the child. So we, that's why we've done now, we've done two presentations to parents.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District D)

Overall, Jobcentre Plus staff perceived limited barriers to delivering activities within schools. Some advisers discussed challenges in tailoring opportunities to the schools' agenda and identified that this was dependent on access to both careers leads and schools' senior leadership teams to fully understand the gaps within the provision and to get a clear understanding of school expectations and need.

'I would say our biggest problem is tying down that you're speaking to the right people in the school and that the schools, so you know you talk to the careers officer and they don't communicate back up the line to the senior leadership team, or they don't communicate to you.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District C)

In a few instances, Jobcentre Plus staff felt that one challenge for them was engaging effectively with a student audience. These staff were conscious that students were younger than the people that they normally work with, and were sometimes uncertain whether the tone or content of their materials would translate for the younger audience. Additionally, in several districts Jobcentre Plus advisers felt they would benefit from more training in delivering activities to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or complex needs so they could tailor their approach accordingly.

Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme – Pathfinder evaluation

'You don't want it to be too childish. You don't want it to be patronising, and you want to be capturing them at the right level. And some of these children we're going out to, the alternative learning schools, you know ... it is very different.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District D)

Jobcentre Plus advisers also reported that in some instances they needed to manage school expectations of what the programme could deliver. Because of the flexible nature of the offer, some schools were seen to have unrealistic expectations of what could be included, for example, one school expected that the programme could deliver a work experience programme for an entire school year.

'There were some schools going to try and say, 'oh, can you just do all our work experience?' Which we wouldn't. That would have to be a no because you couldn't specifically do every school's entire work experience programme, and the schools are supposed to do that themselves.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District A)

Looking to the future, there was also a concern regarding how to sustain delivery if the number of schools involved increased. Some Jobcentre Plus advisers felt they were reaching full capacity for their team and that they wouldn't be able to deliver the same kind of quality programme options if more schools engaged without increased Jobcentre Plus staff resource to support delivery.

'I think the steer is that we can manage up to about 12 schools. I think any more than that, I think it's probably, you know, per individual, that is. I think any more than that, you're just stretched too thin.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District B)

Jobcentre Plus advisers also suggested that future provision should target younger pupils (Year 7 and Year 8) before GCSE subject options were selected in Year 9, to ensure subject choice was informed by early careers advice and information.

6.2 Schools' experiences

Those schools who had received support from Jobcentre Plus widely reported this experience to have been a positive one. The Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme was widely perceived to have filled gaps in schools' provision in a way that added value. This value was directly related to the programmes' flexible and tailored approach, access to Jobcentre Plus's employer networks and local labour market knowledge, as well as Jobcentre Plus' credibility as a familiar external organisation. Each of these areas is explored in more detail below.

Flexibility of Jobcentre Plus approach: Employers, Jobcentre Plus advisers and school careers leads primarily reported that the support delivered by Jobcentre Plus was tailored effectively to their needs. Jobcentre Plus staff were seen to have been responsive to the requests of schools, and to have provided support in line with this.

The one exception to this was in District B, where in one instance Jobcentre Plus staff were only able to arrange a workplace visit in one area of industry which the school felt was less relevant to their students' needs and interests. It was felt that in this case more flexibility was required to tailor the offer to the needs of the school.

Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme – Pathfinder evaluation

The organisational success of delivering the activities was facilitated by good preparation by Jobcentre Plus staff; for example, Jobcentre Plus advisers meeting with school staff and pupils before the main activities took place to understand the facilities available and students' specific needs.

'They were great. They were obviously on time; they were well resourced; they were well rehearsed; they were engaging; they were, you know, empathetic to the kids' needs.'

(Participating School Lead, District D)

Jobcentre Plus's employer networks: Schools welcomed the opportunity to be connected with employers who were able to provide work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, as well as conduct school visits or receive students for daytrips. Most schools did not have the time or access to business networks to make contacts with outside employers. Access to practical, hands-on experiences with potential employers was particularly valued and motivating for students interested in those sectors. As outlined in Section 4.2, this was one of the key factors driving demand for the programme – and schools typically felt that this promise had been delivered on. The only exception was in District E, where the Jobcentre Plus Adviser's employer links were not fully established.

'They have to have the hands on experience, you have to have that real experience. You can't just be told this is what the workplace is like.'

(Participating School Lead, District B)

Jobcentre Plus's local labour market knowledge: Schools' expectations that Jobcentre Plus would have good knowledge of the local labour market (one of the key drivers of demand for the programme) were felt to be borne out through the support that was delivered. Where Jobcentre Plus staff had been personally involved in the support delivered to schools, their knowledge of local companies and the skills they were looking for were seen to be valuable. Schools particularly appreciated Jobcentre Plus advisers' specialist knowledge for pupils who were looking at employment and apprenticeship opportunities and required current and specialist knowledge on local job-search and benefits enquiries. An example was the impact on Family Credit entitlement if a young person takes up an apprenticeship.

'As a member of staff at a school we have to have so many hats on, and we are not experienced in everything, you know, but it is nice to have people that come in that have got experience of the labour market, training and stuff like that to support us, it really is.'

(Participating School Lead, District D)

Jobcentre Plus's credibility as a familiar external organisation: School careers leads noted that students were enthusiastic about the opportunity to receive an activity or lesson delivered by an external provider. Jobcentre Plus's reputation as an organisation closely involved with helping those seeking employment was also felt to lend credibility to the information being shared.

'[Students] have been saying they have really enjoyed [the support] and it's opened their eyes to what they can do when they leave school – coming from an outside point of view and telling them about work and the people that [Jobcentre Plus advisers] see every day at the Job Centre.'

(Participating School Lead, District C)

Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme – Pathfinder evaluation

Despite an overall perception among schools that pupils had engaged with programme activities and received a greater understanding of what was involved in certain careers, there were some areas for improvement identified. There was demand for greater tailoring of the content of activities by year group and/or student needs – for example, specific year group presentations to Year 7s and Year 8s on the broad variety of career options.

Some schools felt that Jobcentre Plus advisers could have provided more support on the practicalities of arranging employer engagement and wanted more advice and guidance about how to prepare staff and suggested ideas of content and structure. This arose from the variable extent to which Jobcentre Plus staff were directly involved in providing activities: in some districts they only facilitated initial contact and relationships with employers, while in others they led the full organisation and delivery of events and activities to students.

‘So if there’s a bit of flexibility it would be good. It’s more of a supportive, liaison role that we need.’

(Participating School Lead, District B)

There was demand for further support in facilitating students’ reflection and next steps after an event was delivered. Some schools who were at the early stage of engagement had queries about how arrangements with employer would work; for example, safeguarding arrangements and health and safety.

There were also challenges with employers’ availability and commitment for events. It was felt that some employers did not always have the flexibility to provide support in school hours. In District C, one school had experienced employer non-attendance at events, leaving children disappointed and missing out on learning about industries they were interested in.

‘When you’ve psyched children up for something like an apprenticeship fair and there are a lot of children who are interested in those sorts of things, it’s getting the breadth and making employees come forward, and actually committing to working with schools.’

(Participating School Lead, District C)

Some schools suggested that one of the few downsides to the programme’s current implementation was a degree of uncertainty around the exact nature of the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools ‘offer’. Although schools valued and welcomed Jobcentre Plus’s flexibility, some felt that it would be useful to have a clear understanding of what the potential support on offer was, in order to quickly determine how relevant it would be for them and their school. Some schools suggested providing eligible schools with a ‘menu’ of possible support options.

‘That will be almost like a menu of different things. We can provide you with this as a menu. And then our school pick and choose what they want and different schools pick and choose what they want, potentially. That will be- That will be quite a nice thing to have. And it will be like a range of different things.’

(Participating School Lead, District D)

Schools also expressed some concerns about the available resource within Jobcentre Plus. There were concerns that as the programme became better known and more popular there would be an increasingly limited amount of support time available for schools who wished to participate in future.

6.3 LEP/EAN's experiences

In most districts, Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)/Enterprise Advisor Network (EAN) staff did not have a direct role in delivery of the programme and had limited awareness of how delivery had been received in detail. Only in District B had Enterprise Coordinators attended and taken part in the delivery of support activities. In other districts, LEP/EAN staff's perceptions drew on their involvement as observers of programme delivery, or feedback received directly from schools regarding the programme.

Overall, LEP/EAN staff typically felt that the programme had been delivered effectively. Feedback provided to the local LEP/EAN by schools often made reference to student experiences of the programme, and the contributions of Jobcentre Plus staff in sharing their knowledge of the local labour market, facilitating employer engagement and providing opportunities for pupils to understand employer's real life experiences of specific industries.

'[Jobcentre Plus] will have an awareness of the local labour market and the dynamism of the local labour market and what employers are looking for, what skill sets employers are looking for and hopefully would be able to encourage those people and look at the skills that they have to match for the needs of the local labour market ... I think that's the new, that's the sort of USP of this programme.'

(EAN Coordinator, District A)

6.4 Employers' experiences

Employers welcomed the opportunity to engage with schools via Jobcentre Plus and most reported the experience to be positive. Employers perceived the programme as an opportunity to introduce their industries and specific companies to a wider audience. Many employers felt that the programme represented a way of 'giving back' to the local community and engaging in a positive way with young people in the local area. Employers also perceived practical benefits in meeting potential future apprentices or employees. Employers discussed how the programme met broader aims of their organisation to be involved in corporate and social responsibility activities.

'It's kind of challenged their perceptions about what it means to work in certain industries. I think they get an idea ... [that] there are a lot of careers ... that aren't immediately apparent.'

(Employer, District C)

Some of the employers involved in the programme already had extensive experience of offering support to schools and young people, while others had not done so previously. Those with previous experience of undertaking engagement activities noted the importance of ensuring content was interesting and relevant to meet the needs of pupils.

'When we polled them again at the end, just show of hands, who were thinking about [apprenticeships] it more than doubled in all the classes. So, that was a good success.'

(Jobcentre Plus Adviser, District A)

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Some employers felt engagement of pupils was higher when sessions were with smaller groups because young people felt more able to ask questions directly to employers about their career journeys and experiences of the industry they worked in. One employer highlighted the value of working with Jobcentre Plus and schools to add practical elements to employer presentations. This allowed pupils to discuss and reflect on important skills (for example, communication and team building) required in that industry. Employers who offered work experience placements saw this as a good opportunity to identify potential apprentices or recruits; or just to help impart skills to students.

'They were good kids ... They asked questions et cetera. They were keen. So yes, yes. It was positive, what we got back.'

(Employer, District B)

Employer activities were facilitated by good communication in advance and organisation within schools, for example, agreeing the logistical arrangements for the activities such as technical equipment (e.g. laptop and projector). Employers also perceived that pupil engagement was enhanced by providing information about that activity prior to the sessions to manage both pupil expectations and increase interest.

Although experiences were largely positive there were elements of employers' involvement which were identified as having room for improvement. Some businesses were involved in one-off engagement activities and wanted an ongoing relationship with schools and felt there was added value to continuing the relationship after their support had provided. For example, arranging taster visits and work experience opportunities after an initial presentation in school to further enhance exposure to how that career works in practice.

'Getting [students] to a place of work rather than [delivering sessions in] the schools would be a good way of ... following it up – so they could actually see people in action and the careers that are linked to it.'

(Employer, District C)

Although visits to employer workplaces were largely felt to be positive experiences, they were also seen to be time intensive – requiring the involvement of multiple members of staff for employers. One employer suggested that they might reduce the time of the visit for future events and have a more structured Q&A session.

'Employers sometimes need to put their money where their mouth is because if they are really keen on helping schools, they need to come in and work with schools in the way that the schools can make it work, because you can't just pull children off timetable for hours at a time, because it would impact on their progress.'

(School Lead, District C)

7 Conclusions and key learnings for national rollout

Overall, it is clear that the Support for Schools programme has been well-received by schools and other stakeholders. Once they became aware and properly understand the offer, there is high demand from schools, who value the flexible and tailored approach of the programme, as well as the skills, experience and employer networks provided by Jobcentre Plus. Opportunities to learn from and improve the programme centre on ensuring clarity about the offer to stakeholders, and offering further tailoring of support and follow-up for students.

7.1 Overview against research objectives

Demand for Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools and the best use of resources to meet this demand: Where schools are made aware of the programme, demand for support is generally high. Given the constraints of school timetables, current experiences of Jobcentre Plus staff suggest that best use of resource is to deliver a higher number of interventions to a wider range of schools, rather than attempt to deliver ‘in-depth’ support to a limited number of schools.

Nature and scope of support wanted by schools: Schools involved in the programme so far have expressed interest in a wide range of activities, and have generally been open to the suggestions made by Jobcentre Plus staff in their district, rather than having a particular ‘vision’ for what they would like Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools to deliver. Some of the most common forms of support offered have involved: support in arranging work experience placements; soft skills training sessions; and advice and guidance around apprenticeships.

Improving the service level of support delivered to schools: Schools involved in the programme have generally been satisfied with the support that they have received from Jobcentre Plus – many had only recently become aware of the programme and were grateful for the offer of any free support. In a few instances, schools suggested that support could be tailored even more specifically to the interests of their students.

Best practice for effective delivery: Models of implementation varied widely between districts. While it is too early to speculate on the impact of these models on the effectiveness of delivery, initial discussions with Jobcentre Plus staff suggest that a collaborative approach to engaging with schools (rather than relying solely on Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)/ Enterprise Advisor Network (EAN)) resulted in faster uptake and clearer understanding of the programme among schools.

Beyond the delivery model, Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN staff agreed about the importance of clarity about the remit of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools, to ensure that this does not overlap with support provided by other organisations. Districts where Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN staff met in person to introduce each other and discuss the scope of the Jobcentre Plus programme generally felt that co-operation was stronger than in areas where such a meeting had not taken place, or had been delayed.

Tailoring of support was also a critical factor in perceived satisfaction with the programme. Schools were particularly enthusiastic about any elements of the programme/support received that they felt had been directly tailored to their needs, and where a good personal relationship had been established with the Jobcentre Plus Adviser.

Finally, Jobcentre Plus staff were keen for the opportunity to discuss and share best practice examples with colleagues to learn and improve the support provided to schools.

7.2 Learnings for set-up and communication

A number of potential learnings for the set-up and communication of the programme emerged from the pathfinder case studies:

- **Establish early communication and cooperation with LEP/EAN and other local partners:** Communication at an early stage ensures there is clarity about the roles and remits of each organisation, to facilitate the use of networks and connections for mutual benefit.
- **Utilise face-to-face communication with schools:** In the absence of face-to-face communication about the programme, it took schools some time to fully understand the purpose and possibilities of what was on offer. By making a direct approach, ideally face-to-face, it is possible to give clarity about how the relationship can develop most effectively.
- **Need for standard introduction to the programme:** Some schools disengaged because they did not fully understand the programme – so some standardised materials that introduce the programme would be a helpful resource for Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools. This includes being clear about the programme aims and what support Jobcentre Plus will be able to provide.
- **Balance engagement activity with available resource:** Given that in most districts schools were enthusiastic about the programme and demand was strong once the programme had been fully introduced and explained, there is a need to give consideration to how resource is deployed in order to meet the programme's objectives, and to share learnings across Districts about how resource can be best prioritised. For example, in District D, approaching a wide number of schools in the first instance resulted in a higher number of requests for support than it was feasible to respond to.
- **Additional training for Jobcentre Plus advisers:** Some Jobcentre Plus advisers were keen for additional support and training, largely relating to working with young people. In particular, those working with special schools and pupil referral units wanted guidance on how best to work with students in these settings.

7.3 Learnings for interventions and implementation

Specific learnings for implementing and learning from the programme also emerged from the pathfinder case studies – specifically, providing a tailored offer, and sharing learnings and resources across districts.

- **Tailor support to school needs:** Participating schools across most districts responded very positively where they perceived the support on offer from Jobcentre Plus to have been tailored to their needs.

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- **Share learnings across districts:** Jobcentre Plus advisers were enthusiastic about the possibility of sharing learnings with other districts that were implementing the programme. Some suggested creating a 'buddying' programme that would match up areas with similar demographic profiles, or similar approaches to the implantation of the programme.
- **Make use of existing careers guidance resources:** Some Jobcentre Plus and LEP/EAN staff suggested that it would be useful for the programme to draw on existing materials and guidance that have been developed by other Jobcentre Plus staff, or by independent careers advice companies. Some suggested it might be possible for quality resources to be pooled centrally for all Jobcentre Plus advisers to access.

Appendix A

Discussion guides used during the fieldwork

A.1 Discussion guide – employers

DWP – Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools Evaluation Topic Guide – EMPLOYERS – v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

The pathfinder evaluation needs to assess the demand for and value of Jobcentre Plus support to schools – with an emphasis on evaluating the process of implementing the programme so far, to help ensure that lessons learned in the pathfinder authorities support the design, delivery and implementation of the national roll-out.

To achieve the aims for this evaluation the research will need to:

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

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of TNS BMRB, an independent research agency.
- Purpose of the scoping stage.
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording.

Introduction (2 minutes)

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

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

-Start recording-

Background and context (2 mins)

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

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

Employers involvement in careers education for schools (15 mins)

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

- **Historic involvement of their organisation with career education in schools:**
 - Any previous role for their organisation in relation to careers education:
 - ~ Providing work experience placements.
 - ~ Working with Jobcentre Plus to provide careers education.
 - ~ Working with schools to provide careers education.
 - ~ Any other involvement in providing careers education.
- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**
 - Their spontaneous understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus:
 - ~ Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students.
 - ~ Providing advice on traineeships and apprenticeships.

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- ~ Facilitating work experience placements.
- ~ Provide advice on local labour market.
- ~ Improve students 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
- **Nature of their existing/historical relationship with Jobcentre Plus:**
 - How their organisation originally became engaged with Jobcentre Plus:
 - ~ Why this happened?
 - ~ Which area(s) of Jobcentre Plus they deal with?
 - ~ -What was provided as a result (e.g. any training provision)?
 - Organisation's ongoing involvement with Jobcentre Plus.
- **Getting in contact with Jobcentre Plus:**
 - How they found out about Jobcentre Plus SfS?
 - How their organisation engaged with Jobcentre Plus staff:
 - ~ Meetings?
 - ~ Emails?
 - ~ Calls?
 - Who drove these connections/made the initial approach:
 - ~ Jobcentre Plus staff?
 - ~ Staff from their organisation?
 - Why Jobcentre Plus approached their organisation:
 - ~ Their perception of Jobcentre Plus's rationale for approaching them?
 - How (if at all) pre-existing connections with Jobcentre Plus shaped implementation?
- **Demand for/interest in Jobcentre Plus SfS:**
 - How much demand from schools for employer support through Jobcentre Plus SfS there is:
 - ~ Types of support demanded?
 - ~ Where support demanded?
 - ~ How many schools?
 - ~ Different types of schools?
 - Factors driving this demand/lack of demand?
 - How interested their organisation is in working with Jobcentre Plus SfS:
 - ~ Reasons for wanting to provide support?

Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme – Pathfinder evaluation

- ~ Demand from schools for organisation's support (more widely than Jobcentre Plus SfS)?
- **Support options discussed:**
 - What support options they discussed providing with Jobcentre Plus:
 - ~ Support for staff?
 - ~ Support for students?
 - ~ Support for specific groups?
 - Rationale for discussing these support options?
 - Which support options felt to be most appropriate for different audiences?

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

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

- **Activities that have been undertaken as part of the programme:**
 - What are the range of activities they have undertaken (for each of these, need to understand which audiences have been engaged: staff/students/particular year groups/particular types of schools/particular types of students):
 - ~ Engaging directly with students in schools.
 - ~ Work experience opportunities.
 - ~ In-school presentation, advice sessions.
 - ~ Other.
 - Who has participated in the activities:
 - ~ Staff?
 - ~ Students?
 - ~ Particular groups of students (e.g. low attainment, less engaged)?
 - ~ Involvement of CEC/LEP/other partners?
 - Why these activities were undertaken:
 - ~ Who proposed them/chose them?
 - How these activities were delivered:
 - ~ Group sessions, one to ones etc?
 - ~ Any challenges to delivery?
 - ~ Anything that's gone particularly well, not well?
 - ~ Involvement of CEC/LEP/other local partners?

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- Overall effect of programme on their organisation's engagement with schools?
- How far these activities required Jobcentre Plus involvement:
 - ~ Need for Jobcentre Plus support to gain access to schools?
 - ~ Need for Jobcentre Plus suggestions about potential activities?
- **Perception of staff and students' experiences:**
 - How students responded to interventions delivered:
 - ~ Any particularly successful aspects of the programme?
 - ~ Any disappointments/things that did not meet expectations?
 - ~ Benefits/impacts on students?

Concluding the interview (3 minutes)

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

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

A.2 Discussion guide – Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)/Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

DWP – Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools Evaluation Topic Guide – CEC/LEP – v4

Overview of research aims and objectives:

The Pathfinder Evaluation needs to assess the demand for and value of Jobcentre Plus support to schools – with an emphasis on evaluating the process of implementing the programme so far, in order to help ensure that lessons learned in the pathfinder authorities support the design, delivery and implementation of the national roll-out.

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

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

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of TNS BMRB, an independent research agency.
- Purpose of the scoping stage.
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording.

Introduction (2 minutes)

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

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

-Start recording-

Background and context (3 mins)

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

- **Day-to-day activities:** participant's roles and responsibilities (capture current role and any secondary roles, e.g. co-ordinator or adviser), previous roles.
- **Operation of CEC Enterprise Network:**
 - How many co-ordinators and advisers?
 - Size of region?
 - What coverage they have across the region?
- **Professional background:** time in current role; previous roles.
- **Involvement in the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (SfS) programme:** their connection to the programme; the extent of their involvement.

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

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

- **Careers advice in their district:**
 - Different sources of careers advice in their district.

Which agencies/teams 'lead' on careers advice?

- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**
 - Their spontaneous understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus:
 - ~ Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students.
 - ~ Providing advice on traineeships and apprenticeships.

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- ~ Facilitating work experience placements.
- ~ Provide advice on local labour market.
- ~ Improve students 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
- **How Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools sits within CEC delivery model/local careers education landscape:**
 - What Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools offers that is new.
 - How Jobcentre Plus SfS sits alongside existing careers advice provision.

Collaborating with Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools (10 mins)

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

- **Getting in contact with Jobcentre Plus:**
 - Who drove connections between Jobcentre Plus and CEC/made the initial approach:
 - ~ Jobcentre Plus staff?
 - ~ CEC staff?
 - ~ Other local bodies??
 - What both parties wanted/expected from each other:
 - ~ Nature of initial interest from both parties?
 - How (if at all) the current position/operation of Enterprise Network affected engagement/involvement with Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:
 - ~ How Jobcentre Plus has linked into existing CEC activities/procedures?
- **Engagement with Jobcentre Plus SfS:**
 - How much interest in engaging with Jobcentre Plus SfS there was when the programme began in their district:
 - ~ From CEC/LEP?
 - ~ From schools?
 - ~ From employers?
 - What specific factors/needs have driven engagement with Jobcentre Plus SfS in their area:
 - ~ Need for labour market advice?
 - ~ Need for work experience brokering?

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

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

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

- **Activities that CEC/LEP have been involved in as part of the programme:**
 - What involvement (if any) they've had in activities undertaken by Jobcentre Plus:
 - ~ Jobcentre Plus providing advice on routes into traineeships and apprenticeships?
 - ~ Jobcentre Plus sourcing and advising on work experience opportunities?
 - ~ Jobcentre Plus providing advice on the local labour market?
 - ~ Jobcentre Plus providing 'soft skills' training/guidance?
 - ~ Jobcentre Plus in-school presentation?
 - ~ Other?
 - How these Jobcentre Plus SfS were delivered:

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- ~ Group sessions, one to ones etc?
- ~ Any challenges to delivery?
- ~ Anything that's gone particularly well, not well?
- **Perceptions of schools/students reception of Jobcentre Plus SfS:**
 - (If they have any knowledge of this) How schools/students have responded to interventions delivered?
 - Their views on whether the children involved in activities have been 'the right ones' (i.e. those at greatest risk of becoming NEET)?
- **How effectively Jobcentre Plus SfS has worked alongside CEC/LEP:**
 - How far Jobcentre Plus SfS has fitted into the 'gaps' identified prior to programme implementation.
 - Their perceptions of how effective collaboration has been between Jobcentre Plus and CEC:
 - ~ What facilitated/prevented cooperation between CEC and Jobcentre Plus?
 - Any challenges/areas for improvement?
 - Anything that has worked particularly well?
 - Overall effect of engaging with programme on CEC?

Concluding the interview (5 minutes)

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

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

A.3 Discussion Guide – Jobcentre Plus Adviser

DWP – Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools Evaluation

Jobcentre Plus Adviser Topic Guide v4

Overview of research aims and objectives:

The Pathfinder Evaluation needs to assess the demand for and value of Jobcentre Plus support to schools – with an emphasis on evaluating the process of implementing the programme so far, in order to help ensure that lessons learned in the pathfinder authorities support the design, delivery and implementation of the national roll-out.

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

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

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of TNS BMRB, an independent research agency.
- Purpose of the scoping stage.
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording.

Introduction (1 minute)

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

- **Thanks and introduction:** Introduce yourself and TNS BMRB.

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

-Start recording-

Background and context (2 mins)

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

- **Day-to-day activities:** participant's roles and responsibilities (capture current role and any secondary roles), previous roles.
- **Professional background:** time in current role; previous roles.
- **Involvement in the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme:** their connection to the programme; the extent of their involvement.
- **Jobcentre Plus's previous experience of engaging with/supporting schools in their district (if any):**
 - Any previous engagements between Jobcentre Plus and schools?

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

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

- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**
 - Their spontaneous understanding of Jobcentre Plus SfS.
 - Their understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus SfS programme.
 - Range of support they are offering in their district (researcher note: only probe if needed – respond to participants' spontaneous explanation).
 - ~ Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students.
 - ~ Providing advice on traineeships and apprenticeships.
 - ~ Facilitating work experience placements.
 - ~ Provide advice on local labour market.
 - ~ Improve students 'soft skills' such as teamworking etc.
 - Any particular activities they have focused on providing in their district.
 - Has pre-programme activity/engagement influenced types of activities focused on?
- **Resource for Jobcentre Plus SfS in their district:**

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- Number of advisers involved in the programme in their district?
- How workload is split among staff (i.e. are all staff FTE, or are some part time)?
- Where advisers are based?
- How much of the district (in geographical terms) they are able to service:
 - ~ District wide?
 - ~ Part coverage?
- **Training and support for Jobcentre Plus SfS staff:**
 - Line management structures for Jobcentre Plus SfS staff in their district.
 - Provision of training to staff in order to deliver Jobcentre Plus SfS:
 - ~ What this training involved?
 - ~ Why this training was required?
 - ~ Key aspects of the programme that required additional training?

Engaging with schools (15 mins)

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

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

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• Demand for/interest in Jobcentre Plus SfS:

- How much demand for/interest in Jobcentre Plus support :
 - ~ From schools?
 - ~ From CEC/LEP?
- What specific factors/needs have driven demand by schools for Jobcentre Plus ScS in their area (for each of these, need to understand which needs apply for which audiences: staff/students (any types? e.g. lower sets)/particular year groups/particular types of schools)?
- Need for labour market advice?
- Need for work experience brokering?
- Need for advice re: traineeships and apprenticeships?
- Other, such as advice on CV, interview techniques, etc?
- Need for certain groups (students/staff):
 - ~ Disengagement/disinterest from schools experienced?
- What factors have driven disengagement/disinterest:
 - ~ Any perceived differences between those schools who are interested in engaging with Jobcentre Plus and those who are not?

• Support options discussed with schools:

- What specific types of support schools wanted to receive from Jobcentre Plus:
 - ~ Support for staff?
 - ~ Support for students?
 - ~ Support for specific groups?
- How this aligned with Jobcentre Plus's expectations/ability to provide support?
- Any demands that it was not possible to meet?
- How conversations/connections with schools informed the implementation of activities?

How much tailoring has been needed across different schools when delivering interventions?

• Implications of demand and resourcing:

- Ability of Jobcentre Plus resource to meet demand from schools/others?
- How demand has affected activities delivered?
- How resource has been deployed/prioritised in order to meet demand?
- Where demand has not been met, the reasons for this:
 - ~ Lack of resource.
 - ~ Geographical limitations (e.g. only have staff coverage in certain areas).

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~ Staff capability.

Working with partners (15 mins)

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

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

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

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

- **Activities that have been undertaken as part of the programme:**
 - What are the range of activities they have undertaken (for each of these, need to understand which audiences have been engaged: staff/students/particular year groups/particular types of schools/particular types of students):
 - ~ Providing advice on routes into traineeships and apprenticeships?
 - ~ Sourcing and advising on work experience opportunities?
 - ~ Providing advice on the local labour market?
 - ~ Providing 'soft skills' training/guidance?

Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme – Pathfinder evaluation

- ~ In-school presentation, advice sessions?
- ~ Other?
- Why these activities were undertaken:
 - ~ Who proposed them/chose them?
- How these activities were delivered:
 - ~ Group sessions, one to ones etc?
 - ~ Any challenges to delivery?
 - ~ How well did you feel prepared/fully trained?
 - ~ Any training needs for staff that emerged?
 - ~ Anything that's gone particularly well, not well?
- **Working with schools/students:**
 - How schools/students responded to interventions delivered. Successes?
 - Any particular challenges to working with schools/students?

Concluding the interview (2 minutes)

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

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

A.4 Discussion guide – participating school leads

DWP – Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools Evaluation

Topic Guide – PARTICIPATING SCHOOL LEAD – v1

Overview of research aims and objectives:

The Pathfinder Evaluation needs to assess the demand for and value of Jobcentre Plus support to schools – with an emphasis on evaluating the process of implementing the programme so far, in order to help ensure that lessons learned in the pathfinder authorities support the design, delivery and implementation of the national roll-out.

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

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

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of TNS BMRB, an independent research agency.
- Purpose of the scoping stage.
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording.

Introduction (2 minutes)

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

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

-Start recording-

Background and context (3 mins)

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

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

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

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

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

Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme – Pathfinder evaluation

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

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

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

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

Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme – Pathfinder evaluation

• Demand for/interest in Jobcentre Plus SfS:

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

• Support options discussed:

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

• Their expectations of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:

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

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

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

Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme – Pathfinder evaluation

• **Jobcentre Plus support delivered:**

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

• **Contacts with employers:**

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

Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme – Pathfinder evaluation

- **Interviewee/staff experiences:**

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

- **Perception of students’ experiences:**

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

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

- What (if any) outcomes/benefits have been observed so far?
- Probe for specific examples of how these outcomes/benefits have come about?
 - ~ (and/or examples of where challenges/barriers have prevented outcomes)?
- Overall effect of engaging with programme on their school and students?

Concluding the interview (5 minutes)

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

- **Expectations of continued engagement with Jobcentre Plus:**

- Are they likely to continue receiving further support from Jobcentre Plus?
- Do they have existing plans for further engagement with Jobcentre Plus?
- Any expectations of how support from Jobcentre Plus is likely to change/evolve?

- **Key lessons learned** in relation to the implementation of DWP SfS within their school.

- **Suggestions for learning** for Jobcentre Plus that could apply in their school or other schools.

- **Any changes in perceptions of Jobcentre Plus?**

- **Any further comments or reflections?**

- **Thanks, and final housekeeping** (reminder of confidentiality and anonymity).

A.5 Discussion guide – non-participating schools

DWP – Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools Evaluation Topic Guide –Non-Participating Schools– v3

Overview of research aims and objectives:

The pathfinder evaluation needs to assess the demand for and value of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools – with an emphasis on evaluating the process of implementing the programme so far, in order to help ensure that lessons learned in the pathfinder authorities support the design, delivery and implementation of the national roll-out.

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

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

Protocol:

- About the research: Role of TNS BMRB, an independent research agency.
- Purpose of the scoping stage.
- Confidentiality and anonymity: No individuals will be identified to DWP in reporting, and no comments from interview discussion will be shared within the District or to other interviewees.
- Recording.

Introduction (2 minutes)

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

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

-Start recording-

Background and context (3 mins)

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

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

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

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

- **Careers education in their district:**
 - Different sources of careers education in their district.
 - Which agencies are used to provide careers education in the school?
 - Any ethos/principles guiding the school's careers education policies?
 - Overall summary of the 'need' for careers advice in their school.
 - Any unmet need for specific types of careers education.?
- **Their perceptions and understanding of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools:**
 - Their spontaneous understanding of Jobcentre Plus SfS.

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- Key elements of Jobcentre Plus SfS – ‘what it is’.
- Their understanding of objectives of Jobcentre Plus – ‘what it is trying to do’
(Researcher Note: probe only as necessary – keep in mind section timing):
 - ~ Assist schools in delivering careers advice to students.
 - ~ Providing advice on traineeships and apprenticeships.
 - ~ Facilitating work experience placements.
 - ~ Provide advice on local labour market.
 - ~ Improve students ‘soft skills’ such as teamworking etc.
 - ~ Enhance students’ understanding of available options.
 - ~ Facilitate transition from school to work, training or further study.
- **Existing career support context:**
 - Any previous role for Jobcentre Plus in engaging with/supporting their school?

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

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

- **Getting in contact with Jobcentre Plus:**
 - How they found out about Jobcentre Plus SfS?
 - How their school communicated with Jobcentre Plus staff:
 - ~ Meetings?
 - ~ Emails?
 - ~ Calls?
 - Who drove these connections/made the initial approach:
 - ~ Jobcentre Plus staff?
 - ~ School staff?
 - ~ CEC?
 - ~ Other local partners?
- **Demand for/interest in Jobcentre Plus SfS:**
 - How much demand for/interest in Jobcentre Plus careers advice/support there was in their school when they first became aware of the programme?
 - What careers education support they want/need at their school:
 - ~ Support for staff?
 - ~ Support for students?
 - ~ Support for specific groups?

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- What support they were offered by Jobcentre Plus?
- How far Jobcentre Plus support met (or failed to meet) existing careers support needs:
 - ~ Responses to Jobcentre Plus SfS offers (prompts below); why do/don't these resonate?
 - ~ Labour market advice?
 - ~ Work experience facilitation?
 - ~ Advice re: traineeships and apprenticeships?
- Factors driving disinterest in the programme:
 - ~ Lack of time/capacity to include Jobcentre Plus into school activities.
 - ~ Lack of awareness of full range of Jobcentre Plus offer.
 - ~ Overlap with existing careers advice provision/similar support sourced elsewhere.
 - ~ Support not suitable for school/pupils.
 - ~ Timing of approach.
 - ~ Perceived ability of Jobcentre Plus to provide high quality support.
 - ~ Other reasons.

Concluding the interview (5 minutes)

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

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

A.6 Our analysis approach

Kantar Public (formerly TNS BMRB) uses matrix mapping, an analytical approach which has been developed and honed over many years. It is systematic, robust and reliable. Our procedures and process ensure that the extraction and interpretation of findings are grounded and based on the raw data rather than on researchers' impressions. Our approach is inductive. This means we build up our analysis from the raw data rather than sorting the findings into predetermined categories. By using a matrix emergent key themes can be identified. Researchers charted the interviews into a framework by drawing on their notes and listening through interview audio. They summarised key themes and quotes for each interview and developed an overall analysis framework.

All researchers involved then discussed emerging themes in a brainstorm, drawing on the matrix mapping and their experiences interviewing. The brainstorm stage of analysis focuses on defining concepts and explanation of phenomena uncovered. The key themes were then explored further in the presentation and this report.