Supervised Jobsearch Pilots trial evaluation

July 2016

Summary

This report presents findings from the external evaluation of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Supervised Jobsearch Pilots (SJP). This evaluation encompasses quantitative and qualitative research with claimants, provider staff and DWP strategy and programme leads, and was conducted by the Learning and Work Institute (L&W) in partnership with BMG Research on behalf of DWP.

The DWP SJP was contracted to run from October 2014 until March 2015. They aimed to test the impact of a prolonged period of supervised job-search activity, intended to mirror working hours, on two groups of claimants: those who were considered to require support and supervision before referral to the Work Programme (WP), and those who had already received support from Jobcentre Plus after completing the WP.

The intention of the pilots was to make claimants' job search more effective, in order to increase their likelihood of moving off benefit and into work. Claimants were referred to the pilots by Jobcentre Plus and, once referred, were required to attend a local provider centre for up to 35 hours per week for 13 weeks, unless they left Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) during this time.

The report presents findings to address the following research aims:

- Measure the extent that the pilots move participants closer to work.

- Provide details on the support delivered and gather feedback on claimant experience.

- Assess the Supervised Jobsearch model to consider whether it is the most effective design, and to suggest improvements to the provision.

- Complement the impact assessment element of the evaluation in exploring why the pilot interventions did or did not have an impact on benefit and employment outcomes.

- Provide lessons learnt from service delivery to determine the design of any national roll-out and future design of employment programmes.

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Executive summary

Background

This is a summary of findings from the external evaluation of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Supervised Jobsearch Pilots (SJP). This evaluation encompasses quantitative and qualitative research with claimants, provider staff and DWP strategy and programme leads, and was conducted by the Learning and Work Institute[1] (L&W) in partnership with BMG Research on behalf of DWP. The DWP SJP was match funded by the 2007–2013 England and Gibraltar European Social Fund Convergence, Competitiveness and Employment Programme.

The pilots were contracted to run from October 2014 until March 2015. They aimed to test the impact of a prolonged period of supervised job-search activity, intended to mirror working hours, on two groups of claimants: those who were considered to require support and supervision before referral to the Work Programme (WP), and those who had already received support from Jobcentre Plus after completing the WP.

The intention of the SJP was to make claimants' job search more effective, in order to increase their likelihood of moving off benefit and into work. Claimants were referred to the pilots by Jobcentre Plus and, once referred, they were required to attend a local provider centre for up to 35 hours per week for 13 weeks, unless they left Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) during this time.

As DWP designed the pilots to test a specific intervention, contracted providers were commissioned to deliver the intervention via a service-fee model. Providers were paid for the delivery of a specified service rather than for employment or other outcomes. Provider performance monitoring and payment was therefore linked to a series of specified minimum service levels, rather than employment outcomes. Key elements of the specified model for the pilots included:

• an intensive level of attendance and supervision;

• a focus on job-search activity, primarily using on-line methods; and

• provider staffing levels to facilitate close supervision of small groups and the provision of one-to-one support as required.

The SJP explicitly focuses on change at the individual claimant level and seeks to move claimants closer towards employment or into employment (and off benefit). According to this model, in order for claimants to achieve the main outcome of obtaining employment, they must have the requisite job-search skills, approach and attitude towards job search and employment.

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[1]   Formerly the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion.

Evaluation aims

The aims and objectives of the evaluation were to:

• measure the extent that the pilots move participants closer to work (e.g. increases in work-related activity and changes in attitudes to work)[2];

• provide details on the support delivered and gather feedback on claimant experience;

• assess the Supervised Jobsearch model to consider whether it is the most effective design, and to suggest improvements to the provision;

• complement the impact assessment element of the evaluation in exploring why the pilots interventions did or did not have an impact on benefit and employment outcomes; and

• provide lessons learnt from service delivery to inform the design of any national roll-out and future design of employment programmes.

Findings

Analysis and reporting sought to compare and contrast the experience of pre- and post-WP participants. Where this has been possible, findings presented in the report draw out any differences identified. Where no differences are apparent (either due to broad consensus on an issue, or unclear patterns of reporting), participants are not distinguished between pre- and post-WP groups. The timing of the fieldwork also means that the two-wave survey does not provide an assessment of 'pre-' and 'post-' participation. Rather, Wave 1 provides a picture of participants at the time of (or soon after) participation, while Wave 2 focuses on experiences and attitudes some time after participation has ended.

As discussed above, a service specification for the pilots formed part of DWP contracts with providers for the delivery of the SJP. The evaluation did, however, find evidence that some operational issues had an impact on delivery and the pilot model was not always delivered in line with the specification. To some extent this compromised the testing of the pilot model, and should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings.

Characteristics of Supervised Jobsearch Participants (section 3.1)

Supervised Jobsearch survey participants were more likely to be male than female (73 per cent compared with 27 per cent), and three in ten (30 per cent) were aged 50 or over. Almost three in ten (29 per cent) said they had a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness. One in six (16 per cent) were from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) group.

Many participants had not worked for a long period of time. Around a third (34 per cent) had either not worked for five years or more or had never worked.

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[2]   The quantitative research presented within this report is based on a sub-sample of pilot participants who were interviewed – see section 1.6 for more detail on the methodology. A separate impact assessment using DWP and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) administrative data is published alongside this report which compares benefit and employment outcomes for all pilot participants.

Barriers to work and engagement with the pilots (section 3.2)

Participants reported a range of barriers to work, including a perceived lack of available jobs, personal characteristics such as health issues, and barriers related to their work experience and skills. Providers also noted that some participants faced barriers such as mental health conditions, poor literacy and numeracy, mild learning difficulties and low levels of self-esteem and confidence.

Some of the identified barriers to employment were also put forward by provider staff as examples of barriers to successful engagement with the pilots. They suggested that participants with significant reading/writing difficulties, lack of computer skills and learning difficulties struggled to engage with the pilots, due to the focus on individual computer-based job-search activity. Provider staff also reported that in some instances the widely varying support needs of participants could be a source of tensions and in some cases disruptive behaviour.

Completion of the pilots (section 3.3)

In the quantitative survey, two in five participants (40 per cent) said that they left the pilots early, while the remainder said they had completed the full amount of time on the pilots (normally 13 weeks).

The two main reasons reported for leaving early were getting a job offer or starting a job (particularly among pre-WP participants) and being unable to stay on the pilots because of health problems (particularly among post-WP participants).

Pre-WP participants were much more likely than post-WP participants to have left early (63 per cent compared with 35 per cent); in total, more than a third of pre-WP participants reported that they left the pilots early in order to start a job.

Some participants raised the mandatory nature of the pilots during the qualitative interviews. This aspect of the pilot model, along with a provider focus on supervision rather than support, prompted some negative views, for example, giving participants a sense of being punished for being unemployed (sections 3.7.4 and 3.3.5).

Pilot delivery (section 3.4)

In line with the specification for the pilots, a consistent picture emerged from provider interviews when describing the model of delivery. For many claimants this was a seven-hour day, five-day working week in an office-based setting for the duration of the pilots[3].

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[3]   Hours were adjusted in line with what was agreed in participants' Claimant Commitment.

Provider staff experience of referral flows (section 3.5)

The number of claimants referred to the pilots by Jobcentre Plus was lower than anticipated and providers reported some difficulties associated with the flow of referrals. They indicated that they had expected the referral of participants via a steady flow, although the DWP specification offered no guarantee as to actual volumes and timing. Providers reported that in practice very few referrals were received during the first five to seven weeks of the pilots going live, followed by a sudden increase in volumes.

Negative consequences related to this, reported by frontline provider staff, included overcrowding, lack of desks and resources and insufficient staffing to maintain the minimum staffing ratio as required by the service specification. At times, therefore, the operational issues relating to participant flows during the implementation of the pilots did appear to have a fairly significant impact on delivery at many pilot sites, as the pilot model was not always delivered in line with the specification.

Referral, induction and action planning (section 3.6)

DWP issued a number of letters to claimants before joining the pilots, specifying the mandatory requirements and consequences of failing to participate, including factsheets which offered detailed information on the SJP. Some participants appeared to recall receiving fairly clear information about attendance requirements either from Jobcentre Plus or by letter. A number of participants described their positive expectations of the pilots based on the information they were given by Jobcentre Plus staff at the point of referral. In other cases, some participants reported that they were given limited information about the pilots, and described feeling shocked when they attended and the extent and duration of the pilots was outlined. Some frontline provider advisers also felt that participants often failed to absorb any of the information they were given, other than when to attend. This could lead to misunderstandings at the start of the pilots, with some participants unaware of the commitment required.

Inductions usually served as an introduction to the pilots and to the provider, setting out the pilots offer to the participants and consequences of non-compliance. Participant first impressions tended to be determined by whether, and to what extent, they received a one-to-one introduction to the pilots. Participants who described meeting advisers face-to-face during their initial visit tended to describe their experience in positive terms. In turn these positive first impressions appeared to influence participants' overall experience of the pilots. By contrast, other participants who reported attending sites experiencing higher volumes of referrals, and were therefore more likely to report receiving less personal group inductions, recalled their experience in more negative terms.

Core elements of delivery model (section 3.7)

The DWP specification, described pilot participants as *'attend*[ing] *a local centre to do jobsearching activities of up to 35 hours per week.'* It specified that claimants would undertake any activity related to searching and applying for jobs, with support and supervision from the provider. For example, this might include help with job search, job goals, cover letters and interview techniques.

The research process identified a number of 'core' elements within pilot delivery which encompassed the majority of participant activities, the environment within which the pilots were delivered and the approach to support and supervision of participants.

Supervised Jobsearch design was that it should replicate work with the delivery environment designed to mimic a working office. This in turn facilitated intermediate outcomes within the model such as increased social interaction for participants. Attending the pilot site alongside their peers was identified as a key benefit by many participants. They also felt the pilots provided an opportunity to engage with other people, to bond over shared experience and offered a setting to provide and receive peer support. Access to computers and telephones was also generally well regarded by participants (sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2).

Providers viewed the parallel with the usual working week positively, as they felt it could help to (re)introduce structure and routine for participants who may have been out of work for a significant period of time. This included adjusting participants' lifestyles around work commitments. This view was shared by some participants: in the quantitative survey, around half of respondents (52 per cent at Wave 1) said that the pilots helped them a lot or a little in equipping them to cope with the routine of going to work.

Providers reported that individual job search was the key activity for the pilots, and an important step towards securing employment for participants. However, the overwhelming sentiment expressed by participants and providers towards the amount of time spent on individual job search was negative. For example, a number of participants reported that there were insufficient relevant job vacancies for them to apply for to fill the time allocated (section 3.7.3).

As noted above, providers and some participants expressed very positive views about the intensity and duration of the pilot intervention. In line with the policy intent, this element of the model was described as '*resembling work*'. In contrast, participants in both the qualitative and quantitative interviews generally considered that the pilots were too long. Around half of survey respondents (54 per cent) felt they spent too long on the pilots (in terms of the total number of weeks), while around two-thirds of participants (68 per cent) said that the number of hours per day was too great (section 3.7.4). Both participants and providers felt that the content of the pilots was narrow and focused almost entirely on individual job search, and did not require either 35 hours per week or the 13-week duration.

Overall, a wide range of provider and participant views on the 'core' elements of the pilot model was reported. Some elements were generally well received, such as the workplace environment with opportunities for increased social interaction, and one–to-one support from advisers. Other elements, in particular the amount of time prescribed to job-search activity, were generally felt to be less successful.

Non-core elements of delivery model (section 3.8)

In addition to the core focus on individual job-search activity, there was scope within the pilot model for other activities and some group-based sessions, although the intent was that group-based sessions should form no more than ten per cent of participant activities in each week.

A number of one-to-one and group-based 'non-core' activities were identified as part of pilot activities in the qualitative interviews with providers and participants. These included both specified activities, such as careers advice and group activities seeking to develop team working and problem solving, and non-specified activities such as training and skills provision (in particular IT or on-line training), employer engagement, and what were described as motivation and confidence building activities.

Some providers reported a degree of flexibility in their service delivery, which they acknowledged had been introduced with the knowledge that it was probably outside the scope of pilot model. They described this as being led by participant needs (section 3.8.1).

In the Wave 1 quantitative survey, pilot participants confirmed that they had taken part in these various non-core elements. Specifically, 45 per cent said they had help or training on using the internet or computers, 32 per cent said they had received help or training on numeracy or literacy, 28 per cent had counselling or mentoring and 27 per cent had visited a workplace. Quantitative respondents were then asked which of the activities they would like to have done as part of the pilots (if they had not actually done them). Participants were most interested in visits to a workplace (40 per cent).

Respondents who said they had received the different types of non-core support were mostly positive towards their experience. In each case, a consistent proportion (between 80 per cent and 87 per cent) said that the activities had been very or fairly helpful.

Intermediate outcomes

The quantitative survey examined whether the pilots had made a positive impact on intermediate outcomes (job-search activity, skills and confidence). Findings compare Supervised Jobsearch participants (the treatment group) with non-participants (the control group), based on interviews at Wave 2 of the survey (around six to ten months after starting on the pilots).

Firstly, in relation to **job-search activity** (section 4.1.3), the quantitative findings suggest that the pilots had a positive impact on job-search intensity, increasing the number of applications that people made. Treatment sample respondents were more likely than those in the control sample to have applied for 20 or more jobs (75 per cent compared with 65 per cent).

Otherwise, the quantitative surveys suggest that the pilots have not had an impact on job-search activity. The treatment and control groups were no different in relation to:

• the proportion that had been for a job interview in the previous month; and

• the proportion who had made any job applications in the previous month; however, for the post-WP pilots specifically, participants were less likely than those in the control sample to have applied for paid jobs in the previous month.

There was some evidence from the qualitative interviews that the requirement to spend prolonged periods of time dedicated to on-line job searching increased the depth of job-search activity. Interviews with participants also indicated that some changes had occurred in certain aspects of their approach to looking for work after attending the pilots. This included a greater sense of routine in their core job-search approach, applying for a broader range of jobs, and paying more attention to individual applications. Some participants also reported that pilot attendance had developed their knowledge and experience of computer-based job-searching resources

In terms of **job-search methods**, treatment sample respondents were more likely than those in the control sample to have had their name on the books of a private employment agency (68 per cent compared with 59 per cent). Otherwise, there were no differences between the two groups.

Despite the positive impact on job-search activity, the overriding view from the qualitative research was that attendance on the pilots added little to participants' existing knowledge and ability of how to look for jobs. The findings also suggest that any changes to job-search activities may have been short lived, with participants often appearing to revert to their previous methods after leaving the pilots.

In the quantitative survey, pilot participation was found to have a positive impact on respondents' **confidence in their job-search skills** (section 4.2.2). At Wave 2, treatment sample respondents expressed greater levels of confidence than control sample respondents, specifically in relation to:

• skills being up-to-date (43 per cent 'very confident' compared with 34 per cent); and

• having the skills and knowledge to look for work successfully (63 per cent compared with 51 per cent).

In the qualitative interviews, participants described key areas in which they improved their skills: learning the importance of tailoring job applications to the role, the need to 'sell yourself" and understanding the level of competition for jobs. Some participants also pointed to the interview training they had received, which they felt made them feel more 'confident', less 'nervous' and better prepared for interview situations. Some qualitative respondents also reported that the programme opened their mind to more job options and opportunities that they had not considered before commencing the pilots.

There were also positive findings from the quantitative survey regarding the impact the pilots made on **self-confidence and motivation** (section 4.3.2). Although pilot participants were no more confident than non-participants that they would get a job in the next three months, the pilots had a positive effect on general feelings of confidence and motivation.

At Wave 2, treatment sample respondents expressed greater levels of confidence than control sample respondents, specifically in relation to confidence in:

• doing well in job interviews (40 per cent compared with 33 per cent);

• coping with rejections and knock-backs (46 per cent compared with 37 per cent); and

• being ready for work (62 per cent compared with 55 per cent).

The pilots also appear to have had a positive impact on attitudes, specifically in relation to the importance of keeping a job, and in confidence in finding a suitable job. In contrast, participation in the pilots also appears to have made respondents more likely to feel that people are put under too much pressure to find work.

In the qualitative interviews, some participants identified a range of factors that had helped to increase their confidence, including meeting new people, acquiring new knowledge and skills (e.g. cover letters, interview skills), and using a computer. There was some qualitative evidence that Supervised Jobsearch helped participants to develop more *'will power'* and *'determination'*.

By contrast, some qualitative participants reported that pilot involvement had no influence on their motivation as they consistently felt motivated to find work. Others felt that the pilots had in fact worsened their confidence and self-esteem. This was attributed to factors such as the repetition of job searching, feeling compelled to apply for what they believed was the same role advertised over different recruitment sites or agencies, and job searching in an environment that they felt uncomfortable in.

Benefit and work outcomes (section 4.4)

At the Wave 2 survey (six to ten months after starting on the pilots), there was no statistical difference found in the proportion of survey respondents in the treatment and control samples who were in employment (18 per cent in each case). This suggests that, in the time frame covered by the survey, there was no evidence of an impact on employment rates resulting from the pilots. Similarly, there was no apparent impact on movement off benefits: the same proportions in the two samples were receiving JSA, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit at the time of the Wave 2 interview (77 per cent).

The qualitative findings can help to understand the reasons why the pilots did not appear to improve employment outcomes (at least in the short term). Critically, when exploring why participants had failed to secure employment, they identified key factors that were unrelated to job search. These revolved around participants' own barriers to work, such as perceived age-related barriers, time spent out of work, and lack of relevant skills and qualifications plus the lack of suitable employment available locally.

It is important to consider the nature of the participant group when considering these work and benefit outcomes. The pilots were aimed at claimants who had difficulties in finding work, and many had not worked for at least five years. As a result, it may not be reasonable to expect the pilots to have had a major impact on employment outcomes.

Overall assessment of the pilots (Chapter 5)

At both waves of the survey, just over half of respondents said that their overall experience of the pilots was 'very positive' or 'positive' (54 per cent at Wave 1, 57 per cent at Wave 2), while at both waves 42 per cent said it was 'very negative' or 'negative'. There was a fairly even spread of responses from 'very positive' to 'very negative', indicating that the pilots attracted a wide range of views from participants. While the quantitative findings indicate an equal balance of positive and negative views, the qualitative interviews did present a more negative picture: although there was a broad range of experiences and views relating to the pilots, participant satisfaction with pilot involvement overall was generally low.

The quantitative findings indicate groups of participants who benefited more or less from participating in the pilots:

• Participants with lower skills and/or further from the labour market were more positive about the pilots; specifically, they were more likely to say they gained job-search awareness and skills, and that their confidence and motivation improved. In general, the findings indicate that the pilots may have been most effective in improving intermediate outcomes among those with lower skills or who had been out of work for a longer period of time.

• Participants with children were generally more positive about the pilots, particularly in relation to gaining job-search awareness and skills, and increasing their self-confidence and motivation.

• Younger participants (aged under 35) were more positive than older participants towards the personal support they received, and were more likely to feel the pilots helped improve their job-search ability.

• Participants with health problems were less positive about the pilots overall, and were less likely than other participants to say that it increased their confidence and motivation. Health problems were also a common reason for leaving the pilots early (particularly in the post-WP group).

• BAME participants were more critical than white participants, regarding the level of support they received, and were less likely to say that the pilots improved their job-search skills.

The qualitative findings suggest that experiences of the pilots were commonly underpinned by the level of one-to-one support and the relationship with provider advisers. Some participants felt the support they received was good, with advisers able to help them *'straight away'*. There was also some evidence of strong interpersonal relationships forming between participants and advisers, with positive one-to-one support being provided. By contrast, some participants suggested they received little or no one-to-one or personalised support. Overall, in the quantitative survey, the majority of participants agreed that staff on the pilots understood their particular circumstances (64 per cent), while just over half of participants (56 per cent) felt that they received about the right amount of support.

Numerous suggestions were made by participants in the qualitative interviews as to **improvements that could be made to the pilots**. Three in particular came out strongly:

• more intensive one-to-one support from advisers;

• more personalised support, addressing key needs and barriers to getting into work; and

• access to employers, including facilitation of work experience and placements.

Whilst providers generally believed that job search was a key activity and should remain, they universally argued for greater flexibility in determining and delivering support. Typically, when probed, providers suggested splitting time between job search and other activities (for example, non-core activities) equally.

Specific types of support that providers would like to introduce include being able to provide skills-based training, intensive literacy and numeracy support and, in particular, allowing participants to attend work-based placements and engage with employers directly.

1   Introduction

This report presents the findings from the external evaluation of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Supervised Jobsearch Pilots (SJP). This evaluation encompasses quantitative and qualitative research with claimants and qualitative research with provider staff and DWP strategy and programme leads. It was conducted by the Learning and Work Institute (L&W)[4] in partnership with BMG Research on behalf of DWP. The DWP SJP was match funded by the 2007–2013 England and Gibraltar European Social Fund (ESF) Convergence, Competitiveness and Employment Programme[5]. As one of the European Union's (EU's) structural funds, the ESF in the 2007–2013 programming period aimed to support the Lisbon Strategy's vision of the creation of 'more and better jobs'[6]. The pilots were contracted out by DWP to a number of provider organisations, to run from October 2014 until March 2015.

The pilots aimed to test the impact of a prolonged period of supervised job-search activity, intended to mirror working hours, on two groups of claimants: those who were considered to require additional support and supervision before referral to the WP[7], and those who had already received support from Jobcentre Plus after completing the WP.

The Jobcentre Plus districts participating in the pilots were Surrey and Sussex, the Black Country, Mercia and West Yorkshire. Three districts delivered both the pre- and post-WP pilots. The fourth district delivered the post-WP pilot only.

1.1   Background and policy context

Since April 2011, Jobcentre Plus has delivered a flexible support model for claimants. This model includes a core regime of regular face-to-face meetings, flexible Work Coach support and a flexible menu of support options including skills provision. This includes improving job search and getting ready for work core modules that are nationally available.

Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches have the power to judge which activities will best meet the needs of the individual to encourage a return to employment. Once an unemployed claimant has been on benefit (in most cases) for 12 months they are referred to the WP. The 'Help to Work' scheme, which went live in April 2014, provides intensive support for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit (UC) claimants who have not found employment after completing the WP.

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[4]   Formerly the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion.

[5]   Further information about the ESF programme can be found at: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/ esf/ ESF funding is distributed through 'Co-financing Organisations' (CFOs), which includes DWP. CFOs are public bodies which bring together ESF and domestic funding for employment and skills, so that ESF complements national programmes. CFOs are responsible for both the ESF money and match funding.

[6]   European Commission (2005) *2005/600/EC: Council Decision of 12 July 2005 on Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States*.

[7]   Referral to the WP is usually after 20–25 weeks on benefit for 18 to 24-year-olds or after 33-38 weeks on benefit for those aged 25+.

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The Jobcentre Plus Work Coach can refer the claimant to one of three forms of support: three-months' daily work search review, a Community Work Placement for six months or the Mandatory Intervention Regime if the claimant has complex barriers to work[8].

Further support and requirements for job seekers were funded through the Spending Review 2013[9], which announced a package of measures that aimed to save and reinvest £350 million each year – including:

- weekly signing for half of job seekers, and a requirement that new job seekers begin preparing for work before their first interview;

- (re)introducing quarterly interviews; and

- a seven-day waiting period before claimants become eligible for JSA.

In October 2013, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced that the Government would be 'launching two pilots for full-time mandatory attendance centres: one for claimants prior to joining the WP; the other for those who have come out the other side of post-WP support, still without a job'[10].

A range of studies from the UK[11] and overseas[12] shows that effective job-search support can reduce unemployment and increase employment. The SJP aimed to test the extent to which supervised full-time job-search activities further increase benefit off-flows and movement into employment.

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[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/help-to-work-nationwide-drive-to-help-the-long-term-unemployed-into-work

[9] *Spending Round 2013*, HM Treasury, June 2013 (Cm 8639).

[10] Supervised Jobsearch Pilots – Specification and Supporting Information, DWP, 2014.

[11] See for example: Rayner, E. *et al.* (2000). *Evaluating Jobseeker's Allowance: A summary of the Research Findings*. DWP Research Report 106; Riley, R. *et al*. (2011). *The introduction of Jobcentre Plus: An evaluation of labour market impacts*. DWP Research Report 781; Middlemas, J. (2006). *Jobseekers Allowance intervention pilots quantitative evaluation*. DWP Research Report 382; and Dolton, P. and O' Neill, D. (1996). 'Unemployment Duration and the Restart Effect: Some Experimental Evidence', The Economic Journal. 106 (March) pp 387-400.

[12] See for example: Thomsen, S. (2009). 'Job Search Assistance Programs in Europe: Evaluation Methods and Recent Empirical Findings'. FEMM Working Paper 18; Gurgand, M. *et al.* (2005). *Counseling The Unemployed: Does it Lower Unemployment Duration and Recurrence?;* Centre d'Etudes de l'Emploi; and Hertweck, M. and Sigrist, O. (2012). The Aggregate Effects of the Hartz Reforms in Germany; University of Konstanz.

Although data is limited, there is evidence that, on average, unemployed people spend relatively little time seeking work[13] and that this decreases as the length of unemployment increases.[14] While there are a number of international examples of full-time job-search support (e.g. in Denmark, France and Germany), these are typically a shorter duration than SJP and tend to focus on improving job-search skills rather than full-time job-search activity (which includes a focus on improving job-search skills)[15].

1.2   Purpose of the pilots

The intention of the SJP was to make claimants' job search more effective in order to increase their likelihood of moving off benefit and into work.

Contracted providers were required to ensure that:

• claimants' job goals were feasible and appropriate to their abilities and the local labour market;

• claimants understood the range of relevant websites, and how to use them appropriately;

• claimants were encouraged to use the Universal Job Match facility to search for vacancies;

• Curriculum Vitae (CVs) were up-to-date and individually tailored effectively to the individual vacancies;

• any application forms and covering letters were appropriately tailored to the vacancy; and

• claimants understood how to present themselves at an interview to heighten their chances of finding employment.

Providers were also required to provide career guidance, mentoring and counselling to improve job skills throughout the claimants' time on the pilots.

Claimants were referred to the pilots by Jobcentre Plus and, once referred, they were required to attend a local provider centre for up to 35 hours per week for 13 weeks, unless they left JSA during this time. Attendance was mandatory and failure to participate without good reason would lead to a benefit sanction. Thus key elements of the pilots included an intensive level of attendance and supervision and a focus on job-search activity, primarily using on-line methods, with provider staffing levels to facilitate close supervision of small groups and the provision of one-to-one support as required.

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[13]   Alan B. Krueger and Andreas Mueller. May 2008. *The Lot of the Unemployed: A Time Use Perspective*. IZA DP No. 3490.

[14]   Alan B. Krueger and Andreas Mueller. January 2011. *Job Search and Job Finding in a Period of Mass Unemployment: Evidence from High-Frequency Longitudinal Data*. IZA DP No. 5450.

[15]   Thomsen, S. (2009). *Job Search Assistance Programs in Europe: Evaluation Methods and Recent Empirical Findings*. FEMM Working Paper 18.

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As noted above, the SJP was designed to test the impact of the intervention with two groups of claimants:

• The pre-WP pilot was intended to test Supervised Jobsearch with claimants who displayed behaviour which indicated a need for further support, such as not taking sufficiently effective steps to secure employment. Referrals to this pilot were expected to take place around 14–15 weeks prior to WP referral.[16]

• The post-WP pilot was intended to test Supervised Jobsearch with claimants who had received a period of support from Jobcentre Plus after returning from the WP. Initially, the post-WP eligibility required that 26 weeks had elapsed since their WP Completer Interview (WPCI) before people came in scope of the trial. Further, participants should be receiving 'Post-WP Support' or 'Help to Work'. Owing to low numbers of referrals to SJP the eligibility criteria was expanded.[17]

These pilots were therefore testing the impact of a single intensive and structured regime with claimants who had been through the Jobcentre Plus Offer, for example the WP, but had still not found sustained employment.

Contracted providers were commissioned by DWP via a service fee rather than a Payment by Results (PbR) model, i.e. providers were paid for the delivery of a specified service rather than for employment or other outcomes. Provider performance monitoring and payment was therefore linked to a series of specified minimum service levels, rather than employment outcomes.

The SJP was designed to run as a randomised controlled trial (RCT) whereby eligible participants were assigned into a treatment group, i.e. those referred to the SJP, or a control group, (those who received 'business as usual' support from Jobcentre Plus). The purpose of this approach was to assess the net impact of the pilots, by comparing the experiences of the two groups. As the allocation to the two groups was done at random, the aggregate characteristics of the two groups should be the same; therefore, any differences in the experiences of the two groups can be attributed directly to the pilots. The use of the RCT method is discussed further below (section 1.6.1).

In order to comprehensively explore the impact of the pilots, the evaluation was designed to examine both intermediate outcomes, such as claimant work related behaviours and attitudes, and employment outcomes. Thus evidence from the pilots should facilitate further development of the knowledge base on what works to support claimants move towards and into employment.

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[16] After 20–25 weeks on benefit for 18 to 24-year-olds or after 33–38 weeks on benefit for those aged 25+.

[17] As of 27 October 2014 this criterion was expanded to include people who had their WPCI more than 26 weeks beforehand. To ensure that the modified criterion was as close as possible to the original criterion, the WPCI attendees were recruited in reverse order of attendance. That is, those who attended their WPCI closest to the 26-week point were considered for recruitment first.

1.3   Evaluation aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the evaluation were as follows:

• To measure the extent that the pilots move participants closer to work (for example, increases in work-related activity and changes in attitudes to work)[18].

• To provide details on the support delivered and gather feedback on claimant experience.

• To assess the Supervised Jobsearch model to consider whether it is the most effective design, and to suggest improvements to the provision.

• To complement the impact assessment element of the evaluation in exploring why the pilot interventions did or did not have an impact on benefit and employment outcomes.

• To provide lessons learnt from service delivery.

Where possible, views on support delivered through a 'supervised job-search' model (as opposed to the direct experiences of SJP delivery) were sought. It is, however, important to consider that the views of research participants were likely to be strongly influenced by their direct experience of the pilots, making it difficult to capture objective views on the more abstract concept of a theoretical model.

1.4   Methodology

The evaluation utilised a comprehensive mixed methods, multiphase approach, examining the process and impact of participating in the SJP. It consisted of several complementary research elements using both quantitative and qualitative data drawn from a variety of sources. In doing so, the evaluation sought to provide a rounded view of the SJP from both the participant and provider perspective.

It should be noted that whilst conducting mixed methods research can facilitate the understanding of multiple aspects of an issue it can also be challenging and may produce some conflicting results between research strands[19]. While this may make it more difficult to identify clear findings, it enhances the robustness of the study by accounting for response bias sometimes encountered when relying on one method alone. Indeed, it has been suggested that being able to highlight these differences within a single study demonstrates the value over a single methods study[20].

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[18]   The quantitative research presented within this report is based on a sub-sample of pilot participants who were interviewed – see section 1.6 for more detail. A separate impact assessment using DWP and HMRC administrative data is published alongside this report which compares benefit and employment outcomes for all pilot participants.

[19]   Bryman, A. (2007). Barriers to integrating quantitative and qualitative research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1: 8-22.

[20]   Moffatt, S., White, M., Mackintosh, J., Howel, D. (2006). Using quantitative and qualitative data in health services research—what happens when mixed method findings conflict? *BMC Health Service Research* 6: 28.

1.5   Qualitative research

The evaluation involved several qualitative strands which are considered in more detail below.

1.5.1   Scoping stage

In order to become familiar with the pilots and initiate the development of a theory of change model to support the evaluation, the first phase of the evaluation was to conduct a scoping review of the pilots. This was carried out over two stages. Firstly, the Evaluation team carried out a desk-based review of relevant documentation (for example, the SJP Invitation to Tender, successful provider bids, etc). Secondly, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with seven relevant SJP leads within DWP and senior staff from within the pilot providers. The interviews sought to explore respondents' understanding of the intentions and objectives behind the intervention, how the design was implemented in practice, and how involvement in the pilots was intended to influence participants' behaviour and attitudes.

1.5.2   Theory of change

The theory of change approach is an evidence grounded process used to develop a theoretical model of how a programme causes intended or observed outcomes. It specifies a chain of causal assumptions linking programme activities, intermediate outcomes and the ultimate programme goals. Using a theory of change model is useful as it clearly sets out programme objectives and the causal levers being tested.

The model developed for this evaluation was built on data from the scoping stage. The model describes the overall goals, anticipated high level and intermediate outcomes and the policy interventions and policy drivers that support these. The model therefore maps the anticipated sequences of change that lead to the desired overall goals that the policy aims to achieve, assuming it is implemented as indicated.

1.5.3   Immersive site visits

Following the scoping phase, site visits were conducted in each of the four operational pilot areas. All visits were carried out towards the end of the pilots in March 2015 and lasted between two and three days. Three-day visits were carried out in Mercia, the Black Country, and Surrey and Sussex, and a two-day visit in West Yorkshire[21]. A number of activities were conducted during the site visits, including observations of Supervised Jobsearch activities and short feedback interviews with participants and providers on observed activities. The site visits also provided an opportunity to carry out interviews with front line pilot provider staff. Overall, 16 face-to-face depth interviews were carried out with provider advisers lasting around an hour. The interviews were designed to explore how the trial was implemented; how participants had responded to the SJP; which elements of delivery were working well; and challenges experienced in delivering the pilot and how were these resolved.

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[21]   The shorter duration was due to the Yorkshire pilot only working with post-WP participants.

1.5.4   Qualitative interviews with participants

Qualitative interviews with participants were conducted over two waves to facilitate a longitudinal exploration of views related to their experience of the SJP and any progression made following completion. During the first wave, 78 depth interviews were conducted with participants; of these 67 were conducted over the telephone and 11 were conducted face-to-face during site visits. All Wave 1 interviews were conducted between March and April 2015. Face-to-face respondents were recruited using a convenience sampling[22] approach by researchers on location during site visits. Telephone respondents were recruited using administrative data provided by DWP. In the first instance, respondents were recruited directly from administrative data; more latterly, respondents were recruited from the accompanying participant survey (described below).

Of the 78 people who were interviewed during the first wave, 48 agreed to be re-contacted for a second wave of interviews. Follow-up qualitative interviews were carried out with 32 of these respondents who had been interviewed at Wave 1. A further four standalone interviews were carried out to 'top-up' the sample; these interviews were drawn from fresh leads from the associated participant survey. Overall, 36 Wave 2 interviews were achieved between June and July 2015; all were conducted over the telephone.

Table 1.1 shows the number of achieved interviews split by the primary sampling criteria; trial area and participant cohort.

Table 1.1   Achieved qualitative interviews

Pilot area	Post-Work Programme		Pre-Work Programme	
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 1	Wave 2
Black Country	12	7	8	3
Mercia	10	4	9	5
Sussex/Sussex	13	4	9	7
Yorkshire	15	6	2	0
Total	**50**	**21**	**28**	**15**

The participant interviews aimed to explore a number of areas related to experience of the SJP. This included views on:

• activities that were undertaken;

• elements of the pilots that worked well, worked less well and why;

• how participation influenced behaviour and attitudes in areas such as quality/quantity of job applications, attitudes to work, confidence levels and perceived barriers to work;

• skills gained as a result of participation;

• how support could be improved; and

• the effectiveness of the full-time, 13-week, supervised model.

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[22]   Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling approach that relies on data collection from eligible individuals who are conveniently available to participate in a study. The use of a convenience sampling approach was desirable in this instance as it allowed the researcher to fully utilise their time while at the site, and also allowed for refinement of the topic guide prior to the main stage of the qualitative participant fieldwork.

All qualitative interview participants were issued a £15 Love2Shop voucher as a thank you payment for their participation. The duration of both first and second wave interviews was about 35 minutes.

All depth interviews were recorded with the participant's consent, and transcribed verbatim for detailed analysis. Discussions were directed by topic guides tailored to the research participant. Using topic guides helped to ensure a consistent approach across all of the interviews and between members of the Research team, while allowing exploration of issues relevant to the individual research participant.

1.5.5   Qualitative data analysis and reporting

Interview data was charted and analysed using a Framework methodology[23]. Key topics and issues emerging from the data were identified through researcher debrief sessions structured around the objectives of the research, from which the Research team devised a series of thematic charts into which the interview data was entered. Summarising the data in this way means that it is grounded in research participants' accounts, while oriented to the research objectives.

As outlined above, the evaluation involved several qualitative strands including the use of in-depth interviews with both Supervised Jobsearch providers and pilot participants. These elements were designed to capture and present the range and diversity of participant experiences and views of the pilot providers. It is important to note that qualitative research is not intended to indicate proportionality or prevalence, as its sampling is not designed to be statistically representative of the wider population[24]. Instead, it offers robust insights into questions of how and why research participants have differing experiences and views.

Where qualitative evidence suggests an imbalance in experience or sentiment, this is reflected in this report. This applies to the selection of quotes and examples which, when viewed collectively, may suggest a dominant theme or sentiment on an issue.

Analysis and reporting sought to compare and contrast the experience of pre- and post-WP participants. Where this has been possible, findings presented in the report draw out any differences identified. Where no differences are apparent (either due to broad consensus on an issue, or unclear patterns of reporting) participants are not distinguished between pre- and post-WP groups.

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[23]   Ritchie, J. and Spencer, L. (2002). Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. In Huberman, A. M. and Miles, M. B. *The qualitative researchers companion. Thousand Oaks: Sage*.

[24]   Lewis, J., Ritchie, J., Ormston, R. and Morrell, G. (2014). Generalising from Qualitative Research, in J. Ritchie, J. Lewis, C. McNaughton Nicholls and R. Ormston (eds). *Qualitative Research Practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

1.6   Quantitative surveys

The evaluation included quantitative surveys alongside the qualitative strands. The survey methodology reflected the RCT design of the pilots, by interviewing a sample of Supervised Jobsearch participants (treatment sample) alongside a sample of non-participants (control sample).

For Supervised Jobsearch participants, the survey was based on a two-wave longitudinal survey. Control sample respondents were interviewed once at the same time as the Wave 2 participant survey.

The pilots covered a relatively small 'population' of individuals. Therefore, the sample included all eligible individuals for whom contact details were available: 1,725 Supervised Jobsearch participants (treatment sample) and 2,540 individuals in the control sample. Sample data was provided by DWP.

The **Wave 1 survey** covered 534 Supervised Jobsearch participants, who were interviewed approximately two to five months after starting on the pilots. Fieldwork was carried out between 20 February and 29 March 2015. The response rate was 44 per cent[25].

The **Wave 2 survey** was conducted between 4 June and 2 August 2015. This meant that Supervised Jobsearch participants were interviewed approximately six to ten weeks after starting on the pilots (or at least three months after ending their time on the pilots).

The following numbers of interviews were achieved at Wave 2:

• Supervised Jobsearch participants who had been interviewed at Wave 1 and who agreed to be recontacted: 226 interviews. The response rate was 48 per cent[26].

• Supervised Jobsearch participants who were not available for an interview at Wave 1, or who could not be contacted at Wave 1: 42 interviews. The response rate was 11 per cent[27].

• Control sample of non-participants: 653 interviews. The response rate was 37 per cent[28].

Table 1.2 summarises the number of survey interviews, broken down by the two types of pilot.

Table 1.2   Summary of quantitative survey interviews

	Pre-WP	Post-WP	Not known	Total
Treatment Wave 1	89	445	0	534
Treatment Wave 2	47	219	2	268
Control	166	486	1	653

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[25]   Claimants in scope of the fieldwork. Excluding ineligible claimants, opt-outs and claimants with invalid contact details.

[26]   *Ibid*.

[27]   *Ibid*.

[28]   *Ibid*.

All interviews were carried out by telephone by BMG Research on the behalf of L&W. At both waves, a pilot was conducted prior to the main fieldwork; pilot interviews are included in the analysis.

Full technical details on the quantitative survey are included in Appendix A.

1.6.1   Analysis of quantitative data

The Wave 1 findings include a detailed examination of Supervised Jobsearch participants' experiences, and perceptions, of the pilots. The purpose of the Wave 2 survey was to take a longer-term view of participants' perceptions of the pilots, and to examine impact and outcomes, by comparing the treatment and control samples: both 'hard' outcomes relating to movement off benefit and into work, and 'soft' or 'intermediate' outcomes, relating to job-search activity, participation in work-related activity, confidence in finding work and attitudes towards work. These reflect pilot goals and intermediate outcomes identified as part of the theory of change model developed for the pilot (detailed in section 2.3).

As part of the RCT design, eligible claimants were allocated at random to either the treatment or control group. As a result, this should mean that the samples of treatment and control sample respondents are matched in terms of their characteristics. In general, therefore, we can be confident that any differences in experiences or attitudes between the two groups can be attributable to the pilots, rather than other factors. In practice, however, it is possible that there may be some differences in the profile of the treatment and control groups. This could arise, for example, where individuals who were allocated to the treatment group were exempted/removed from the pilots prior to participation. Differences could also be due to response bias in the survey. In order to assess this issue, the profiles of the two sample groups that were interviewed in the survey (at Wave 2) were compared. This analysis shows that the two groups are closely matched in their demographic profile, with minor differences identified in relation to:

• gender: the treatment group had a higher proportion of men (76 per cent, compared with 69 per cent in the control group);

• age: the treatment group had a slightly older age profile (11 per cent aged 18-24 compared with 16 per cent in the control group);

• ethnicity: the treatment group included a lower proportion of BAME respondents (16 per cent compared with 22 per cent in the control group);

• long-standing illness or disability: incidence was lower in the treatment group than in the control group (27 per cent compared with 33 per cent); and

• dependent children: respondents in the treatment group were more likely to have dependent children (25 per cent compared with 22 per cent in the control group).

It was decided not to weight the survey data. This was because:

• to a large extent, the variations noted above reflect differences in the profile of the sample populations; i.e. the survey samples accurately reflect the actual profiles of claimants; and

• where differences arise specifically from survey response, these differences are small, and do not point towards any systematic response bias.

Supervised Jobsearch participants were surveyed several months after starting on the pilots (two to five months at Wave 1 and six to ten months at Wave 2). This means that responses are subject to recall error, particularly in findings which relate to specific elements of participation. The timing of the interviews also means that the two-wave survey does not provide an assessment of 'pre' and 'post' participation. Rather, Wave 1 provides a picture of participants at the time of (or soon after) participation, while Wave 2 focuses on experiences and attitudes some time after participation has ended.

When interpreting the findings for this survey, it should be borne in mind that the survey is based on a sample of pilot participants rather than the total 'population' of all individuals who took part in the pilots. This means that all findings are subject to sampling tolerances. Any differences highlighted in this report are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level (meaning we can be confident that, 19 times out of 20 (or in 95 per cent of instances), the difference can be considered a 'real' difference.

The survey covers a relatively small sample of individuals, particularly in the pre-WP group. As a result, there is limited scope for analysing the pre-WP group separately, and large differences are needed to detect statistically significant differences between the pre-WP and post-WP participants. Because of the small sample of pre-WP participants, the findings are mostly analysed at the aggregate level (for both pilots combined).

Table 1.3 shows the difference required (in percentage points) when comparing two samples; examples are shown for some of the main types of analysis that have been conducted.

These calculations take into account that:

• samples are based on small populations (c. 1,700 treatment and 2,500 control sample cases), which increases the level of statistical confidence;

• where part/all of the sample is longitudinal, statistical confidence is enhanced; and

• data have not been weighted.

Table 1.3   Percentage difference required to identify differences between comparator groups based on actual sample achieved

Comparison	Sample size	Difference required for statistical significance (at 95% level)
Treatment versus control (Wave 2)	268 versus 653	4–7 percentage points
Pre-WP versus Post-WP treatment (Wave 1)	89 versus 445	7–10 percentage points
Pre-WP versus Post-WP treatment (Wave 2)	47 versus 219	10–15 percentage points
Treatment Wave 1 versus treatment Wave 2	534 versus 268	4–6 percentage points
Treatment Wave 1 versus treatment Wave 2 (longitudinal sample only)	226 versus 226	3–7 percentage points

In the commentary, differences between sample sub-groups are only mentioned where they are statistically significant (i.e. if the commentary for any question does not mention the pre- and post-WP groups, this means that differences are not statistically significant).

In general, it is important to note that the evaluation covers a very specific group of benefit claimants, who were eligible for the SJP at a particular point in time. The findings should therefore not be generalised to reflect benefit claimants or job seekers more generally.

Throughout the report percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number (figures are rounded up from .5, and rounded down below this). Percentages in the tables and charts do not always add to 100 per cent due to rounding. In cases where a number of responses have been grouped together ('netted'), the proportion of respondents who gave a 'netted' response may not always equal the sum of the individual responses, again due to rounding.

1.7   Report structure

Chapter 2 of this report aims to offer some background to the delivery of the SJP, including details of the design of the intervention specified by DWP and the theory of change model that was developed to support the evaluation. Chapter 3 then presents the findings on participant characteristics, and pilot delivery, offering some contextual data on the challenges associated with pilot implementation. Chapter 4 presents the outcomes achieved through participating on the pilots. Participant and provider perspectives offering an overall assessment of the pilots are reported within Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 draws together the conclusions emerging from the research findings.

2　Pilot delivery context

This chapter aims to offer some background to the delivery of the Supervised Jobsearch Pilots (SJP), including details of the design of the intervention specified by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This is primarily drawn from the service specification and associated minimum service levels. The chapter then goes on to describe the theory of change model which was developed to support the evaluation and finally describes some contextual delivery factors which had an impact on the delivery of the intervention.

2.1　Contracted providers and supply chains

The SJP was commissioned by DWP using a prime provider approach whereby the Department contracted for service delivery with a single provider organisation (the prime provider) in each pilot area. There are two different models of prime provider delivery practice. The first model involves a managing agent prime that provides no direct services but sub-contracts all delivery through a supply chain of subcontractors. The second is that of a delivery prime that combines direct delivery, of varying levels, and subcontracting with a supply chain.

Both managing agent and delivery prime providers were involved in the delivery of the SJP, so whilst a single prime provider held the contract within each of the four pilot districts, there were a number of provider organisations involved in delivery of the pilots within each district (both prime and subcontracted providers). The prime provider was ultimately responsible for contract delivery.

Communication with DWP regarding pilot delivery would generally be limited to the prime provider, who was also responsible for passing relevant information to and from subcontractors in their supply chains.

2.2　Service specification/minimum service levels

As described in the previous chapter contracted providers were commissioned by DWP via a service fee rather than a Payment by Results (PbR) model, i.e. providers were paid for the delivery of a specified service rather than for employment or other outcomes. Their contracts with DWP therefore included a detailed service specification with performance monitoring and payment linked to a series of specified minimum service levels or service delivery standards.

2.2.1　Service specification

The DWP Supervised Jobsearch Pilots Specification and Supporting Information issued to providers stated that claimants would be mandated to attend the provider's premises, Monday to Friday, for up to 35 hours, less any agreed restrictions on their availability as agreed within their Jobcentre Plus Claimant Commitment[29].

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[29]　The Claimant Commitment outlines what job seeking actions a claimant must carry out while receiving Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). It is usually drawn up during a conversation between a claimant and their Jobcentre Plus Work Coach.

It specified that claimants would undertake any activity related to searching and applying for jobs, with support and supervision from the provider. For example, this might include help with job search, job goals, cover letters and interview techniques.

It also stated that this may include activities such as group sessions to help progress the claimants' aptitude to job search effectively and address barriers which may affect their ability. That said, there was more focus on individually-based activities inclusive of one-to-one support from provider advisers with the specification stating that group sessions must not make up more than 10 per cent of activities per week.

The detailed DWP service requirement reiterated that *'the intention of the pilot is to make claimants' job search more effective in order to increase their likelihood of moving into work. This will include ensuring that:*

- their job goals are feasible and appropriate to their abilities and the local labour market;

- career guidance, mentoring and counselling to improve their job skills must be provided throughout the claimants' time on the pilots;

- they understand the use of websites and are using them appropriately;

- they encourage claimants to use the Universal Jobmatch facility to search for vacancies;

- CVs are up-to-date and tailored effectively to vacancies;

- career discussions have taken place every fortnight;

- the provider must assess the claimant's job readiness every fortnight;

- any application forms and covering letters are tailored appropriately; and

- claimants understand how to present themselves at an interview to heighten their chances of finding employment.

In addition to this, the service specification outlined specific capacity requirements whereby 'the provider must ensure there is sufficient capacity regarding space and resources for every claimant who attends on a given day to job search', for example ensuring there is provision (per person for up to 35 hours per week) for:

- desk space – minimum cubic meters per person to meet the standard health and safety (H&S) requirements;

- any reasonable adjustments or special equipment where required;

- working computers; printers; internet; Wi-Fi; phones; stationery; and

- facility to use data storage devices (e.g. USB sticks).

Providers were required to appoint facilitators/provider advisers to support claimants move closer or into work, for example, the ability to provide careers guidance, mentoring and counselling to support job-search activity, the ability to sensitively probe and explore potential barriers, and understanding the importance of the social values of work. They were also expected to have knowledge and skills in respect of disability and multicultural awareness, to be able to support claimants with job applications, including on-line job-searching skills, and follow-up actions, for example.

The service specification also required that providers 'must ensure there is sufficient facilitator resource (provider advisers) for every claimant who attends on a given day to job search, for example, ensuring there is a minimum supervision ratio 1:12'.

2.2.2   Minimum service levels

Contracts with the pilot providers were managed by the DWP Performance Management team against a number of specified minimum service levels, which the provider had to meet for every claimant who attended on a given day. The areas covered by the minimum service levels related to:

• **Joining the Pilots** – Initial interviews.

• **During the Pilots** – Action plans, claimant portfolios, Supervised Jobsearch activities and attendance management.

• **Decision Making and Appeals (DMA) action** – referrals to DMA action for failure to attend/participate.

• **Leaving the Pilots** – Exit interviews.

In addition to the detailed guidance within the service specification each minimum service level outlined specific details of the service requirement and the evidence required to demonstrate that this had been achieved.

For example the minimum service level related to participant action plans states:

> *'The provider must keep a record of all participation and agreed activities to be undertaken throughout the Supervised Jobsearch, and ensure all agreed activities are recorded on the action plan within 1 day.'*

The evidence requirement related to this minimum service level (which should be available for performance management review) is detailed below:

• Is there an action plan?

• Is the action plan signed by both the claimant and facilitator?

• Are the activities undertaken recorded on the action plan within one day?

• Is the action plan individually tailored to track the activities of each claimant?

• Is the action plan reviewed and updated weekly?

• Is the action plan available for DWP Contracted Employment Provision? Directorate (CEPD) management checks, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and European Social Fund (ESF) checks.

Such evidence should offer a good indication of the provider's action planning process. It is, useful to note though that some aspects of service delivery can be more difficult to specify and capture via this type of evidence. For example, the minimum service level related to Supervised Jobsearch activities states *'that activities must be individually tailored to meet the requirements of each claimant'*. The evidence requirement related to this minimum service level states that throughout the pilots the provider has kept a record of the following:

• career guidance, mentoring and counselling to improve their job skills;

• evidence of all job applications and the outcome/response;

- key job-search web sites used on a regular basis;

- that career discussions have taken place every fortnight;

- assess the claimant's job readiness every fortnight;

- claimants' email address;

- claimants' job-search activities (either on Universal Jobmatch or clerical copy if no DWP permission on the Universal Jobmatch account);

- updates to the claimant's 'My Workplan' as part of the Claimant Commitment;

- a list of the recruitment agencies to support claimant's job searching;

- any assistance with job applications; and

- support given for job interview skills including preparation and presentation at interview.

In the following chapter, which discusses service delivery and claimant experience, relevant areas of the service specification or minimum service levels are outlined prior to the discussion of findings related to that area. This aims to clarify any distinction between the intended design of the intervention and participant and provider perceptions of what was delivered.

2.3 Theory of change

The model developed for this evaluation was built on data from the scoping stage outlined in the methodology section of the previous chapter (i.e. review of documentation such as the service specification and interviews with senior DWP and provider staff.) The model describes the overall goals, anticipated high level and intermediate outcomes and the policy interventions and policy drivers that support these. The model therefore maps the anticipated sequences of change that lead to the desired overall goals that the policy aims to achieve, assuming it is implemented as indicated.

As outlined in section 1.2 above, the SJP involved two groups of claimants. The pre-WP pilot was intended to test Supervised Jobsearch with claimants who displayed behaviour which indicated a need for further support, such as not taking sufficiently effective steps to secure employment. Referrals to this pilot were expected to take place around 14–15 weeks prior to WP referral[30] and were made at the discretion of Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches. The post-WP pilot was intended to test Supervised Jobsearch with claimants who had received a period of support from Jobcentre Plus after returning from the WP, and referral of this group was not subject to Work Coach discretion. Although there were likely to be some differences in the two participant groups, linked to the length of their claim for JSA a single pilot model was developed, providing a similar level and type of service across claimants. This single model is illustrated below:

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[30]   After 20–25 weeks on benefit for 18 to 24-year-olds or after 33–38 weeks on benefit for those aged 25+.

Figure 2.1   Theory of change for the Supervised Jobsearch Pilots
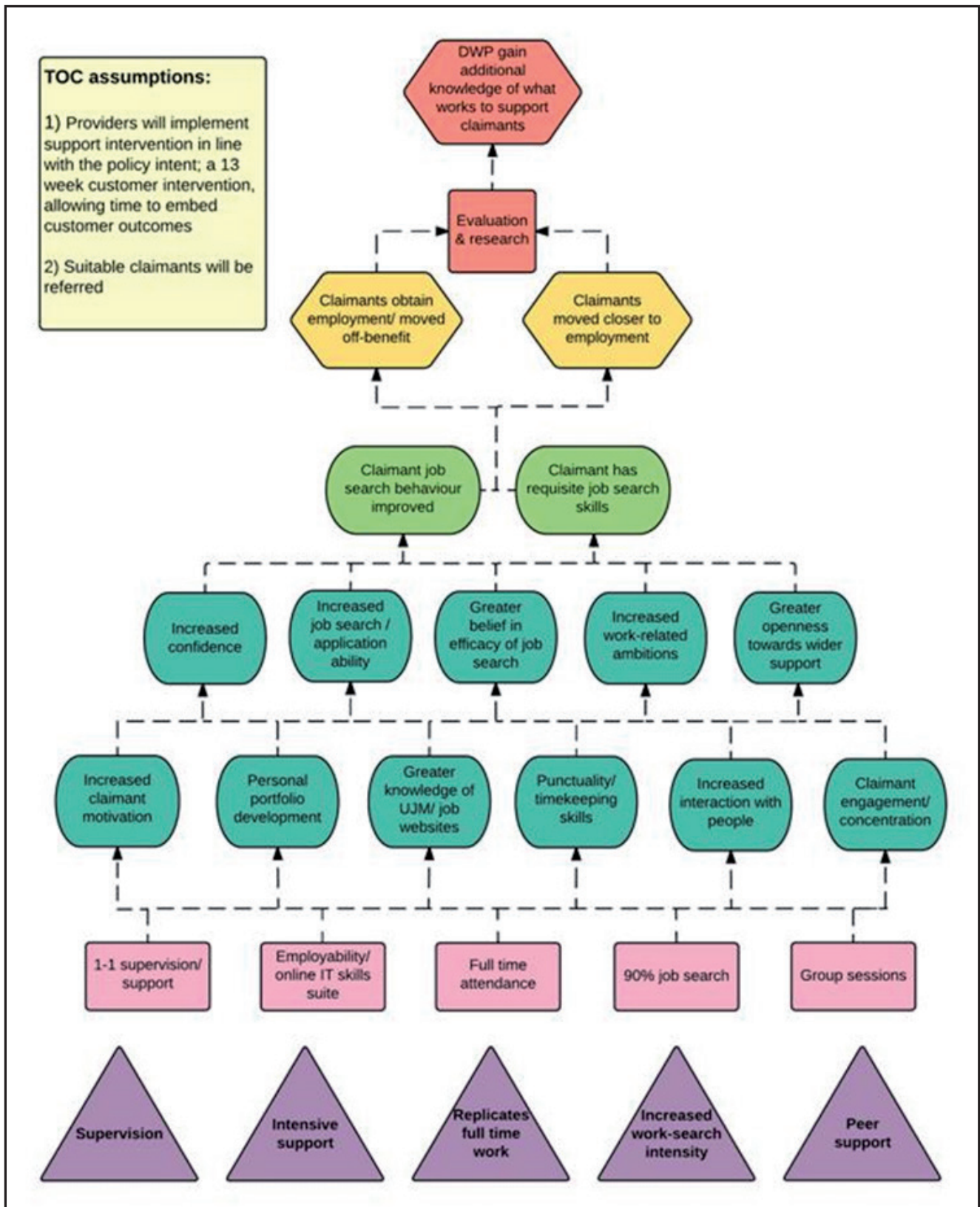
The SJP explicitly focuses on change at the individual claimant level and seeks to move claimants closer towards employment or into employment (and off benefit). By running the pilots and commissioning research and evaluation, the Department will also gain increased knowledge of what works to support claimants into employment.

As the model further describes, in order for claimants to achieve the main outcome of obtaining employment, they must have the requisite job-search skills, approach and attitude towards job search and employment.

The policy model outlines a number of steps that participants must achieve in order to reach this stage of being both behaviourally ready and appropriately skilled. The model also describes these intermediate outcomes such as increased motivation and increased on-line job-searching skills and knowledge. The level of priority placed on the achievement of each of these intermediate outcomes would vary depending upon the particular needs and circumstances of individual participants.

The level below the intermediate outcomes outlines the policy interventions which support the achievement of these outcomes. Key priorities of the intervention were the intensive level of attendance and supervision and the focus on job-search activity which was primarily focused on using on-line methods. The attendance requirement was designed to replicate employment of up to 35 hours per week for 13 weeks[31]. Staffing levels aimed to facilitate close supervision of small groups of participants, with the provision of one-to-one support as required. Below these the policy drivers that feed into the interventions to precipitate participant behaviour change are detailed.

As the model also illustrates, there are a number of assumptions which could affect the successful implementation of the policy intent. Firstly, the model operates as intended where providers adhere to the interventions specified by the Department. Secondly, the 13-week period of the intervention is sufficient time for providers to engender the necessary participant behaviour change and achieve outcomes. Thirdly, the theory of change model applies behaviour change to a specific group of claimants who require additional motivational support and job-searching skills. Therefore, the Jobcentre Plus referral process has to identify the appropriate claimants to refer to the intervention.

Findings throughout the report are compared with the theory of change model and the intended intervention, as outlined in the DWP pilot specification. This helps to indicate how findings relate to the intervention, rather than issues related to delivery or implementation of the randomised controlled trial (RCT).

2.4   Referral flows and implications for delivery

The DWP SJP Specification and Supporting Information issued to providers stated that the anticipated numbers of claimants would be up to 3,000 for each pilot and up to 3,000 for the relative control groups; and that DWP provides no guarantee, warranty or assurance as to the actual volumes and process timings that will apply during the life of the contract.

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[31]   Where a claimant was seeking part-time work due to caring responsibilities their pilot attendance could be adjusted accordingly, in agreement with Jobcentre Plus.

As noted in section 1.6 and Appendix A, referral volumes were lower than anticipated.[32] In total across all pilot areas, 2389 individuals' details were received by providers via the DWP Provider Referral and Payment (PRaP) system. A smaller number of individuals (1,801) were recorded as attracting payment in the official data indicating not all of these referrals would have gone on to start SJP[33].

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[32] As discussed in section 1.2, DWP extended the eligibility criteria for the Post-WP pilot, and increased the proportion of pilot participants allocated to the treatment, rather than control, group for both pilots.

[33] PRaP is the DWP Provider Referrals and Payment system which enables secure, automated exchanges of information about customers referred to providers, and payments from DWP to providers.

3 Supervised Jobsearch delivery and claimant experience

This chapter presents the findings on participant characteristics, and pilot delivery, offering some contextual data on the challenges associated with pilot implementation. This includes an exploration of some of the barriers to employment and pilot participation, an outline of pilot attendance and completion patterns, and provider and participant views and experiences of key elements of the pilot delivery model.

3.1 Supervised Jobsearch participants

The Wave 1 quantitative survey gathered socio-demographic and employment history data on participants of the Supervised Jobsearch Pilots (SJP).

3.1.1 Socio-demographic characteristics

This section summarises the demographic characteristics of Supervised Jobsearch participants. Participants were more likely to be male than female, and this applied particularly to the post-Work Programme (WP) group (76 per cent of whom were male); see Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Gender profile of participants

| | Column percentages | | |
	Pre-Work Programme	Post-Work Programme	Total
Male	57	76	73
Female	43	24	27
Base	89	445	534

Base: All Wave 1 respondents.

Three in ten participants (30 per cent) were aged 50 or over, and this proportion was higher for the post-WP group than for the pre-WP group (32 per cent compared with 19 per cent); see Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Age profile of participants

| | Column percentages | | |
	Pre-Work Programme	Post-Work Programme	Total
18-24	28	7	11
25-34	22	26	25
35-49	29	34	33
50-64	19	32	30
Refused	1	1	1
Base	89	445	534

Base: All Wave 1 respondents

Other key demographic characteristics are as follows; figures are based on all participants, combining both pilots:

• one in four respondents (25 per cent) had dependent children living with them;

• one in ten (ten per cent) had caring responsibilities for someone who is sick, disabled or elderly – either in their own household (eight per cent) or outside their household (three per cent);

• Almost three in ten (29 per cent) said they had a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness. There was no significant difference between pre-and post-WP participants; however, as seen in section 3.3, pre-WP participants were more likely to report health issues or a disability as a barrier to work;

• holding a driving licence has been found to be an important driver of work entry. This is both because of its practical benefits, in providing greater access to workplaces and job-search opportunities, and because possession of a driving licence can be viewed as a type of 'qualification' or credential[34]. Possession of a driving licence can therefore be a useful proxy for distance from the labour market. Less than a third of respondents (31 per cent) had a current driving licence;

• six per cent said that English was not their first language; and

• one in six (16 per cent) were from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) group.

Provider views of pilot participants from the qualitative interviews were in line with survey responses, as it was suggested that participants were 'diverse'. In addition to the characteristics outlined above, providers referred to working with participants with low levels of literacy and numeracy, with learning difficulties, and with mental health conditions. This is discussed further in section 3.2 below.

3.1.2 Experience prior to Supervised Jobsearch

The Wave 1 quantitative survey provides details on participants' self-reported previous work experience, and this confirms that many participants had not worked for a long period of time. A third said that they had either not worked for five years or more or had never worked (34 per cent). This applied particularly to the post-WP participants, 36 per cent of whom said that they had either not worked for at least five years or had never worked (compared with 22 per cent of pre-WP participants).

The following groups of participants were more likely to report they had spent five years or more out of work (or had never worked):

• women (42 per cent) compared with men (31 per cent);

• older participants (38 per cent of those aged 35 or over, compared with 26 per cent of those aged under 35);

• disabled participants (42 per cent compared with 30 per cent of non-disabled participants).

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[34] See for example Evans *et al*., (2004). and Hales *et al*., (2003).

3.2   Barriers to employment

Supervised Jobsearch participants were highly diverse, with varied backgrounds and employment experience; this diversity was also evident in the barriers to employment participants faced. The Wave 1 survey took place between two and five months after participants had started on the pilots. At this point, most respondents (87 per cent) were not in work, and these respondents were asked what they thought was preventing them from finding work. The main barriers related to the lack of available jobs: 22 per cent said there was a lack of vacancies or too much competition for jobs, while 18 per cent said there was a lack of jobs available locally. Respondents also mentioned personal characteristics: health issues or disabilities that limited the kind of work they could do (14 per cent), their age (11 per cent) or family or caring commitments (five per cent).

The other main types of barrier related to respondents' experience and skills: 14 per cent said that lack of work experience was a barrier, while nine per cent mentioned lack of skills, and five per cent mentioned the length of time they had spent out of work. In addition, seven per cent said that transport or travel difficulties were a barrier.

The only statistically significant difference between the two pilot groups was that respondents in the pre-WP group were more likely than those in the post-WP group to say that health issues or disabilities were a barrier (22 per cent compared with 13 per cent).

Figure 3.1   Barriers to work

Base: All Wave 1 respondents not in paid work at the time of the interview (466).
Note: Chart includes responses given by at least five per cent of respondents only; respondents were able to give more than one response.
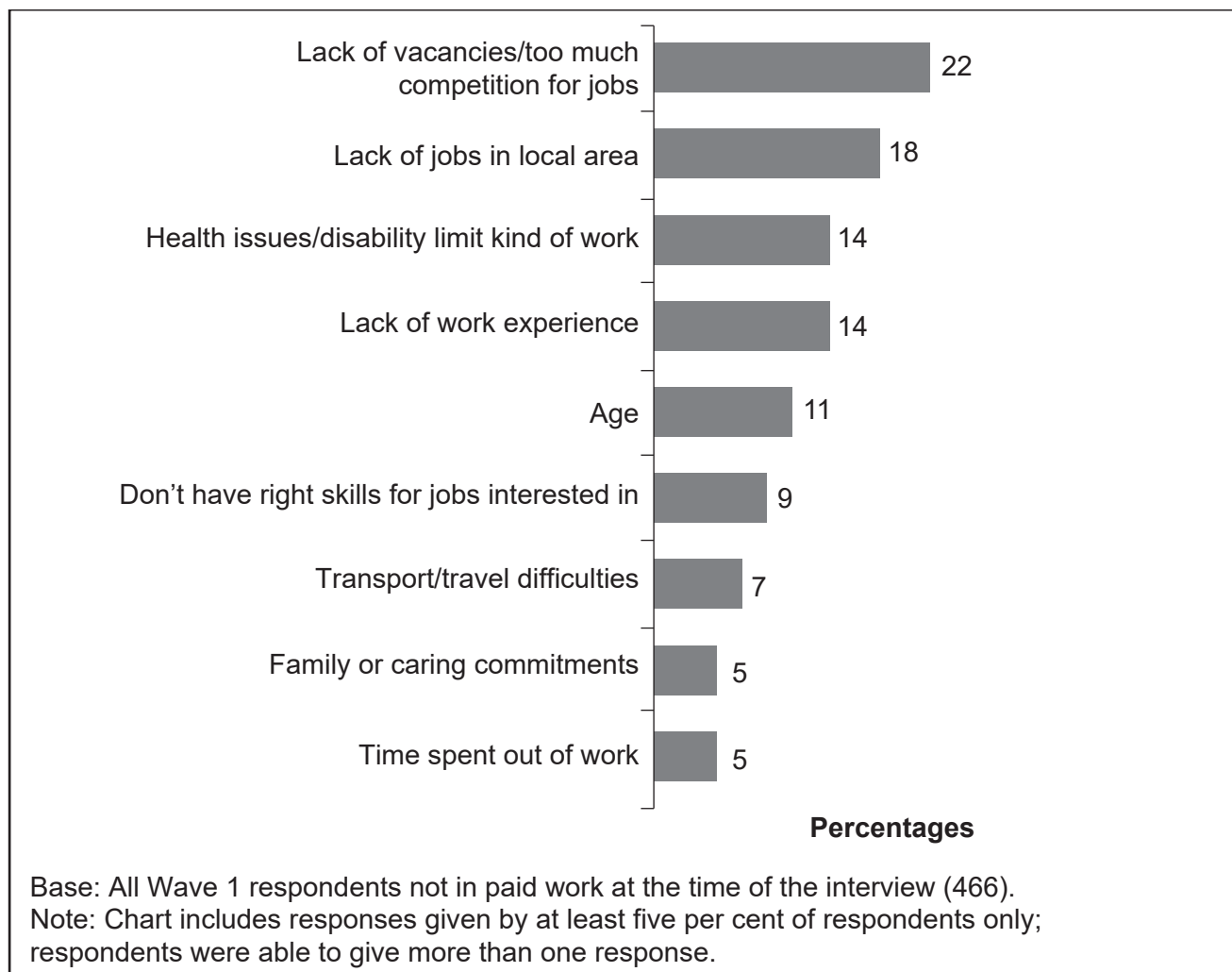
These findings were supported by the views of **provider staff** who identified a number of common barriers to employment for pilot participants. These included a lack of recent work experience or appropriate skills, caring responsibilities, poor transport (particularly in rural areas), having English as a second language, mental health conditions, poor literacy and numeracy and learning difficulties. Low levels of self-esteem and confidence were also reported to be a barrier for some.

As outlined in section 1.2 (above), pilot participants, in particular those in the post-WP group, had been unemployed and claiming benefit for some time; more than half (53 per cent) of those in the post-WP group said they had not worked for three years or more. A number of front line provider staff reported that they had been told that pilot participants would be 'job ready', although requiring additional job-search support and supervision. However, some staff reported that many participants were not what they considered job ready, and needed more than simply support and supervision with job-search activities. Providers who used the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) assessment system for assessing job readiness suggested there were very few *'genuinely 'green'* [most job ready] *customers and a large group of amber and reds* [least job ready]*.'* One provider commented that the participants facing the most significant barriers and who were the hardest to support were those who had been out of work for a long period and who had already received support from Jobcentre Plus, with little success.

3.2.1   Challenges to pilot participation

Some of the identified barriers to employment were also offered by **provider staff** as examples of barriers to successful engagement with the pilots. For example, they described participants with significant reading/writing difficulties, very limited or non-existent computer skills and learning difficulties. Providers suggested that participants facing these types of barriers struggled to engage with the pilots due to the focus on individual computer-based job-search activity.

Provider staff also noted more practical challenges to full-time engagement such as participants with childcare responsibilities. As discussed previously there were circumstances under which pilot involvement could be modified to fit participants' needs, for example, changing start and end times to accommodate such responsibilities; the responsibility for authorising this lay with the referring Jobcentre. There were, however, some participant reports of delays in the necessary authorisation reaching provider staff.

Commenting on others involved in the pilots, some **participants** in the qualitative interviews also reported that there were some people with high support needs such as learning difficulties, mental health conditions or other issues such as substance dependency, in their groups. As well as highlighting the additional support required by some participants, these respondents also questioned the appropriateness (in terms of capacity and capability) of some of the referrals made.

Provider staff reported that in some instances the widely varying support needs of participants could be a source of tensions and in some cases disruptive behaviour:

> *'There's one gentleman* [on site] *now who is particularly aggressive and screams and shouts. We do believe he does have a drug addiction but until he actually does do something for me to…I'm not in a position to remove him from the branch. So it is unnerving and scary at times for both staff and clients.'*

> (Frontline Adviser, prime provider)

This provider explained that while they were able to support people facing some types of barriers to engagement with the pilots, such as mild learning difficulties, they did not feel fully equipped or sufficiently prepared to support other types of need. This included participants experiencing acute mental health conditions or substance dependency issues.

3.3 Attendance and completion

This section examines completion rates on the pilots, as well as the extent to which participants attended for the full duration.

3.3.1 Completion

Participants were expected to attend Supervised Jobsearch for 13 weeks, unless they left Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) during this time. This could be for a mix of reasons, for example because they found a job or for other reasons, discussed in section 3.3.2.

In the **quantitative survey**, two in five participants (40 per cent) said they left the pilots early, while the remainder said they completed the full amount of time on the pilots.

Pre-WP participants were much more likely than post-WP participants to have reported that they left early (63 per cent compared with 35 per cent), as shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2   Pilot completion

Base: Wave 2 participants (268), Pre-Work Programme (51), Post-Work Programme (216).
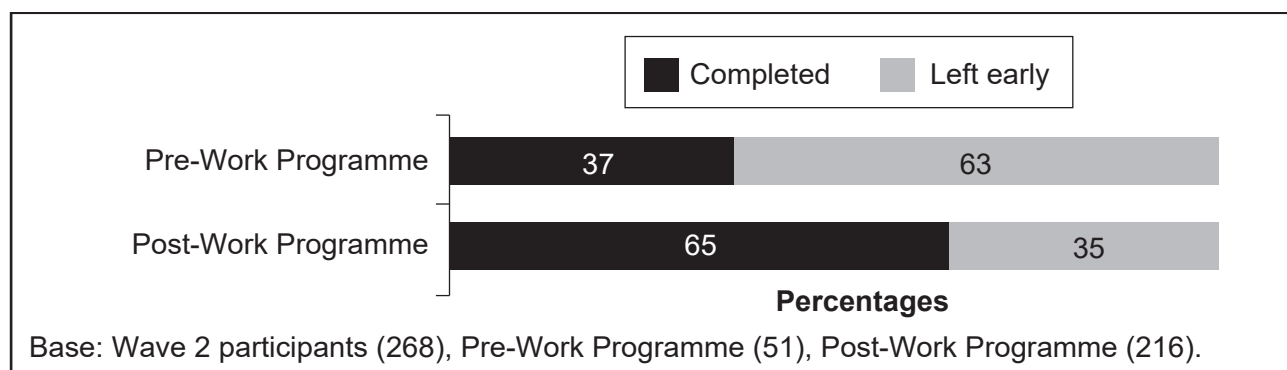
3.3.2 Reasons for non-completion

Respondents in the **quantitative survey** who had left the pilots early gave two main reasons:

• getting a job offer or starting a job (46 per cent); this was higher among pre-WP participants (59 per cent) than post-WP participants (41 per cent). This means that more than a third of all pre-WP participants left early to start a job;

• being unable to stay on the pilots because of health problems (28 per cent), higher among post-WP participants (31 per cent) than pre-WP participants (20 per cent).

3.3.3 Hours attended

The intention was that most participants would attend the pilots for 35 hours per week. At the Wave 1 **quantitative survey**, most respondents said they spent between 30 and 35 hours per week on the pilots (66 per cent), while 18 per cent said they were on the pilots for more than 35 hours per week. Just 15 per cent gave a figure of less than 30 hours per week; specifically:

- two per cent said they spent less than 10 hours per week on the pilots;

- three per cent said they spent between 10 and 19 hours per week; and

- nine per cent said they spent between 20 and 29 hours per week.

Participants who had dependent children were more likely to say they had spent less than 30 hours per week on the pilots (26 per cent compared with 11 per cent of those without children).

These findings are in line with the pilot design, in which the number of hours could be reduced to reflect particular circumstances (e.g. caring or childcare responsibilities), in agreement with Jobcentre Plus.

3.3.4   Time completed and attendance

Pilot participation was intended to last for up to 13 weeks in total. According to the **quantitative survey**, participants who left the pilots early often completed most of the pilots: around a third (36 per cent) completed two months or more. At the other extreme, 39 per cent of those who left early spent less than a month on the pilots, including ten per cent who left in the first week. The remaining 25 per cent spent between one and two months on the pilots.

Around half of Wave 1 **survey respondents** (51 per cent) said that they missed time on the pilots when they were meant to attend (Figure 3.3), although in most of these cases, they reported that this involved missing only a little amount of time. Only one in ten (ten per cent) said that they missed 'most' or 'some' of the time on the pilots.

Figure 3.3   Attendance at pilots

Percentages

Base: All Wave 1 respondents (534).
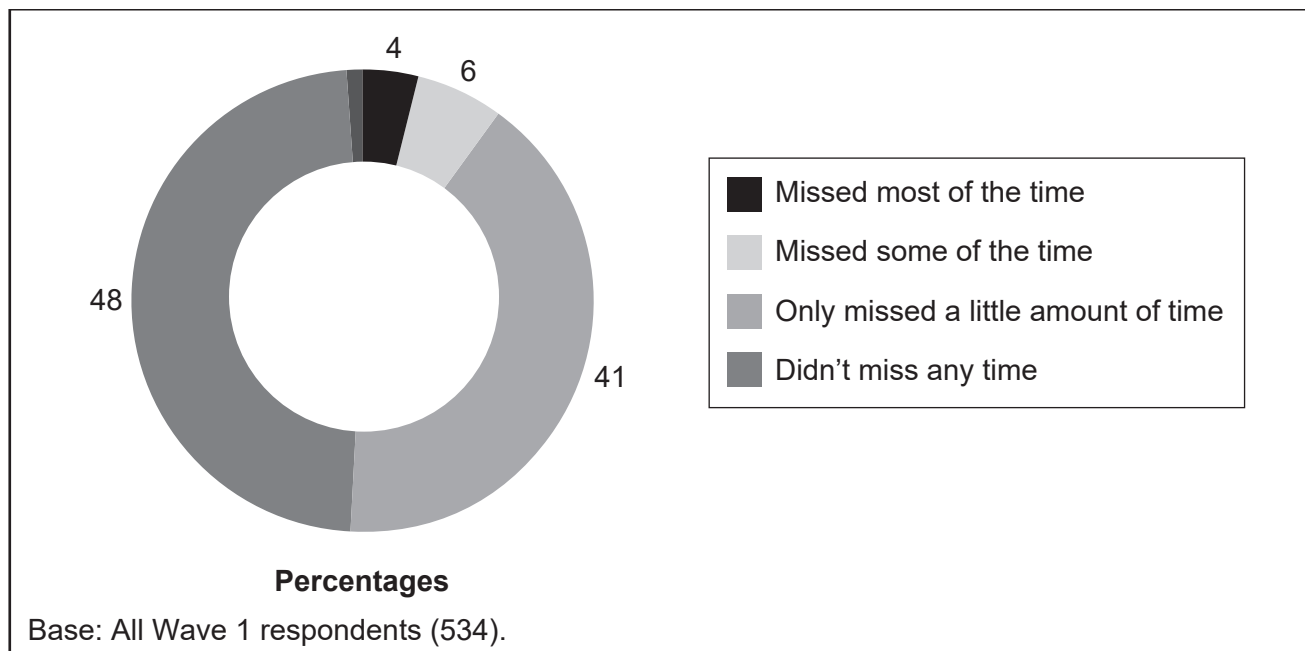
3.3.5   Mandation

Once referred to the pilots, claimants were required to attend the pilots for 35 hours per week for 13 weeks, unless they left Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) during this time. Attendance was mandatory and failure to participate without good reason would lead to a benefit sanction. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) service specification noted that mandation involves notifying the participant in writing of their requirements to attend and participate and any potential consequences of failing to attend or participate without good reason. As discussed previously this was included in the information given to participants at the point of referral to the pilots.

The specification also outlined the process to be followed by providers where a participant failed to attend or participate without good reason. This involved the provider making a 'Decision Making and Appeals' referral directly to a DWP Labour Market Decision Making (LMDM) team, and at the same time informing Jobcentre Plus of this action. Whilst it was the responsibility of the provider to make this referral, the LMDM team made any decisions related to the application of a benefit sanction.

Although participant views on the mandatory nature of the pilots were not sought directly, some did raise this issue during the qualitative interviews. For some of these participants, the mandatory nature of the pilots appeared to engender a sense of them being punished for being unemployed.

> *'That you're just sat there, that you're unemployed. You had to sit there for 35 hours a week. If you didn't do it, you'd have your money stopped.'*

> (Participant, Wave 1)

Other participants also described being made to feel like a 'naughty child' which they described as having a demoralising effect and/or reducing their motivation to look for work (discussed in more detail in section 4.3.2). For others, the use of referrals for sanctions was reported to be the dominant approach utilised by advisers who supervised their time on the pilots. One individual suggested the use of sanctions was punitive and widespread.

> *'I felt they were just looking to sanction people, yeah, I really did.'*

> (Participant, Wave 1)

This participant described how this perceived threat caused her significant anxiety. The participant believed this, along with a direct experience of being sanctioned, contributed to a deterioration in her mental health, with her reporting a subsequent movement onto Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) that she attributed to her attendance on the pilots.

In contrast, a number of other participants appeared more indifferent to mandation.

> *'I have no feelings, I had to do it or they cut my benefits, as simple as that.'*

> (Participant, Wave 1)

Participants were asked in the qualitative interviews if they would have attended the pilots on a voluntary basis. Some suggested that they would, although some also indicated that they would not have attended the full duration had it not been for the knowledge of a potential benefit sanction.

3.4 Pilot delivery

As discussed in section 1.2, the Supervised Jobsearch pilots aimed to make claimants' job search more effective in order to increase their likelihood of moving off benefit and into work. DWP specified that the pilot intervention delivered by providers should ensure that participants' job goals were feasible and that they had appropriate job searching and application skills. This was to include an understanding and use of web-based employment sites, the use of up-to-date and effectively tailored CVs and application materials and interview skills. Providers were also required to provide career guidance, mentoring and counselling to improve job skills, throughout participants' time on the pilots.

In addition to these outputs, the DWP contract specification included detailed requirements related to areas such as staffing (both the areas that staff should be competent to deliver[35] and a frontline staffing ratio of one adviser to 12 participants) and pilot delivery site facilities (including individual access to desks and computer equipment). As noted in section 2.2, provider compliance with a number of their contractual obligations was monitored via a series of minimum service levels.

Where relevant the DWP requirements for particular activities, such as referral and action planning processes, are outlined within the subsequent sections which offer findings related to pilot delivery.

3.4.1 Overview of Supervised Jobsearch

The DWP specification stated that claimants would be mandated to attend the provider's premises, Monday to Friday, for up to 35 hours, less any agreed restrictions on their availability as agreed within their Jobcentre Plus Claimant Commitment. In accordance with this a consistent picture emerged from **provider interviews** when describing the model of delivery, including the seven-hour day, five-day working week and the office-based setting for the duration of the pilots. In line with the policy intent for the pilots, providers noted the similarity between pilot participation and full-time employment:

> '[i]*t's like having a job, and…getting your benefits for it'.*

> (Site manager, lead provider)

Participants were scheduled a set lunch break and two short breaks: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Participants could also have 'comfort breaks' away from computers.

As well as the necessary desks and computers, Supervised Jobsearch offices usually had break out areas and tea and coffee making facilities. Providers stressed the importance of having a pleasant work environment as they felt this helped participants adjust and settle into the pilots. For some interviewees, it appeared that the office environment was an integral element to the overall model as it reproduced a workplace and enhanced the sense of the pilots replicating employment.

Provider views on specific aspects of the pilot delivery model are discussed in more detail within subsequent sub sections. Findings on overall views on the pilots, including perspectives on refining the delivery model, are presented in Chapter 5.

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[35] For example, the ability to assess how 'job ready' participants are, to provide career guidance, mentoring and counselling to support the job-search activities and to have excellent interpersonal and written communication skills.

3.5 Staff and claimant experiences of referral flows

When discussing the implementation of the pilots, SJP providers reported some difficulties associated with the flow of participant referrals from Jobcentre Plus. As noted in section 2.4, referral volumes received by providers were lower than anticipated. Providers also indicated that they had expected the referral of participants via a steady flow during the first three months of the pilots although the DWP specification offered no guarantee as to actual volumes and timing. In practice providers reported that very few referrals were received during the first five to seven weeks of the pilots going live, followed by a sudden increase in volumes[36].

Providers also reported that this increase came without notice and, in some instances, overwhelmed particular sites that had reduced their initial capacity due to the lower than expected pattern of early referrals[37]. One provider explained their site went from receiving one or two participants a day, to receiving between 10-17.

> 'the numbers of referrals were low to start with and…it was kind of floodgates opened, but then that actually had a very negative impact on what we were doing.'

> (Team leader, subcontracted provider)

In another instance a small sub-contracted provider reported that they had made staff redundant due to the very low initial referral volumes, only to struggle once volumes increased. Eventually they re-recruited staff in order to meet the minimum participant to staff ratio required by their contract.

Negative consequences reported by other frontline provider staff included overcrowding, lack of desks and resources and insufficient staffing to maintain the minimum staffing ratio as required by the service specification. Some participants also reported that overcrowding had meant having to share a desk or computer. In one example, a participant reported that during one period they could only use a computer every one in three days, and then in two-hour slots.

Another issue related to the reported sudden high number of participants attending the pilots was the associated pressure this could place on front line advisers. In some instances, where staffing ratios were compromised, this led to some participants saying they received little one-to-one support. There were also some reports from providers and participants of overcrowding, leading to tense office environments with disruptive and sometimes unacceptable behaviour. Some participants who described attending sites that were experiencing high volumes of referrals recalled their experience in very negative terms such as 'absolute chaos'.

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[36]   An expansion of participant eligibility criteria was implemented by Jobcentre Plus in response to low numbers of referrals (see section 1.2).

[37]   At the point of reporting DWP stated that prime providers were sent a letter on 21 October 2014 outlining the approach to increasing volumes.

A variety of approaches was adopted by providers in response to the increase in referrals, which included: using 'hot desking' and IT from another programme being run from the same office, purchasing laptops and tablets for participants to use in break-out areas, meeting rooms and other spaces, and using alternative offices belonging to the provider. It was reported that in at least one case a sub-contractor reported they had to rent and equip a completely new office space in order to meet the surge in participants. In another pilot area, additional group activities (team building for participants), were introduced in response to an office exceeding its capacity to provide sufficient desks and computers to participants following the surge in referral volumes.

There was some indication from provider staff that the early low levels of referrals may have contributed to providers delivering more intensive support to participants that may not have been possible with the planned staffing ratio. For example, one adviser explained that as a result of the very low referrals during the first few weeks, he was providing support to only three individuals; as such he was able to provide intensive digital training for one participant with a low level computer literacy. Another provider observed that the pilot was more successful in achieving participant job outcomes '*when referrals were slower, because we had more time to concentrate on people*.'

At times, therefore, the operational issues relating to participant flows during the implementation of the pilots did appear to have a fairly significant impact on delivery at many pilot sites. To some extent, these issues may have compromised the testing of the pilot model, as delivery was not always in line with the specification, an issue which should be borne in mind when interpreting the evaluation findings.

3.6 Referral, induction and action planning

DWP issued a number of letters, specifying the mandatory requirements and consequences of failing to participate, including some factsheets which offered detailed information on the SJP. These aimed to offer participants detailed information on the pilots, including attendance requirements and information on the potential consequences (in terms of benefit sanction) of failing to attend or participate without good reason. The DWP specification for pilot delivery and associated minimum service levels also outlined a number of requirements related to the referral process, initial provider-participant interview and action planning. These included a requirement for the provider to carry out an initial interview within five working days of the referral from Jobcentre Plus, outlined areas to be covered in the initial interview and offered details on the production and regular review of participant action plans.

3.6.1 Referral process

A number of participants described their positive expectations of the pilots based on the information they were given by Jobcentre Plus staff at the point of referral. One recalled that the referral letter led him to believe that Supervised Jobsearch, '*was going to give us help, support and loads of other things that we needed to…get back to work, which was great*.' Others reported an expectation that they would receive '*help with writing application forms, interview techniques, that kind of thing.*'

Whilst these types of activities all clearly fall within the intended scope of pilot delivery, other participants described expecting to receive access to training that would lead to qualifications. It was not clear how these expectations were formed, as access to training of this sort was not part of the planned pilot intervention. These participants reported that it quickly became apparent that these expectations were unlikely to materialise. Their disappointment that these expectations were not met did appear to lead to some negative views of the pilots overall (for more discussion about overall views, see section 5.1).

The DWP service specification described the referral process whereby Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches would refer eligible claimants by contacting the prime provider and arranging a one-to-one, face-to-face initial meeting. Prime providers were to have a designated point of contact to field and manage phone calls to book these appointments which would be with their own staff (in the case of a delivery prime) or with a sub-contracted provider. The Work Coach would then make the referral to the provider via the DWP Provider Referral and Payments (PRaP) system.

This referral process was described by some **provider staff** as a '*warm handover*' with the initial contact initiated by the Jobcentre Plus on behalf of the participant and not by the participant personally, although in practice there did not appear to be any direct contact between Jobcentre Plus staff and the frontline provider adviser[38]. Participant details were received by providers via DWP PRaP system, often the day before the participant's initial appointment with the provider. The referral document provided details about the participant, their contact details, work history, qualifications and aspirations. Provider staff reported mixed views about the usefulness of the information provided. Some suggested it was limited, although most felt it was better to have some as opposed to no information prior to the participant arriving. Providers also reported that upon receiving a referral they usually arranged an initial appointment with the participant within a day or two.

There were also some reports from **providers** that the outlined referral process was not followed in a minority of cases. They described how some participants were provided with a letter by Jobcentre staff directing them to attend the provider's office with no advance warning to the provider concerned. Some **provider staff and participants** also suggested that the information provided to participants prior to their arrival was not always effective. Despite being provided with a referral letter from the Jobcentre giving an outline of the pilots, the date and time they were to commence the pilots from, and confirming that attendance is mandated, some frontline provider advisers felt that participants often failed to absorb any of the information, other than when to attend. This sometimes created awkward situations whereby the participant had not prepared to attend for the entire first day following their initial appointment.

> '*We had people turning up for the induction and saying, "Excuse me, do you know how long this is going to last because I have to be at x, y and z." We said, "No, you start with us at 09:00. You're going to be here from 09:00, unless your hours have been agreed with the Jobcentre, as far as we're concerned you're here from 09:00 until 17:00 for five days with us a week." "Nobody told us that"'*

(Site Manager, subcontracted provider)

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[38] Jobcentre Plus staff would usually contact a prime provider's contact centre by telephone, who would in turn arrange an appointment for the participant to attend a provider site for an induction into the SJP.

Despite the issue of mandatory letters and factsheets as described above some **participants** reported that they were given limited information about the pilots, and described feeling shocked when they attended and the extent and duration of the pilots was outlined. In particular, some had not expected to spend a full day at their initial appointment, which was usually their induction and assessment. In contrast, other participants appeared to recall receiving fairly clear information about attendance requirements either from the Jobcentre or by letter.

> *'They* [the Jobcentre] *gave me an introductory on it to tell me what it would be about. I was under the impression that I would be helped to find jobs. I was obligated to do it otherwise I would have lost my benefits. I had to attend, you know, the expected 37 hours a week.'*

> (Participant, Wave 1)

3.6.2 Induction

The DWP specification stated that the provider must carry out a one-to-one initial interview, which included some assessment of participant skills, experience and support requirements within five working days of the referral from Jobcentre Plus. Most **providers** reported that they sought to carry out an induction and one-to-one assessment of participant needs on the first day of attendance. However, in some sites, due to the high number of referrals being received on any one day, inductions were staggered through the first week of attendance week to free up adviser time to carry out the one-to-one assessments.

Inductions appeared to cover similar ground across all of the pilot sites. They usually served as an introduction to the pilots and to the provider, set out the pilot offer to the participants and consequences of non-compliance. The code of conduct, health and safety policy and data protection issues were also covered.

Participant first impressions tended to be determined by whether, and to what extent, they received a one-to-one introduction to the pilots from provider staff. At one end, participants who described meeting advisers face-to-face during their initial visit tended to describe their experience in positive terms, '*perfectly fine, absolutely great, no problems whatsoever*'. In turn, these positive first impressions appeared to influence participants' overall experience of the pilots.

In contrast to this, other participants who reported attending sites experiencing high volumes of participant referrals and were therefore more likely to receive less personal, group inductions recalled their experience in more negative terms. Some participants also suggested the tone of the pilots from the outset was not very welcoming, which they felt set the mood for their experience of the rest of the pilots:

> *'rather than welcoming us* [the adviser] *spent the first half an hour telling us how if we didn't do this we'd be sanctioned, if we didn't do that we'd be sanctioned, if you didn't do the other you'd be sanctioned, you can't have a medical appointment unless we see it in writing first or you'll be sanctioned."*

> (Participant, Wave 2)

Further participant views on the support and supervision element of pilot delivery are outlined in section 3.7.4 below.

3.6.3 Assessment and action planning

Provider staff generally considered it important that initial assessments were carried out as soon as possible, as Supervised Jobsearch was a short, intensive programme (as compared to the two-year duration of the WP) so that participants '*had to hit the ground running*'.

Providers described the assessment as covering the participants' capabilities, aspirations, support needs and barriers to employment (criminal records, self-esteem/confidence, etc). The one-to-one nature of the assessment was valued by advisers as they felt it allowed them gain an understanding of the participant and enabled them to begin to build a rapport and degree of trust. They also suggested that the assessment gave participants an opportunity to express their own needs and aspirations.

The outcome of the assessment process was usually described by providers as an action plan for the participant which set out tasks and objectives for the duration of the pilots. This is in line with DWP requirements that action plans were produced and these were individually tailored to track the activities of each claimant. Provider staff also described regular review of action plans with participants; again this aligns with DWP requirements which required action plan review and updating on a weekly basis.

Participants' views on action planning were more mixed. There was limited recall over the timing of their assessments, and some suggested no assessment had taken place. Others recalled being '*asked a lot of questions*'. These covered areas such as work history, aspirations and existing job application material (CVs and cover letters). Some participants also recalled carrying out literacy and numeracy tests.

Where participants did recall a discussion of goals, some considered these and the resulting action plans to be fairly basic.

> '*The action plan was freeform, basically turn up, don't be rude, job search.*'

> (Participant, Wave 1)

Some participants did indicate that their action plan included setting goals to be achieved during the course of the pilots, although there appeared to be some inconsistency in how action plans were actually used. Some participants described weekly meetings where action plans were reviewed. Others suggested they were not reviewed regularly or revisited only at the end of the pilots, which would contravene the minimum service levels for action planning.

3.7 Delivery model – core elements

In the overview of the DWP specification pilot participants are described as '*attend*[ing] *a local centre to do jobsearching activities of up to 35 hours per week.*' The specification states that claimants '*will undertake any activity related to searching and applying for jobs, with support and supervision from the provider.*' The specification does not present a precise definition of what 'job-searching activities' should consist of but provides examples such as, 'help with job search, job goals, cover letters and interview techniques.'

The research process identified a number of 'core' elements within pilot delivery which encompassed the majority of participant activities, the environment within which the pilots were delivered and the providers' approach to the support and supervision of participants. Findings related to a number of these core elements of service delivery are discussed in more detail in the following subsections. It should be noted that although the pilots involved

two specific claimant groups (pre- and post-WP) they all received the same intervention, and were treated as a single group by the pilot providers.

3.7.1   Workplace environment

A key element of the Supervised Jobsearch design was that it should replicate work with the delivery environment designed to mimic a working office. This in turn facilitated intermediate outcomes within the model such as increased social interaction for participants. Many providers stressed the importance of this workplace environment and viewed this as a key integral element to the overall model. Providers also acknowledged the benefits to participants of increased social interaction and peer support which they suggested could help build participant confidence. Attending the pilot site alongside their peers was also identified as a key benefit by many **participants**. For some this social aspect was the main strength of the pilots. The pilot was also felt to have provided an opportunity to engage with other people, to bond over shared experience and offer a setting to provide and receive peer support.

> *'…you were out socialising with people in a similar situation and I was able to share the benefit of my experience and help other people out, which they found helpful.'*

> (Participant, Wave 2)

This type of peer support was, in general, well regarded. The reported lack of support from some provider advisers, which is discussed in more detail in the next section, appeared in some cases to result in peer support supplementing advisers' support functions.

> *'I used to help people on the computer because there was quite a lot of people who weren't computer literate so I found myself sort of going round.'*

> (Participant, Wave 1)

As well as the social and peer support benefits, the working environment was reported by some to help improve their levels of confidence, another key intermediate outcome of the pilot model, discussed further in section 4.3.2.

> *'when I was* [not attending Supervised Jobsearch]*, I didn't know no one, couldn't speak in front of no one, couldn't speak to no one and it's helped me a lot.'*

> (Participant, Wave 1)

Whilst for some working within the pilot site was viewed as helpful, others viewed the busy site environment more negatively. This sentiment was amplified where tensions were identified at sites. The boisterous environment caused by the disparate needs of SJP participants, varying levels of motivation and engagement with the pilots, and sometimes rowdy and disruptive behaviour of other participants in their group, was felt by some to be unpleasant and hostile.

Participants who reported having had experienced this type of environment felt it had a negative impact on their experience of the pilots overall '*It was OK until people started kicking off about being there and I had to sit next to these people, which was not nice*'. While some respondents identified particular individuals as the cause of the disruption, one participant suggested that frustration with the pilots itself could lead to aggressive and disruptive behaviour:

'Sometimes it was a bit crowded and you had got some very disinterested people there that weren't really interested at all. They were making a lot of noise, shouting around and playing and getting aggravated. And I understand why they were. If you put young men in an environment like that, you tell them to do something without an end result, they get bored'.

(Participant, Wave 1)

3.7.2　Access to ICT

Participant access to appropriate information and communications technology (ICT) was a core requirement for the pilot sites. DWP specified that each participant should have access to working computers with internet facilities, printers, data storage devices and telephones for the duration of their attendance at the pilots.

Access to computers and telephones was generally well regarded by the **participants** who took part in qualitative interviews, although a number of pilot sites struggled to offer these core facilities during periods of peak referrals. Likewise, obtaining adviser support or help using computers or the internet was appreciated by participants, although this did not appear to be available to all respondents, despite the requirement for this within the DWP service specification.

3.7.3　Focus on individual job search

The DWP specification indicated that whilst job-searching activities could include '*group sessions to help progress the claimants' aptitude to jobsearch effectively and address barriers which may affect their ability*.' It also notes that these group sessions must not make up more than 10 per cent of participant activity per week.

Thus whilst it was not expressly indicated as such within the DWP specification there was a clear sense from the provider interviews that they interpreted the intent for the core focus for 90 per cent of participant activity as individually-based job-searching activity i.e. searching and applying for jobs.

Qualitative interviews with both **providers and participants** confirmed that individual job search on a computer or through newspaper was the most prevalent activity. Providers agreed that individual job search was the key activity for the pilots, and an important step towards securing employment for participants. The pilot design aimed to have provider advisers available to participants who were carrying out this activity to supervise and offer support where required. Section 3.7.4 below explores experiences of these supervisory and support activities in more detail.

The overwhelming sentiment expressed by participants towards the amount of time spent on individual job search was negative. Participants considered the activity '*repetitive*' and '*mundane*' and it was described as '*killing time.*' A number of participants noted that there were insufficient relevant job vacancies for them to apply for to fill the time allocated. Some said that they felt compelled to apply for what they believed was the same role advertised over different recruitment sites or agencies, in order to fill their time.

Although provider staff clearly recognised the importance of individual job-search activity, their views on the proportion of time spent on this activity were broadly similar to pilot participants. This element also appeared to be linked to the negative perceptions expressed by provider staff regarding the prescriptive nature of pilot delivery (discussed further in section 3.8.1.)

3.7.4   Support and supervision

In line with the pilot design of an intensive support model, DWP contracts specified a frontline staffing ratio of one adviser to 12 participants. It also outlined a wide range of required competencies for provider delivery staff to support the claimant move closer or into work. This included:

• an ability to sensitively probe and explore potential barriers/issues; and

• an understanding of participants' personal circumstances and appreciate the impact these can have on looking for work.

In the first wave of the **quantitative survey**, the majority of respondents agreed that staff on the pilots understood their particular circumstances (64 per cent), while 28 per cent disagreed. Early leavers were less likely to agree (56 per cent compared with 67 per cent of pilot completers), black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) respondents were less likely than white participants to agree (55 per cent compared with 66 per cent).

Just over half of participants (56 per cent) felt that they received about the right amount of support on the pilots, while 34 per cent said there was not enough support and six per cent said there was too much (Figure 3.4). BAME respondents were more likely to feel the amount of support had been insufficient (43 per cent compared with 31 per cent of white participants).

Figure 3.4   Attitudes to amount of support and supervision

Base: All Wave 1 respondents (534).
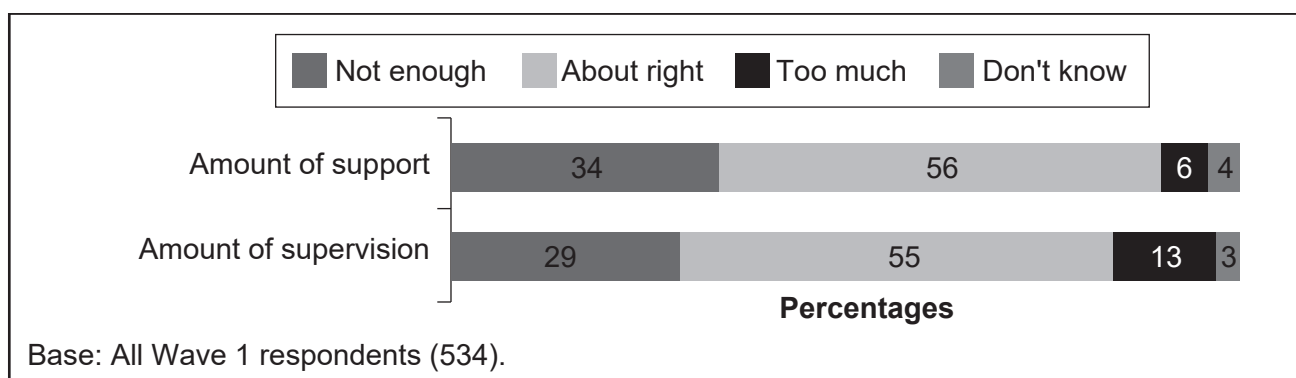
In the **qualitative interviews**, views were mixed. Some **participants** felt the support they received was good with advisers able to help them '*straight away*'. There was also some evidence of strong interpersonal relationships forming between participants and advisers, with positive one-to-one support being provided.

> '*the mentors were always there for me whenever I asked a question. They always answered it fully. They were friendly. They were engaging. Their communication was great. I can't…fault them, I thought they were brilliant.*'

(Participant Wave 1)

Participants also described examples where advisers were felt to have demonstrated sensitivity to individual needs. One participant with learning difficulties described being 'frightened' when he first arrived and saw the computers. However, after disclosing his learning difficulty, he reported that staff had listened and helped him learn new skills. In contrast to this there were reports from participants of unsympathetic behaviour of advisers, with a few isolated accounts from both claimants and provider staff of '*bullying*' behaviours. Where such staff behaviour was reported, providers indicated that appropriate corrective action was taken.

In addition, the mix of abilities within participant groups meant that in some instances provider advisers' time was capitalised on by participants with more complex needs.

> '*I remember being in one of the partner's premises and a chap with real learning difficulties, but they were really helping and supporting him, I mean he was probably benefitting being there, because of the social interaction and everything, but he had to have, you know, he was wandering around because he couldn't cope really on his own and had to be given stuff all the time and that's hard then when you're working with other people.*'

> (Project Manager, lead provider)

In relation to staff supervision, the Wave 1 **quantitative survey** found that just over half (55 per cent) said that the amount of supervision was about right, while 29 per cent said this was insufficient and 13 per cent felt there was too much supervision (Figure 3.4 above).

In the **qualitative** interviews, **participants** generally felt that advisers were primarily there to supervise, as opposed to support or advise participants. Some participants also related feelings of infantilisation associated with the supervised nature of the pilots which one participant described feeling like a '*naughty school boy*'. This view was echoed in **provider** interviews, where one suggested that the programme '*smacks of the school yard*.' Views of this nature were predominantly expressed by participants who had previously worked and/or were looking for, or had previously worked in higher skilled jobs.

Alongside their reports of participants with high support needs, provider staff also noted that some, often pre-WP, participants joined the pilots with good CVs and recent work experience (within the previous six months.) These participants were described as already applying for jobs, '*know what they're doing*', and it was suggested these participants required little support. This type of participant commonly suggested that pilot participation offered little to their pre-existing job-search activity or approach.

The range of views on support and supervision potentially highlights a degree of tension within the supportive and supervisory aspects of the pilot model. It may also reflect differences of approach between providers and the operational constraints on delivery (discussed in section 3.5). Hence when delivery was focused on supporting participants to overcome barriers and improve job-searching skills (and there was site capacity to achieve this) it was generally perceived positively by both providers and participants. Where there was more focus on the supervisory aspect of pilot design, i.e. ensuring participants attended and adhered prescribed activities then it was more likely to be perceived as punitive and experienced negatively.

3.7.5 CV and application support, interview preparation and careers advice

One of the intermediate outcomes identified within the pilot theory of change, and specified within minimum service levels, was the production of participant portfolios, which included their CVs. In addition, support in preparing applications and for interviews and careers guidance were specified as core Supervised Jobsearch activities. Whilst the preceding subsection presented overarching views on the pilots support and supervision, views presented below are related specifically to these elements of application and interview preparation and careers advice.

All of these activities were described as pilot activities in the qualitative interviews with both **providers and participants** across all of the pilot sites. This included writing CVs and covering letters, completing application forms and interview training (for example, mock interviews).

In the Wave 1 quantitative survey, pilot participants were asked which activities they had undertaken as part of the pilots. Respondents generally confirmed that they had received various types of help during the pilots, most commonly help with their CV (72 per cent) and discussion of their job or career options (68 per cent)[39].

Those in the pre-WP group were more likely to say that they had discussed their job or career options (80 per cent compared with 66 per cent of post-WP participants). Otherwise, there were no differences between the two pilots.

Overall, as might be expected, respondents who completed their time on the pilots were more likely than those who left early to say that they had received the various types of help. For example, 77 per cent of completers said they discussed their job or career options, compared with 58 per cent of those who left early.

In addition:

• participants with children were more likely to say they had received help with making job applications (67 per cent compared with 57 per cent of those without children); and

• participants aged under 35 were more likely to say they had undertaken practice interviews (57 per cent) than those aged 35 or over (46 per cent).

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[39] Note that these findings are subject to respondents' ability to recall pilot activities accurately. In some cases, Wave 1 interviews took place several months after participation.

Figure 3.5 Core elements of pilots
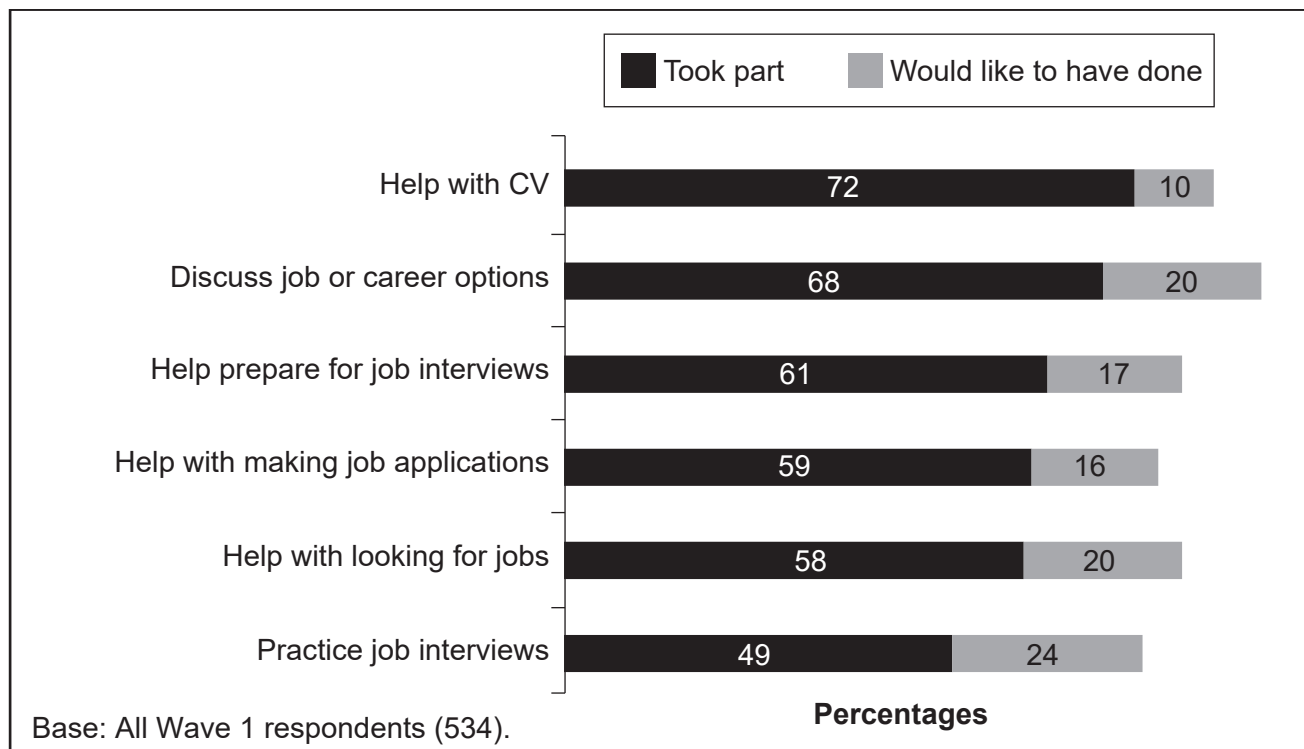
Base: All Wave 1 respondents (534).

Survey respondents were then asked which of the activities they would like to have done as part of the pilots (if they reported that they had not actually done them). Details are shown in Figure 3.5 (above). Overall, participants were most likely to say they would have liked to have done practice job interviews (24 per cent), discussed job or career options (20 per cent) and have had help with looking for jobs (20 per cent).

3.7.6 Duration

A key element of the pilot design was the intensive model which aimed to replicate the experience of full-time work, in which participants were required to attend a local centre for up to 35 hours per week for 13 weeks.

Providers generally expressed very positive views about the intensity and duration of the pilot intervention. In line with the policy intent this element of the model was described as '*resembling work*'. Providers felt this could help to (re)introduce structure and routine for people who may have been out of work for a significant period of time.

> *'If it's not getting them into employment it's certainly getting them into a routine which would be considered normal for a working practice and enabling them to get used to coming in at a certain time, having lunch at a certain time, going home at a certain time and as I say preparing them even if not in work but going into a working environment.'*

> (Site Manager, lead provider)

Some **participants** confirmed this view, indicating that the 35-hour week was useful and effective in getting them into a working routine, which would help to make the transition to work easier. Indeed, one participant drew a clear parallel between attending the pilots and being in work:

'I had to get up in the morning. I had to get ready. I had to catch a bus. I had to be there by a certain time. But that is my mind set and I treated it like a job so in that respect it helps me because now that I have a job I am already into that format.'

(Participant, Wave 2)

In the quantitative survey, there were also some positive views about this aspect of the model. Around half of respondents (52 per cent at Wave 1, 47 per cent at Wave 2) said that the pilots helped them a lot or a little in equipping them to cope with the routine of going to work.

Overall, however, participants in the qualitative interviews generally considered that the pilots were both too long in duration (13 weeks) and too intense in terms of daily attendance requirements (seven hours per day, Monday – Friday). It was felt that the narrow content of the pilots (which focused almost entirely on individual job search as discussed in section 3.7.3 above) did not require either 35 hours per week or the 13-week duration. Similar views were also reported by providers.

These views were also expressed in the **quantitative survey**. At Wave 1, around half of participants (54 per cent) felt they spent too long on the pilots (in terms of the total number of weeks). Just five per cent said that the time they spent was insufficient, while 37 per cent felt it was about right (Figure 3.6).

Older participants (aged 50 or over) were particularly likely to say that the duration of the pilots was too long (63 per cent, compared with 51 per cent of participants aged under 50). Non-disabled participants were more likely than disabled participants to think the duration was too long (59 per cent compared with 44 per cent).The analysis also indicates that participants who were more job-ready were more likely to think the pilots duration was too long. Specifically, respondents with a driving licence (a useful proxy for more skilled, job-ready participants) were more likely than those without a driving licence to think it was too long (68 per cent compared with 48 per cent).

Figure 3.6   Attitudes to pilot duration and hours

Base: Wave 1 respondents able to give an answer on number of hours (527) and number of weeks (367).
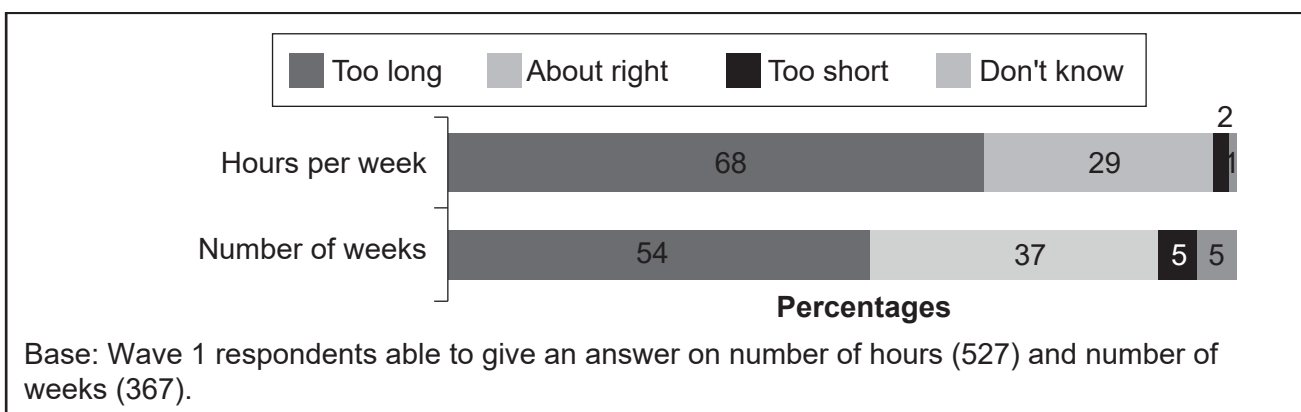
In relation to the number of hours per week spent on the pilots, around two-thirds of participants (68 per cent) said that this was too long, while 29 per cent thought it was about right and just two per cent said the pilot was too short (Figure 3.6).

Respondents who spent less than 30 hours per week on the pilots[40] were more likely to say the number of hours was about right (53 per cent, with 46 per cent saying it was too much), compared with those who spent 30 hours or more per week on the pilots (25 per cent about right, 72 per cent too much).

Among those who said the number of hours per week was too great, 22 per cent thought that it would have been better to spend less than 10 hours per week on the pilots, while 39 per cent gave a figure of between 10–19 hours and 31 per cent said it would have been better to spend 20–29 hours per week.

3.7.7   Summary findings on core elements

As described above, a wide range of provider and participant views on the core elements of the pilot model were reported. Some elements were generally well received, such as the workplace environment with opportunities for increased social interaction, and one–to-one support from advisers. Other elements, in particular the amount of time prescribed to individual job-search activity, were generally felt to be less successful.

In general, where delivery focused on *supporting* participants it was perceived positively by both participants and providers, whereas a focus on *supervising* adherence to the prescribed time on individual job-search activity was more likely to be perceived in negative terms. This potentially highlights a degree of tension within perceptions of the supportive and supervisory aspects of the pilot model i.e. positive perceptions related to the intensive support element of the model were to some extent undermined by the requirement to ensure participants spent 90 per cent of their time on individually-based job-search activity, (an element of the model which was generally perceived negatively).

DWP minimum service levels for the pilots specifically required that Supervised Jobsearch activities should be individually tailored to meet the requirements of participants. Providers suggested that the proportion of time allocated to individually-based job search limited their ability to personalise the support delivered, which they felt was important as pilot participants were a diverse group.

This diversity was demonstrated by the wide range of factors which appeared to have an influence on how successful core elements were perceived to be. For example, there was evidence that elements of the pilot model, such as the focus on ICT with access to computers and internet facilities, which was well regarded by some participants, meant it was less suitable for claimants facing some specific barriers to employment such as learning difficulties. Other aspects of the pilots, such as CV and application support, felt to be helpful by some participants were viewed as less valuable by those who had recent employment experience and relatively high skill levels.

As discussed in section 3.7.4 above, it is also important to note the impact of some of the operational issues which did appear to have a fairly significant impact on delivery and participant experience at many pilot sites. As previously noted these issues may, to some extent, have compromised the testing of the pilot model, as delivery was not always in line with the specification.

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[40]   The DWP SJP Specification and Supporting Information issued to providers stated that claimants would be mandated to attend the provider's premises, Monday to Friday, for up to 35 hours, less any agreed restrictions on their availability as agreed within their Jobcentre Plus Claimant Commitment.

3.8   Delivery model – non-core elements

In addition to the core focus on individual job-search activity, there was scope within the pilot model for other activities and some group-based sessions, although the intent was that group-based sessions should form no more than ten per cent of participant activities in each week.

A number of one-to-one and group-based 'non-core' activities were identified as part of pilot activities in the qualitative interviews with providers and participants. These included both specified activities, such as careers advice and group activities seeking to develop team working and problem solving, and non-specified activities such as training and skills provision (in particular IT or on-line training), employer engagement, and what were described as motivation and confidence building activities.

In the Wave 1 **quantitative survey**, pilot participants confirmed that they had taken part in non-core elements. Specifically, 45 per cent said they had help or training on using the internet or computers, 32 per cent said they had received help or training on numeracy or literacy, 28 per cent said they had counselling or mentoring and 27 per cent said they had visited a workplace (Figure 3.7). The findings varied as follows:

• Pilot completers were more likely than early leavers to say they had undertaken non-core activities. The largest difference was in relation to workplace visits (30 per cent of completers compared with 15 per cent of early leavers).

• Those in the post-WP group were more likely to say that they had been on visits to a workplace (28 per cent compared with 19 per cent of pre-WP participants).

• Participants aged 50 or over were more likely to say they had help or training in using the internet or computers (56 per cent compared with 38–44 per cent in younger age groups).

• Men were more likely than women to say they had help with training on numeracy or literacy (34 per cent compared with 26 per cent) and counselling or mentoring (31 per cent compared with 21 per cent).

Figure 3.7   Non-core elements of pilots

Base: All Wave 1 respondents (534).
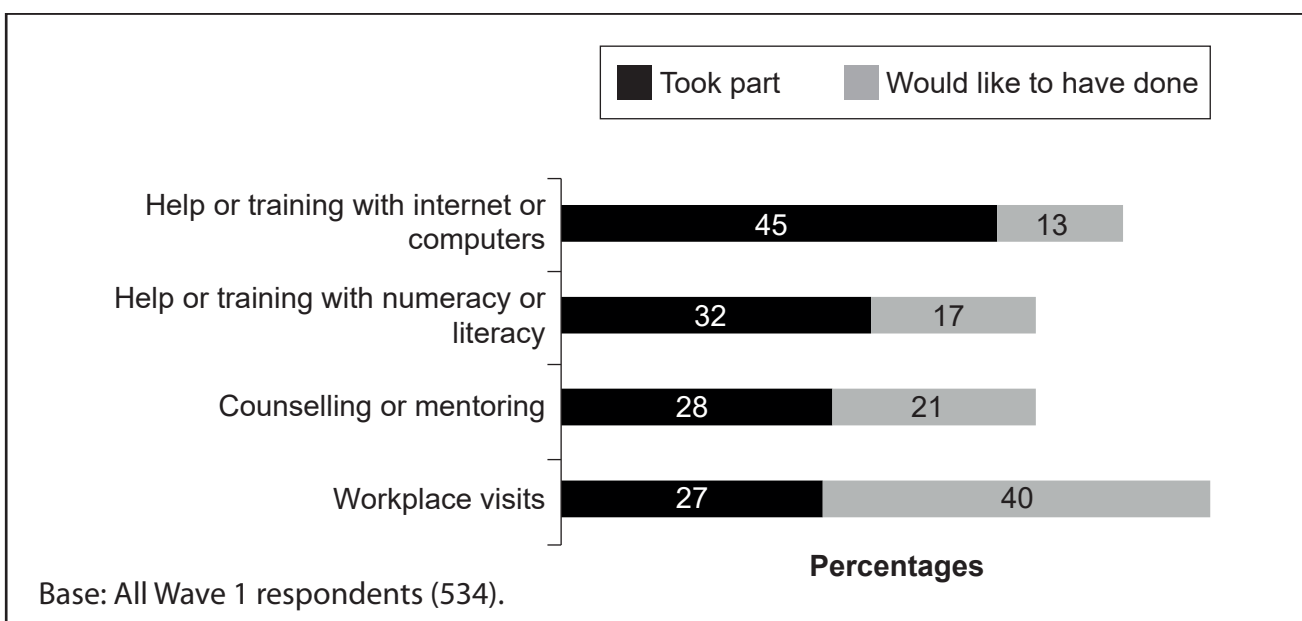
In addition, the analysis suggests that those attending for less than 30 hours a week may have been less likely to take part in the non-core elements. Specifically they were less likely to say they had been on a workplace visit (14 per cent compared with 29 per cent of those who attended for at least 30 hours per week).

The qualitative research found that there was some variation in the provision of non-core elements, both between different providers and between individual sites. Provision also varied according to individual participant and/or provider adviser. This variation may underlie some of the sub-group differences noted above in the quantitative survey.

Quantitative respondents were then asked which of the activities they would like to have done as part of the pilots (if they had not actually done them). Participants were most interested in visits to a workplace (40 per cent), as shown in Figure 3.8.

Respondents who said they had received the different types of non-core support were also asked how helpful each one had been. In each case, a consistent proportion (between 80 per cent and 87 per cent) said that the activities had been very or fairly helpful, while between nine per cent and 18 per cent said they were not very or not at all helpful.

Figure 3.8   Helpfulness of non-core elements of pilots

Base: All Wave 1 respondents who received each type of support.
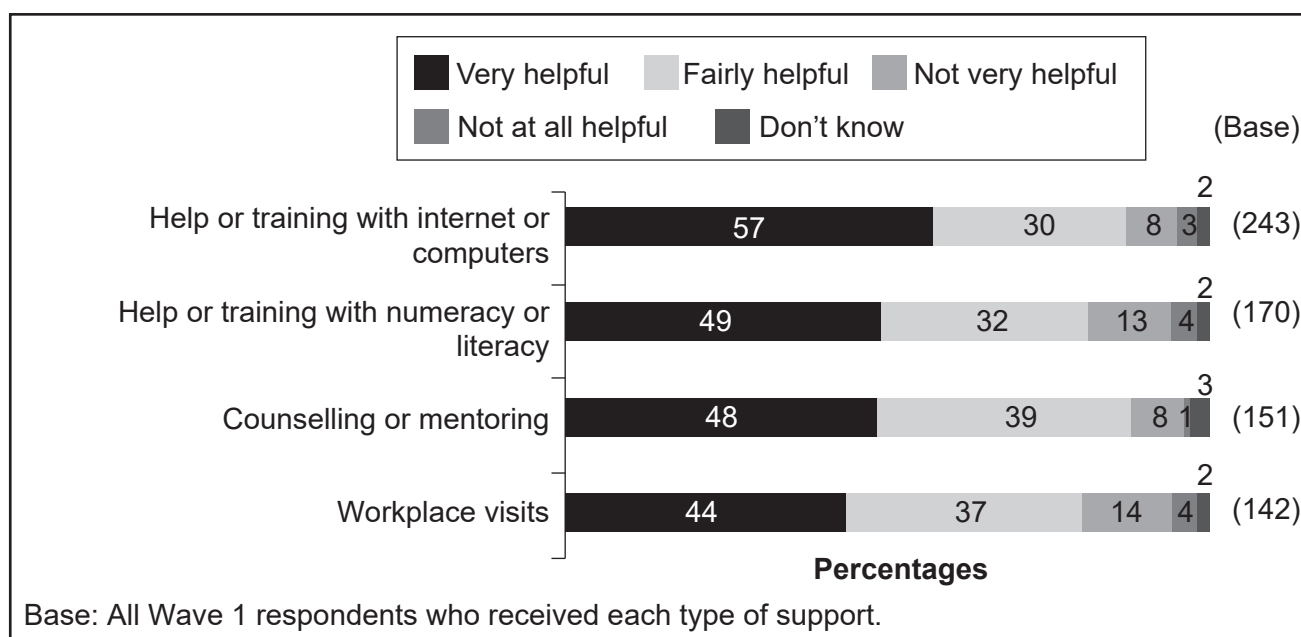
Those who took part in non-core elements were more positive about the pilots than those who were not involved in these activities. For example, 73 per cent of those who went on a workplace visit were positive about the pilots overall, compared with 47 per cent of those who did not go on a workplace visit. Similarly, positive views of the pilots were more common among those who received help or training with the Internet or computers (71 per cent compared with 40 per cent of those who did not get this type of help), help or training with numeracy or literacy (74 per cent compared with 44 per cent) and counselling or mentoring (79 per cent compared with 44 per cent).

In the **qualitative interviews with participants**, careers advice, skills training and confidence building were broadly well regarded. Likewise, group work activities were broadly well received, though some participants reported that these sessions were too simplistic and felt these could be patronising. Where providers facilitated access to on-line training material, allowing participants to self-learn new skills, these were also well received.

Some **providers** reported a degree of flexibility in their service delivery, which they acknowledged had been introduced with the knowledge that it was probably outside the scope of the pilot model. They described this as being led by participant needs. One example of this type of pragmatic local level decision making was to enable individual participants to continue to receive multi-agency support while attending the SJP[41]:

> *'I was talking to one of the customers and he was going and I said, "oh where are you going?" He said* [WHISPERS] *"I'm going to Alcoholics Anonymous", so we're giving them time to work with other support groups, but that was us being flexible when probably strictly speaking we shouldn't have been.'*

> (Project Manager, lead provider)

Other identified non-core activities that were potentially beyond the intended scope of pilot activities either by virtue of being unsupervised or being unconnected to job seeking were also provided to some participants. This included support with financial inclusion (e.g. opening up bank accounts, managing a budget, etc) and permitting individual participants to leave the site to visit local employers and hand out CVs.

3.8.1 Flexibility, personalisation and the delivery of support

DWP minimum service levels for the pilots specifically required that Supervised Jobsearch activities should be individually tailored to meet the requirements of participants.

The **quantitative survey** obtained participant views on the level of personalisation in the pilots, and mixed views were expressed. Just over half of participants agreed that the advice and support they received matched their personal needs and circumstances (54 per cent), while 34 per cent disagreed (see Figure 3.9). This varied between sub-groups as follows:

- Participants aged under 35 were more likely than those aged 35 or over to agree (60 per cent compared with 50 per cent).

- White participants were more likely than BAME participants to agree (56 per cent compared with 45 per cent).

- Early leavers were less likely to agree (45 per cent compared with 56 per cent of pilot completers).

Opinions were divided as to whether participants felt under pressure to take part in activities that they were not suited to (44 per cent agreed while 40 per cent disagreed). Early leavers were more likely to agree (48 per cent compared with 38 per cent of pilot completers).

Most survey respondents agreed that they already knew a lot of what was covered in the pilots (80 per cent, with 12 per cent saying they disagreed).

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[41] This would have been within scope if time away from the pilots had been agreed with the Jobcentre Plus Work Coach and was documented as part of the participants Claimant Commitment.

Figure 3.9   Attitudes towards the pilots

Base: All Wave 1 respondents (534).
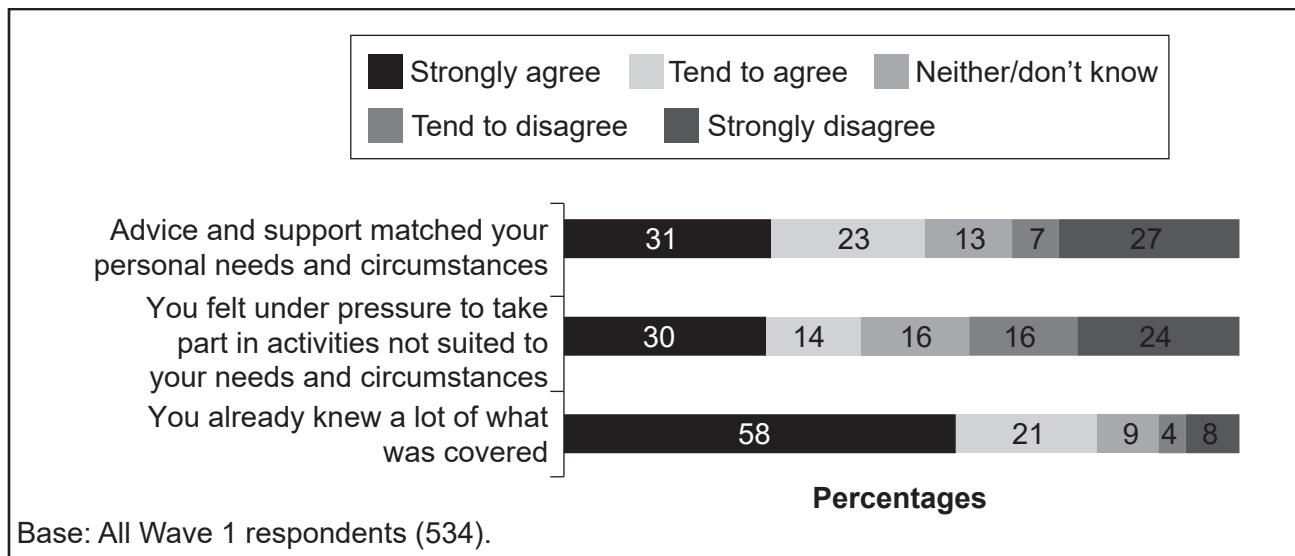
Qualitative research with **participants** presented a nuanced reflection with regard to views on the tailoring of support, with some participants suggesting they received little or no one-to-one or personalised support. It appeared that differences of opinion could to some extent be drawn along employment history lines, with those looking for higher skilled work less likely to report they had received appropriate, tailored support.

Respondents who appeared furthest away from the job market (usually post-WP participants who had either never worked or been out of work for a number of years), and who reported receiving a high level of one-to-one support, tended to feel the support was tailored to their needs. Respondents who viewed themselves as job ready or higher skilled tended to feel the support offer was too basic for their needs.

> '*I'm told I have to sit there and for in a public session and be told that if I go into an interview I shouldn't have headphones in; it would be a good idea to have a good night's sleep the night before; to make sure I'm not wearing trainers; that I've got a suit on. But I hadn't had that once, we've had 4 or 5 two hour sessions covering exactly the same thing. I could weep'*'

(Participant, Wave 1)

In contrast, some pre-WP participants offered positive views on the personalised support that they received. Again this was usually linked to receiving one-to-one support, and also to having confidence in the provider adviser.

> '*The resources that were available, obviously the easy use of the computers there, the printers, the phones and there was always someone there like if you needed help with anything, go over there and they definitely could help you.*'

(Participant, Wave 1)

Thus there did appear to be a link between participants' experience of personalisation and the availability of one-to-one support from an adviser. As discussed previously (section 3.5), there was a contractual minimum staffing ratio for the pilots of one adviser to 12 participants, although at times of peak referrals some sites struggled to maintain this. In addition, participants and providers suggested that a number of other factors were associated with the varying levels of one-to-one support experienced.

These included:

- the support requirements of other participants on the pilots (where the high support needs of some participants meant advisers had to concentrate on supporting particular individuals, or where time had to be focused on managing disruptive individuals);

- the focus placed on individually-based job-search activity; and

- the amount of 'paperwork' that provider advisers were required to complete, which was perceived to be to the detriment of their support role.

In general **providers** appeared to agree with the approach of delivering tailored support to participants as required by the DWP service specification, and expressed a desire to apply this principle to the support they delivered to participants. However, many felt that the design of the pilots prevented them from doing so. The specification set out that group sessions should not make up more than 10 per cent per week. This was interpreted by providers interviewed as the remaining 90 per cent of time needing to be dedicated to individual job-search activities. Providers felt that this presented a very '*restricted*' and '*standardised*' package of support and therefore some considered it a '*one size fits all*' offer.

As a result, some providers felt that the model failed to address some of the deep-rooted, personal barriers that participants might face. There was also a suggestion the model could act as a barrier to developing more productive working relationships between advisers and participants, and to encouraging participants to develop their own sense of personal responsibility to find work.

> '*the contract at the minute doesn't allow you to treat the person as an individual. I don't think that* [lack of flexibility] *helps the relationship we try to build around trust… ownership of their own job search and responsibility.*'
>
> (Project Manager, lead provider)

Some provider staff also expressed frustration that the focus on individual job search limited what they could offer in terms of a package of support in participant action plans.

> '*Well, choices are limited because we can't train them* [the participants] *any further so whilst we've done the assessments, then it's a stumbling block.*'
>
> (Adviser, lead provider)

3.8.2   Summary findings on non-core elements

In general, non-core activities were well received by participants, found to be helpful and appeared to influence positive perceptions of the pilots overall. Participants who indicated they had not participated in non-core activities, such as workplace visits, indicated that they would like to have done so.

In addition to the delivery of the non-core activities that formed part of the intended pilot design, some providers reported introducing flexibility into delivery, which was potentially outside the scope of the pilot model. Providers also suggested there was a need for greater flexibility as they felt the pilot model prevented them from delivering personalised support to participants. Participant views on the level of personalisation were mixed. There did appear to be some link between participant experience of personalisation and the availability of one-to-one adviser support.

The reported divergence of delivery from the intended pilot model should be also considered alongside that reported in relation to the operational issues (section 3.4). This does indicate that pilot delivery was not always in line with the pilot specification and to some extent this may have compromised testing of the model.

4 Outcomes of Supervised Jobsearch involvement

This chapter presents findings related to the outcomes resulting from participation in the pilots, specifically:

• the intermediate outcomes of improved job-search behaviour and job-search skills;

• the intermediate outcomes of improved confidence and motivation;

• the outcome of movement into work and/or off benefits.

The theory of change model outlined in section 2.3 describes how these different outcomes relate to each other. As the model describes, in order for claimants to achieve the main outcome of obtaining employment, they must have the requisite job-search skills, approach and attitude towards job search and employment. The model also outlines a number of steps that participants must achieve in order reach this stage of being both behaviourally ready and appropriately skilled.

Throughout this chapter, findings from the different research elements are used together to provide a full and robust assessment of how the pilots have improved outcomes. This includes:

• Findings from Supervised Jobsearch participants in the quantitative survey, to indicate their *perceptions* of whether the pilots have had a positive effect. A comparison between the Wave 1 and Wave 2 findings show how these perceptions have changed over time. When making these comparisons, it is important to remember that the Wave 1 survey took place during or shortly after participation in the pilots, so the comparisons do not represent a 'before' and 'after' scenario; rather they reflect an immediate or short-term view (at Wave 1) compared with a longer-term view (at Wave 2).

• Findings comparing behaviour and attitudes between the treatment sample (Supervised Jobsearch participants) and the control sample (non-participants), to provide an *analytical assessment* of whether the pilots have had an impact. These comparisons are based on the Wave 2 findings, and therefore indicate outcomes as observed six to ten months after starting on the pilots.

• Qualitative findings from Supervised Jobsearch participants and providers, which complement the survey findings by giving an insight into perceptions of the pilots, and helping to understand how and why the pilots have had an impact.

The chapter concludes with participants' and providers' overall assessment of the pilots including potential refinements to the delivery model.

4.1 Changes in approach to job-search activity

One of the intermediate outcomes identified for the pilots was an improvement in participants' job-searching behaviour. The evaluation therefore explored any influence that pilot attendance may have had on participant job-search activity, including the related intermediate outcomes of improved job-search skills and increased confidence in job-search efficacy.

4.1.1 Job-search awareness and ability

The first area for consideration is Supervised Jobsearch participants' perceptions of whether the pilots helped them in their job-search awareness and ability.

On each of the measures shown in Figure 4.1, around half of survey respondents said that their time on the pilots had helped them 'a lot' or 'a little' (50–55 per cent at Wave 1).

Figure 4.1   Perceptions of whether pilots helped improve job-search awareness and ability
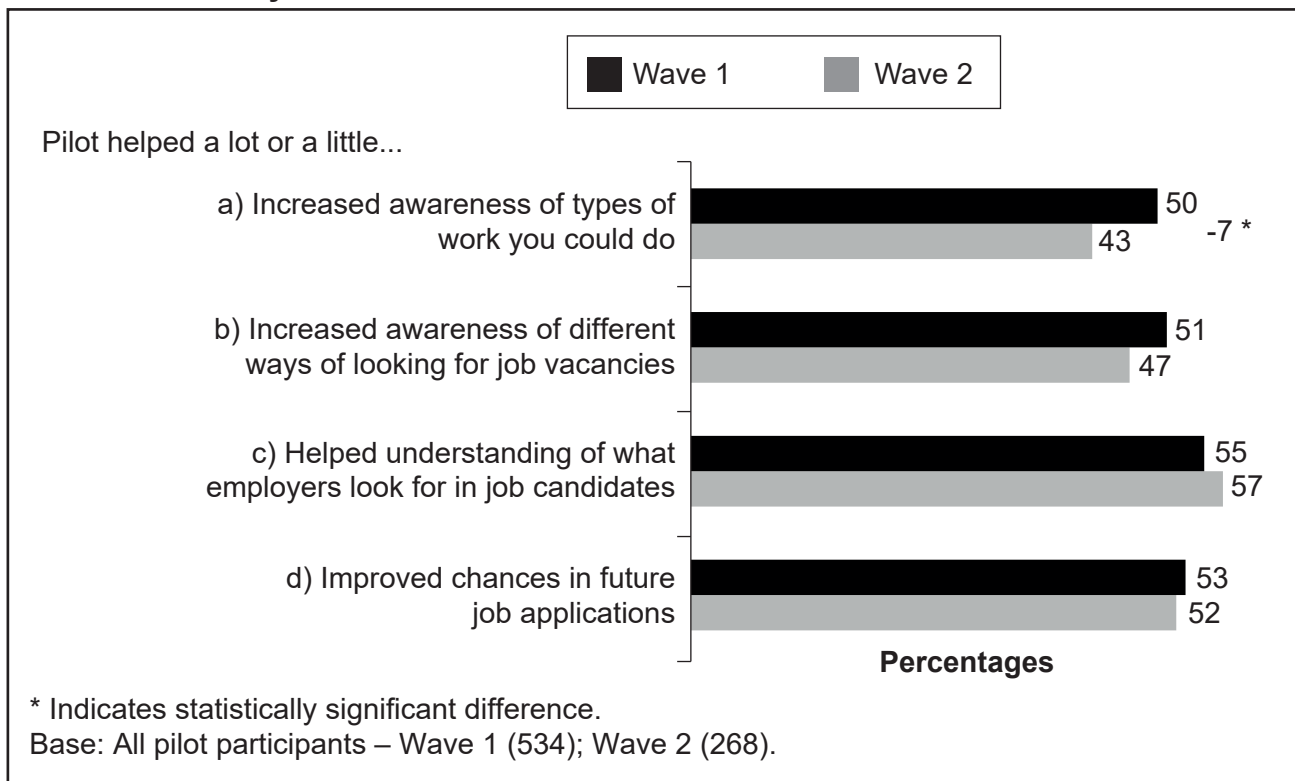
* Indicates statistically significant difference.
Base: All pilot participants – Wave 1 (534); Wave 2 (268).

Looking at the demographic differences for these questions, in relation to those that said the pilots had made *a lot* of difference at Wave 1:

• Younger respondents (aged 18–34) were more likely than older respondents (aged 35 or over) to say that the pilots had helped a lot in improving their chances in future job applications (37 per cent compared with 24 per cent) and in helping their understanding of what employers look for (39 per cent compared with 27 per cent).

• Respondents with children were more likely to say that the pilots had helped a lot in various ways: improving chances in future job applications (39 per cent compared with 26 per cent of those without children), increasing awareness of types of work (36 per cent compared with 26 per cent), increasing awareness of the different ways of looking for jobs (37 per cent compared with 28 per cent) and helping their understanding of what employers look for (43 per cent compared with 28 per cent).

• Respondents who did not hold a driving licence were more likely to say the pilots had helped them. The largest difference was in relation to improving chances in future job applications (34 per cent said the pilots helped them a lot, compared with 17 per cent of those with a driving licence). They were also more likely to say that the pilots helped

them a lot in increasing awareness of types of work (31 per cent compared with 23 per cent), increasing awareness of the different ways of looking for job vacancies (34 per cent compared with 22 per cent) and helping understanding of what employers look for in job candidates (37 per cent compared with 21 per cent). These findings suggest that the pilots may have been more effective in improving the job-search ability of those with lower skills levels or lower levels of employability.

• Similarly, participants who had been out of work for longer were more likely to acknowledge these benefits. Survey respondents who had been out of work for at least five years (or had never worked) were more likely than those who had worked in the last five years to say that the pilots had helped to increase their awareness of the types of work they could do (34 per cent compared with 23 per cent) and increase awareness of the different ways of looking for job vacancies (36 per cent compared with 26 per cent).

• In line with other findings in the survey, respondents who completed the pilots were more positive than those who left early. For example, 32 per cent of completers said the pilots helped them a lot in increasing awareness of different ways of looking for jobs, compared with 20 per cent of those who left early.

Figures were similar at Waves 1 and 2. There was one statistically significant change: Wave 2 survey participants were less likely than those at Wave 1 to say that the pilots had increased their awareness of the types of work they could do. This indicates that the pilots helped to develop a wider awareness of job opportunities, but that participants were less likely to acknowledge this benefit of the pilots over time.

The qualitative findings identified the ways in which the pilots could help to improve job-search awareness and ability.

There was some evidence from the participant interviews that the requirement to spend prolonged periods of time dedicated to on-line job searching increased the depth of job-search activity. It was also reported by providers that some participants increased the number of jobs they applied for, although some providers questioned the quality of those additional applications. Follow-up interviews suggested that this more intense or 'targeted' search approach appeared to continue for some participants after the pilots had ended.

Follow-up interviews with claimants also indicated that some changes had occurred in certain aspects of their approach to looking for work after attending the pilots. This included a greater sense of routine in their core job-search approach, applying for a broader range of jobs, and paying more attention to individual applications. There was some evidence that while not increasing the amount of time spent looking for work, attendance had developed a routine for doing so:

> *'I've got a habit of doing it* [job search] *every day, yeah, so I could say that…they formed a habit, do you know what I mean?'*

> (Participant, Wave 2)

Where more intensive support was provided with regards to applying for work, it tended to be well regarded and was believed to have led to more positive outcomes, such as securing interviews or work:

> *'It's made me more aware of, like, how I should be applying myself to jobs and just how to broaden also my knowledge, in terms of like knowing, like, the sectors of work and obviously the company itself…and obviously getting to know, like, different employers and what they expect.'*

> (Participant, Wave 2)

In general, however, the extent to which any changes were directly attributed to participation on the pilots varied across qualitative respondents with no apparent participant groups tending towards being more or less inclined to attribute outcomes to the pilots. Despite the positive impact found in the survey results, the overriding view from the qualitative research was that attendance on the pilots added little to their existing ability to look for jobs: '*it wasn't anything I wasn't doing already*'. This echoes the quantitative finding that most participants felt that they already knew a lot of what was covered in the pilots (see section 3.8.1).

Some participants in the qualitative interviews felt that the pilots were detrimental to their ability to look for work.

> *'While I was there I was doing less job search, in actual fact…since I left there 2 weeks ago, I've been for 6 interviews in the last 2 weeks that I've never even had in 3 months on this course.'*

> (Participant Wave 1)

4.1.2   Ways of looking for jobs

In the quantitative survey, Wave 2 respondents who were not in work were asked about the various job-search activities that they had undertaken in the past month. Respondents had used a range of different methods, as shown in Table 4.1.

A comparison between the treatment and control survey groups indicates whether the pilots had an impact on encouraging participants to use a wider range of methods of looking for jobs. Treatment sample respondents were more likely than those in the control sample to say they had their name on the books of a private employment agency (68 per cent compared with 59 per cent). This difference also held true when looking specifically at post-Work Programme (WP) participants (68 per cent of treatment sample respondents compared with 59 per cent of control sample respondents). Otherwise, there were no differences between the two survey groups.

Table 4.1   Job-search activities undertaken in past month

	Column Percentages	
	Treatment Wave 2	**Control Wave 2**
Looked for jobs at Jobcentre Plus	67	66
Had your name on the books of a private employment agency	68	59*
Answer advertisements in newspapers, journals or on the internet	84	82
Study situations vacant columns in newspapers journals, or on the internet	83	83
Apply directly to employers	79	74
Ask friends, relatives, colleagues or trade unions about jobs	76	74
None of these	6	8
Base	221	533

Base: All respondents not in paid work at the time of the survey – treatment 221, control 533.

The qualitative interviews also examined the methods that participants were using to look for jobs. Following involvement in the pilots, some participants reported that pilot attendance had developed their knowledge and experience of additional job-searching resources, an intermediate outcome identified within the pilot theory of change model. When explored at the second wave, participants typically reported using on-line websites like Universal Job Match and job agencies like, Reed, Indeed, etc., to look for work. Some reported that they had augmented on-line job searching with other approaches, such as active job searching (visiting and handing CVs to an employer), cold calling employers, searching newspapers and through word of mouth.

> '*I use the Internet and I go myself, do business letters and I ask my friends and family.*'

> (Participant Wave 2)

Some qualitative participants also said that they had found out about job sites or agencies they were not previously aware of, and also increased their awareness of being able to set up email notifications letting them know when jobs arose. After leaving the pilots, participants continued to engage with job sites and recruiters that they were made aware of or registered with while on the pilots. This feedback confirms the quantitative findings on the increased use of private employment agencies resulting from the pilots.

Although some participants made changes to their job-search behaviour while on the pilots, when followed up at the second wave of interviews, qualitative participants had mostly reverted back to pre-pilot methods and routines to search for jobs. This was based on the view that their own methods were more effective and suited to them. This suggests that many of the changes to job-search activity that were observed at the first round of interviews appeared to be short lived.

4.1.3   Job-search activity and intensity

The impact that the pilots had on overall job-search activity and intensity, based on the quantitative survey findings is explored below.

Firstly, in relation to **job applications**, 83 per cent of Supervised Jobsearch participants who were not in work said at the Wave 1 survey that they had applied for a job in the previous month. By the time of the Wave 2 survey, this proportion had fallen somewhat (to 77 per cent); see Figure 4.2. It is not surprising that job applications were higher at Wave 1 than at Wave 2, as participants were either still on the pilots, or had only recently left, when the Wave 1 survey took place.

There was no overall difference between the treatment and control survey samples at Wave 2. However, for the post-WP pilot specifically, Supervised Jobsearch participants were less likely than those in the control sample to say they had applied for paid jobs in the previous month (78 per cent compared with 85 per cent). This suggests that the efforts in applying for jobs undertaken as part of the pilots may have 'worn off' several months later, to the extent that participants (at least in the post-WP group) were actually less likely to be applying for paid work than people who had not taken part in the pilots.

Figure 4.2   Impact on job-search behaviour

* Indicates statistically significant difference.
Bases: a): All respondents not in work (treatment Wave 1 466, Wave 2 221, control 533); b) and c): Those who had applied for a job in last month (treatment Wave 1 389, Wave 2 171, control 433).
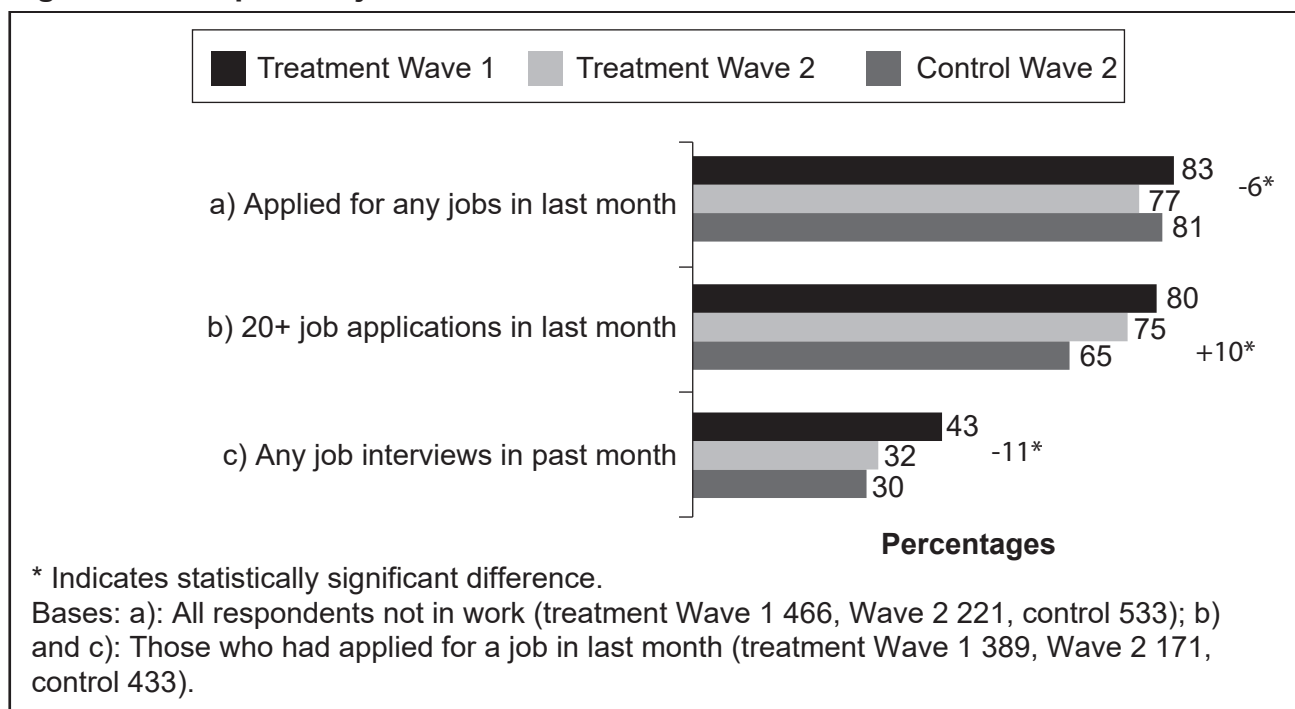
Figure 4.2 also shows details of the number of applications and job interviews, among survey respondents who had applied for jobs in the previous month.

Most respondents had **applied for 20 or more jobs** in the previous month. At Wave 2, treatment sample respondents were more likely than those in the control sample to say they had applied for 20 or more jobs (75 per cent compared with 65 per cent). This suggests that the pilots may have had an impact on job-search intensity. This difference also applies when looking specifically at post-WP participants (77 per cent compared with 66 per cent).

At Wave 1 of the survey, 43 per cent of Supervised Jobsearch survey participants who had applied for jobs in the previous month said they had been for a **job interview** (see Figure 4.2). This was significantly lower by the time of the Wave 2 survey (32 per cent). At Wave 2 there was no difference between the treatment and control samples. The higher figure at Wave 1 is not surprising given that respondents were participating in the pilots at this time. As a core element of the pilots involved looking for and applying for jobs, one would expect most participants to have applied for jobs during that time.

Supervised Jobsearch survey participants who had been on job interviews generally said that they had either one or two interviews in the last month (64 per cent). There were no differences between the treatment and control groups, or between treatment group respondents at Wave 1 compared with Wave 2.

4.1.4   Summary findings on job-search activity

While around half of survey respondents felt that the pilots helped improve their job-search awareness and ability, the overriding view from the qualitative interviews with participants was that the pilots added little to their existing ability to look for jobs. This can be seen in the analysis of the impact of the pilots on participants. The pilots appear to have had a positive impact on job-search intensity – Supervised Jobsearch survey participants were more likely to have made 20 or more job applications in the previous month, compared with the control sample. However, in terms of the overall proportions making job applications and going on to have job interviews, the quantitative surveys suggest that the pilots did not have an impact. In fact, those in the post-WP pilot were less likely to be applying for jobs after attending the pilots, when compared with non-participants.

In relation to job-search methods, the pilots appear to have increased the use of private employment agencies, and there was a general sense that the pilots encouraged participants to use a wider range of methods of looking for jobs. The findings suggest though that any changes to job-search activities may have been short lived, with participants often reverting to their previous methods after leaving the pilots.

4.2   Improving skills

The theory of change model described how achieving the main outcome of obtaining employment is dependent on gaining requisite job-searching skills. This section presents findings which explore views on any influence that pilot attendance may have had on participants' job-search skills.

4.2.1 Perceptions of how pilots developed new skills for finding work

Around half of **survey respondents** said that their time on the pilots had helped them 'a lot' or 'a little' in developing new skills for finding work. This proportion was very similar at Wave 1 (49 per cent) and Wave 2 (50 per cent), indicating that the effects of the pilots were felt to have been sustained over time (Figure 4.3).

Looking at the demographic differences for these questions, in relation to those that said the pilots had made *a lot* of difference:

- respondents with children were more likely to say that the pilots had helped a lot in helping them to develop new skills for finding work (35 per cent compared with 23 per cent of those without children);

- those without a driving licence were more likely than those with a driving licence to say the pilots had helped a lot (30 per cent compared with 18 per cent);

- white respondents were more likely than black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) respondents to say they had been helped a lot (27 per cent compared with 18 per cent); and

- pilot completers were more likely to say the pilots had helped a lot (28 per cent compared with 16 per cent of early leavers).

Figure 4.3   Perceptions of pilots developing new skills for findings work

Pilot helped a lot or a little…

Wave 1   Wave 2

Developed new skills for finding work
49
50

Percentages

*Indicates statistically significant difference.
Base: All pilot participants – Wave 1 (534); Wave 2 (268).
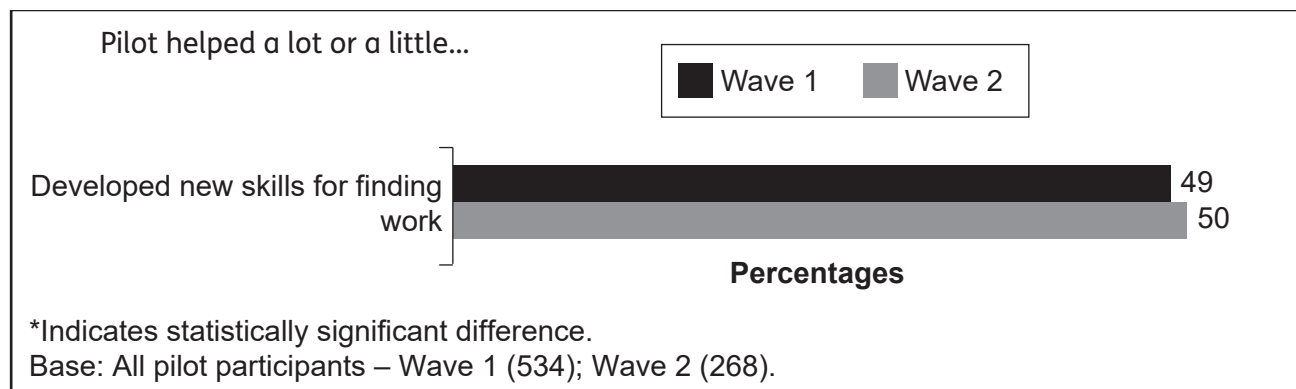
The qualitative findings indicate the ways in which participants described improving their skills. Key lessons learnt included the importance of tailoring job applications to the role, the need to '*sell yourself*" and understanding the level of competition for jobs. There were mixed views as to the level of input provided by advisers; although some respondents found their input valuable in drafting and reviewing CVs, cover letters and application forms.

As previously discussed in section 3.7, some participants said they had received interview training (including mock interviews), and this was generally found useful. Some qualitative participants said that interview training made them feel more '*confident*' and less '*nervous*' about being in an interview situation. In the follow-up qualitative interviews, some respondents said that the skills and techniques they learnt during mock interview sessions helped them to secure employment by preparing them for the interview.

Some qualitative respondents also reported that the programme opened their mind to more job options and opportunities that they had not considered before commencing the pilots. In one example, where personalised careers advice had been provided, the respondent highlighted how pilot participation helped to reassess his expertise, and understand the type and breadth of jobs that could be applied for.

> *'I was applying for a lot of warehouse and retail jobs but* [my adviser] *said, because a couple of years ago my son was ill and I was his full time carer, and she said that's something you can see as a career, care work and things like that. That was something I hadn't done before. I started to apply for similar jobs to that, in the care industry as well.'*

(Participant Wave 1)

4.2.2 Impact of pilots on confidence in job-search skills

Overall, survey respondents were mostly confident in their skills in looking for jobs at both Waves 1 and 2 (Figure 4.4). At Wave 2, treatment sample respondents expressed greater levels of confidence than control sample respondents, specifically in relation to:

- skills being up-to-date (43 per cent 'very confident' compared with 34 per cent); and

- having the skills and knowledge to look for work successfully (63 per cent compared with 51 per cent).

These findings indicate that pilot participation had a positive impact on respondents' confidence in their skills. In addition, findings for the treatment group are similar between Wave 1 and Wave 2, indicating that positive attitudes were sustained over time.

These differences between the treatment and control survey groups still apply when looking specifically at pre-WP or Post-WP respondents:

- Among pre-WP respondents, those in the treatment group were more confident than those in the control group, in relation to skills being up-to-date (57 per cent compared with 34 per cent) and having skills and knowledge to look for work (78 per cent compared with 58 per cent).

- Among post-WP respondents, those in the treatment group were more confident than those in the control group, in relation to having skills and knowledge to look for work (60 per cent compared with 48 per cent).

Figure 4.4   Proportions very confident regarding the following aspects of looking for work
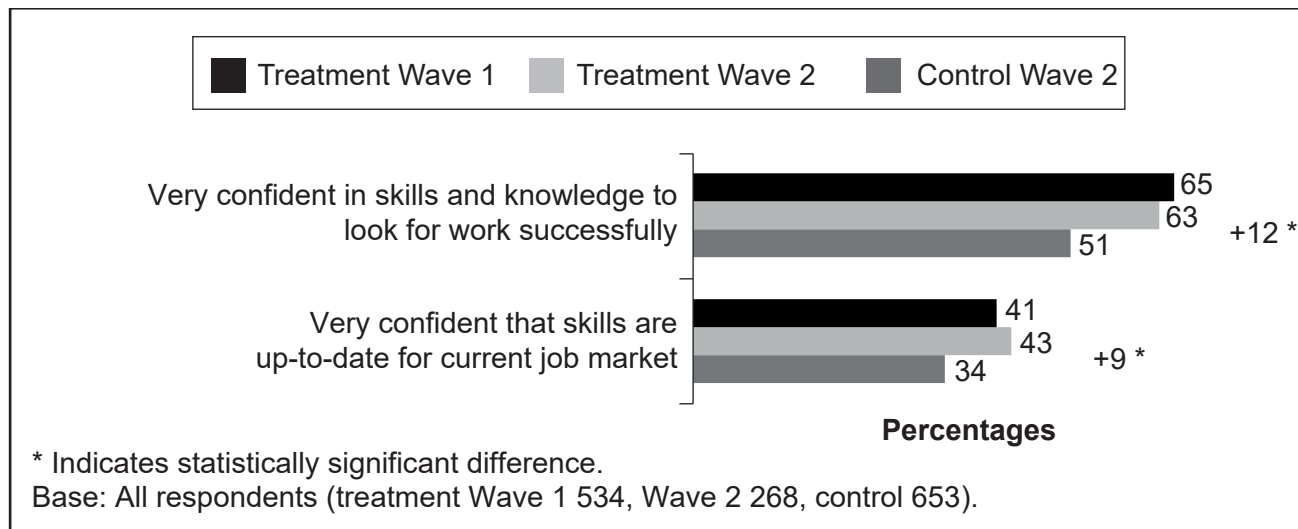
These quantitative survey findings therefore show that pilot participation had a positive impact on respondents' confidence in their job-search skills, specifically in terms of their skills being up-to-date, and having the skills and knowledge to look for work successfully. This impact applied both to the pre-and post-WP groups, and appears to have been sustained over time (levels of confidence were similar in the Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys).

In the qualitative interviews pilot participants who reported an improvement in job-searching skills noted an increased understanding of the need to develop the standard and tailoring of applications, and the need to explore a wider range of job opportunities. The development of interview skills via specific training was also generally viewed as helpful.

4.3   Confidence, motivation and attitudes to work

The theory of change model identified a number of intermediate outcomes, including increased confidence and motivation, and outcomes related to attitudes (e.g. a greater belief in the efficacy of job search, and increased work-related ambitions).

4.3.1   Perceptions of increased confidence

Around half of survey respondents said that their time on the pilots had helped them 'a lot' or 'a little' in relation to their self-confidence (49 per cent) and their motivation to look for work (55 per cent); see Figure 4.5. Small proportions said that the pilots had made things worse: 12 per cent in relation to increasing self-confidence, and nine per cent for increasing motivation to look for work.

There were no statistically significant changes between the findings for Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the survey.

Looking at the demographic differences for these questions at Wave 1, in relation to those that said the pilots had made *a lot* of difference:

• Respondents with children were more likely to say that the pilots had helped a lot, in increasing self-confidence (35 per cent compared with 22 per cent of those without children) and increasing motivation (40 per cent compared with 32 per cent).

• Younger participants (aged under 35) were more likely to say that the pilots had increased their self-confidence (30 per cent compared with 22 per cent of those aged 35 or over).

• Survey respondents without a driving licence were more likely to say the pilots had helped them, in relation to increasing self-confidence (30 per cent compared with 15 per cent) and increasing motivation (39 per cent compared with 24 per cent). As seen below, the qualitative findings also suggest that those with lower qualifications or skills were more likely to feel the pilots had increased their confidence.

• Participants who had been out of work for five years or more (or who had never worked) were more likely to say the pilots had increased their motivation to look for work (39 per cent).

• Non-disabled respondents were more likely to say the pilots had increased their self-confidence a lot (28 per cent compared with 19 per cent of disabled respondents).

• As with other survey findings, respondents who completed the pilots were more likely than those who left early to say they had been helped a lot by the pilots.

Figure 4.5   Perceptions of increased self-confidence and motivation
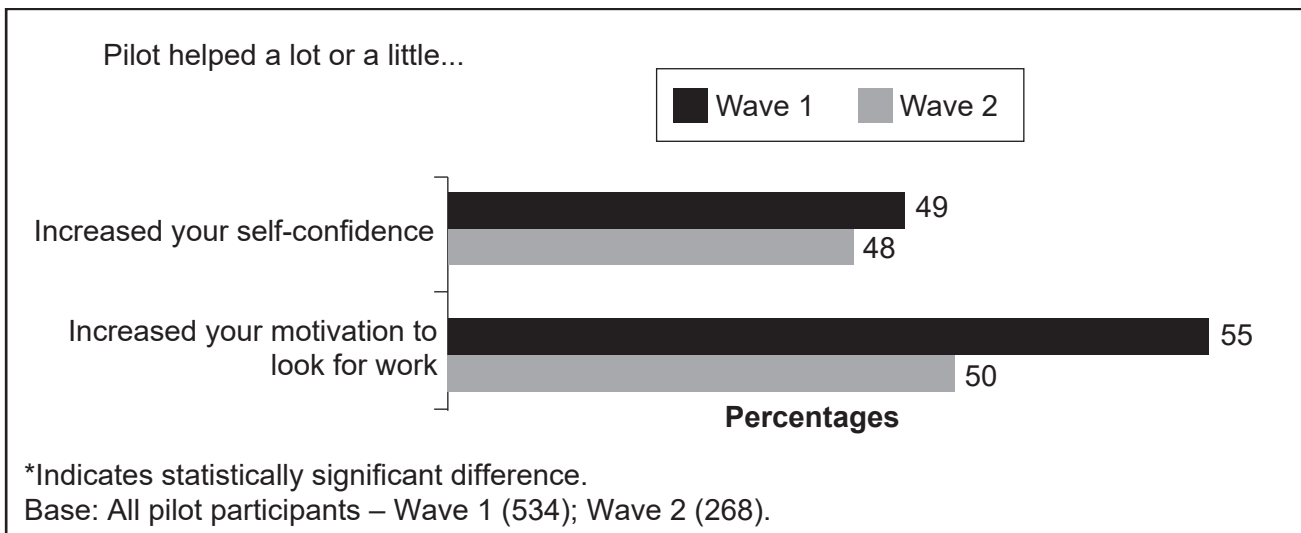
Pilot helped a lot or a little...

Wave 1 | Wave 2

Increased your self-confidence — 49 / 48

Increased your motivation to look for work — 55 / 50

Percentages

*Indicates statistically significant difference.
Base: All pilot participants – Wave 1 (534); Wave 2 (268).

In the qualitative interviews some participants identified a range of factors that had helped to increase their confidence, both in applying for jobs and in other areas such as in using ICT. Specifically, respondents mentioned meeting new people, acquiring new knowledge and skills (e.g. cover letters, interview skills), and using a computer. However, job-search activity itself was not mentioned as a factor related in increasing confidence. This is consistent with the findings reported earlier (section 3.8), where participants expressed positive views towards 'non-core' activities, including dedicated confidence-building exercises.

4.3.2 Impact of pilots on confidence and motivation

There was some qualitative evidence that Supervised Jobsearch helped participants to develop more '*will power*' and '*determination*':

> *'I was obviously applying for jobs but wasn't getting anything back and it got to that sort of point where it's like, 'Right, I'm going to give up trying to do it.' So it kind of motivated me a bit more to go there, look for jobs and yeah, it's definitely helped.'*

(Participant, Wave 1)

In contrast some participants reported that pilot involvement had no influence on their motivation as they consistently felt motivated to find work. Others felt that the pilots had in fact worsened their confidence and self-esteem. This was attributed to factors such as the repetition of job searching and feeling compelled to apply for what they believed was the same role advertised over different recruitment sites or agencies, the job-search environment of the pilots, and the approach used by provider staff (see sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.4). In some cases, this could lead participants to feeling '*victimised*' or '*punished*'. At the extreme, two participants reported that they had to seek help from a medical professional related to the impact of these negative experiences on their mental health.

The qualitative interviews with participants also indicated that those holding no or entry level qualifications, those looking for unskilled work and those who had been out of work for a long time were most likely to feel more confident about securing work following pilot participation. In particular, respondents who did not have a CV or covering letters prior to participating on the pilots, or who felt their application material was out-of-date, found that participation in the pilots made a noticeable difference to their self-confidence. By contrast, participants with higher qualifications and those who were looking for more skilled employment were more likely to say that the pilots made no difference to their confidence levels, or in some cases that it had reduced their confidence in securing work. These findings are consistent with those seen in the quantitative survey (see earlier in this section), in which people who had been out of work for longer and who lacked a driving licence were more positive about the effect of the pilots on their confidence and motivation.

In the quantitative survey, around one in five Supervised Jobsearch participants who were not working at the time of the interview said that they were very confident that they would find work in the next three months (21 per cent at Wave 1, 19 per cent at Wave 2). There were no differences between treatment and control sample survey respondents at Wave 2, although treatment sample respondents may have become marginally less confident over time (12 per cent were not at all confident at Wave 2, a statistically significant increase on the Wave 1 figure of eight per cent); see Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6   Confidence in getting a job in next three months

*Indicates statistically significant difference.
Bases: All respondents not in work (treatment Wave 1 466, Wave 2 221, control 533).
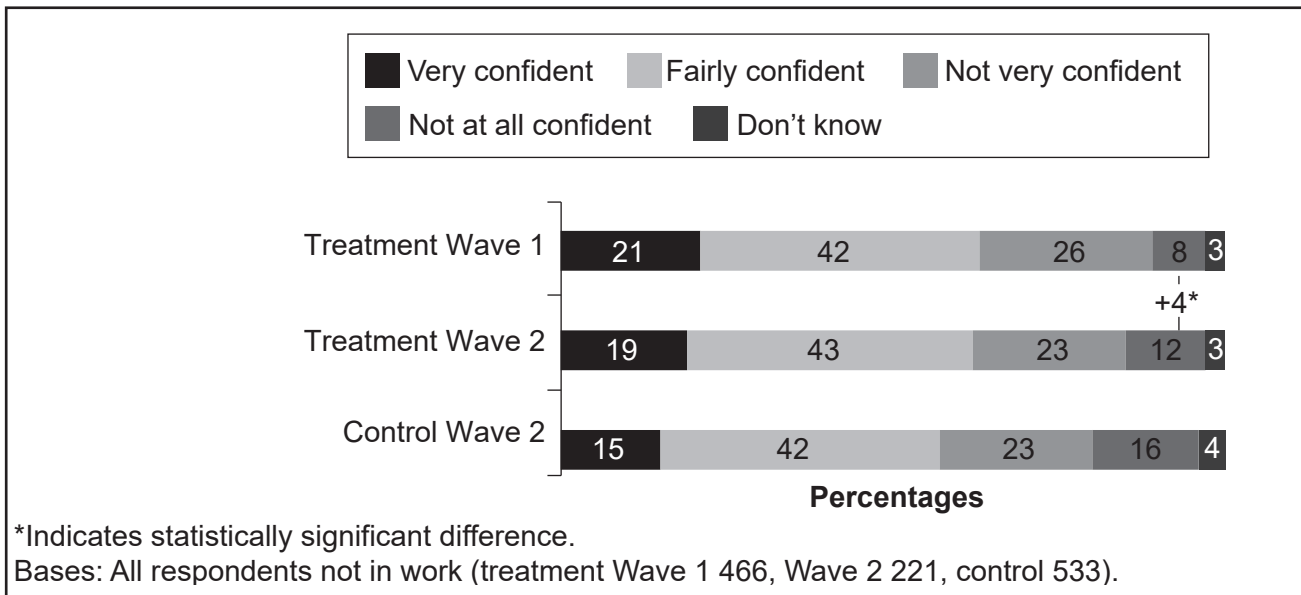
The survey findings indicate that the pilots had a positive effect on general feelings of confidence and motivation (see Figure 4.7). At Wave 2, treatment sample respondents expressed greater levels of confidence than control sample respondents, specifically in relation to confidence in:

• doing well in job interviews (40 per cent compared with 33 per cent);

• coping with rejections and knock-backs (46 per cent compared with 37 per cent); and

• being ready for work (62 per cent compared with 55 per cent).

For the pre-WP group specifically, there was also a positive impact in relation to confidence that employers will want to offer respondents a job interview (see below). However, no impact was seen on this item for the sample of participants as a whole.

In general, these research findings indicate that pilot participation had a positive impact on respondents' confidence in being ready for work. In addition, survey findings for the treatment group were similar between Wave 1 and Wave 2, indicating that positive attitudes were sustained since participation in the pilots.

There were significant differences between the treatment and control groups, when looking specifically at pre-WP or post-WP survey respondents:

• Among pre-WP respondents, those in the treatment group were more confident than those in the control group, in relation to employers wanting to offer an interview (47 per cent compared with 32 per cent), and doing well in job interviews (51 per cent compared with 33 per cent).

• Among post-WP respondents, those in the treatment group were more confident than those in the control group, in relation to coping with rejections and knock-backs (48 per cent compared with 36 per cent), and being ready for work (62 per cent compared with 54 per cent).

Figure 4.7   Impact on confidence and motivation

* Indicates statistically significant difference.
Base: a) All respondents not in work (treatment Wave 1 466, Wave 2 221, control 533).
b), c) and d): All respondents (treatment Wave 1 534, Wave 2 268, control 653).
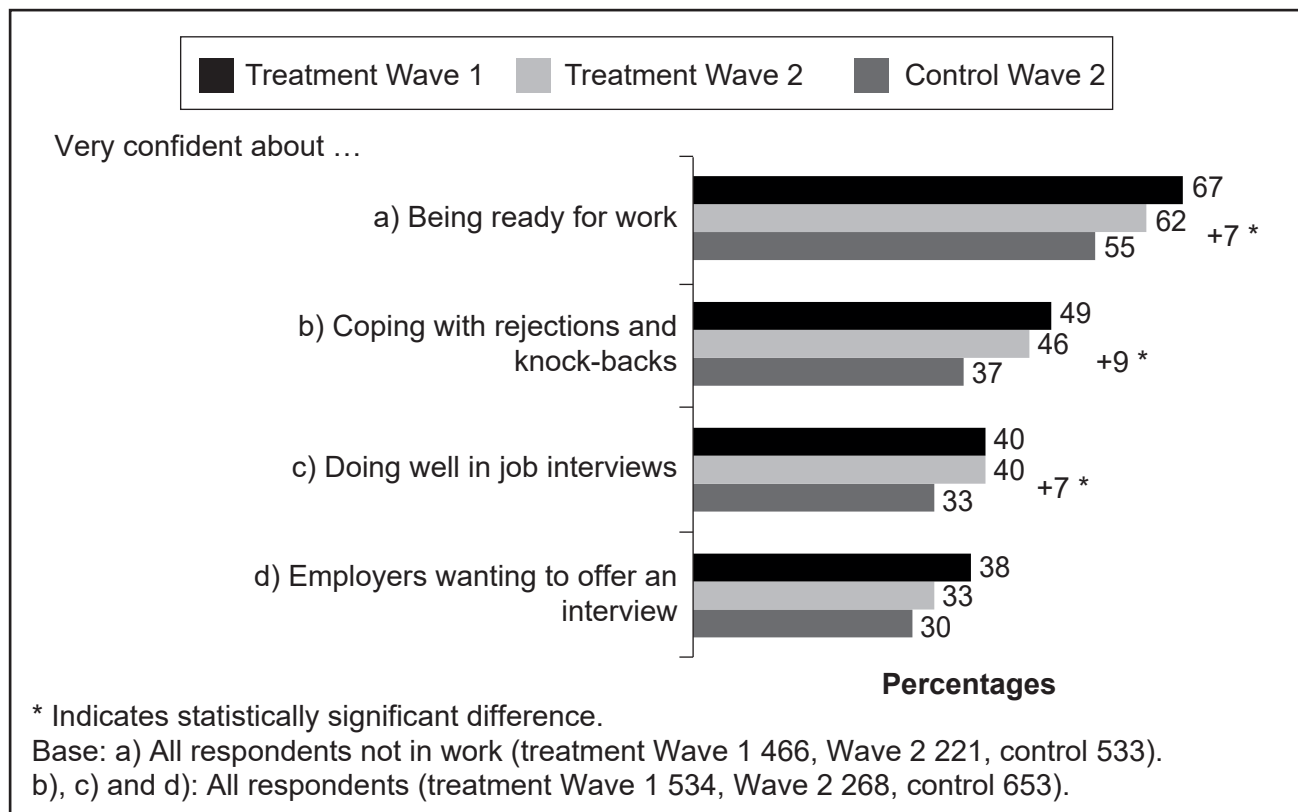
4.3.3   Impact on attitudes to work

The survey questionnaire included eight statements regarding attitudes to work; respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The statements have been used in previous surveys of Jobcentre Plus customers, and therefore provide a tried and tested approach to measuring attitudes towards work.

Findings are shown in Figure 4.8 (covering statements asked of all respondents) and Figure 4.9 (asked of those who were not in work). Respondents generally expressed positive attitudes about work, with large majorities agreeing with statements such as "I would be a happier, more fulfilled person if I was in paid work", and "I am willing to change career or retrain to find a job I can do".

Survey findings chimed with qualitative research with participants, which suggested near universal agreement that work was very important. A key and consistent reason for the importance related to being able to earn a comfortable salary which would enable them to have a better standard of living and afford things that they would like to buy.

A comparison between the treatment and control samples indicates where the pilots had an impact. At Wave 2 of the quantitative survey, treatment sample respondents were more likely than control sample respondents to agree with three of the statements: "Once you've got a job, it's very important to hang on to it, even if you don't really like it" (82 per cent compared with 76 per cent) "I'm confident that I can find a job that suits me" (80 per cent compared with 70 per cent), and "People are put under too much pressure to find work" (58

per cent compared with 51 per cent). This suggests that the pilots have had a positive impact on attitudes, specifically in relation to the importance of keeping a job, and in confidence in finding a suitable job. However, participation in the pilots also appears to have made respondents more likely to feel that people are put under too much pressure to find work.

There were no significant differences between treatment sample survey respondents at Wave 1 compared with Wave 2. This indicates that positive attitudes have continued over time.

The difference noted above between the treatment and control groups, in relation to the statement "I'm confident that I can find a job that suits me" applies both to pre-WP and post-WP respondents. Specifically:

• pre-WP participants: 88 per cent in the treatment group compared with 69 per cent in the control group; and

• post-WP participants: 78 per cent in the treatment group compared with 71 per cent in the control group.

Figure 4.8   Impact on attitudes to work

* Indicates statistically significant difference.
Base: All respondents (treatment Wave 1 534, Wave 2 268, control 653).
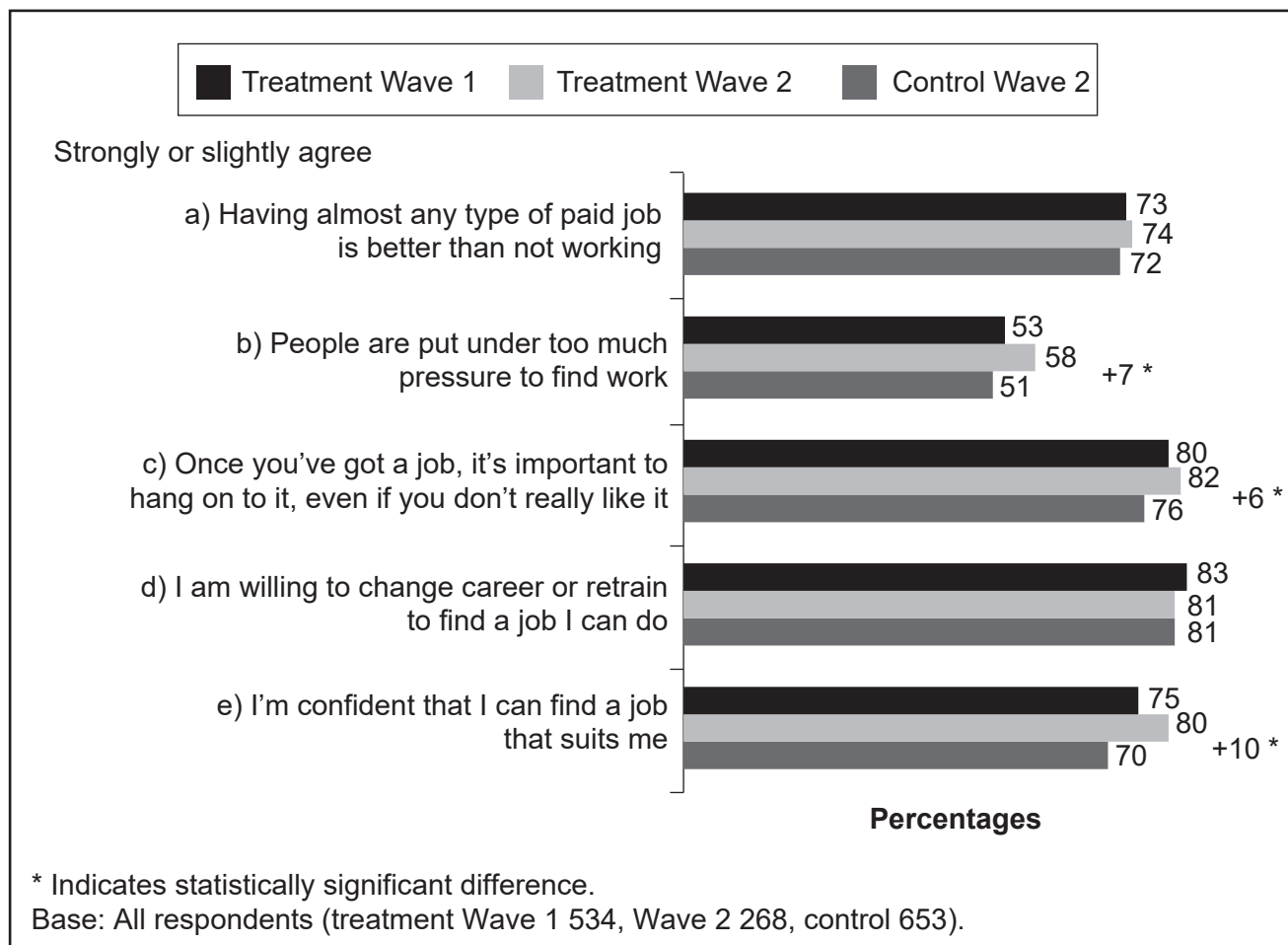
Figure 4.9   Impact on attitudes to work among those not working

* Indicates statistically significant difference.
Base: All respondents not in work (treatment Wave 1 466, Wave 2 221, control 533).
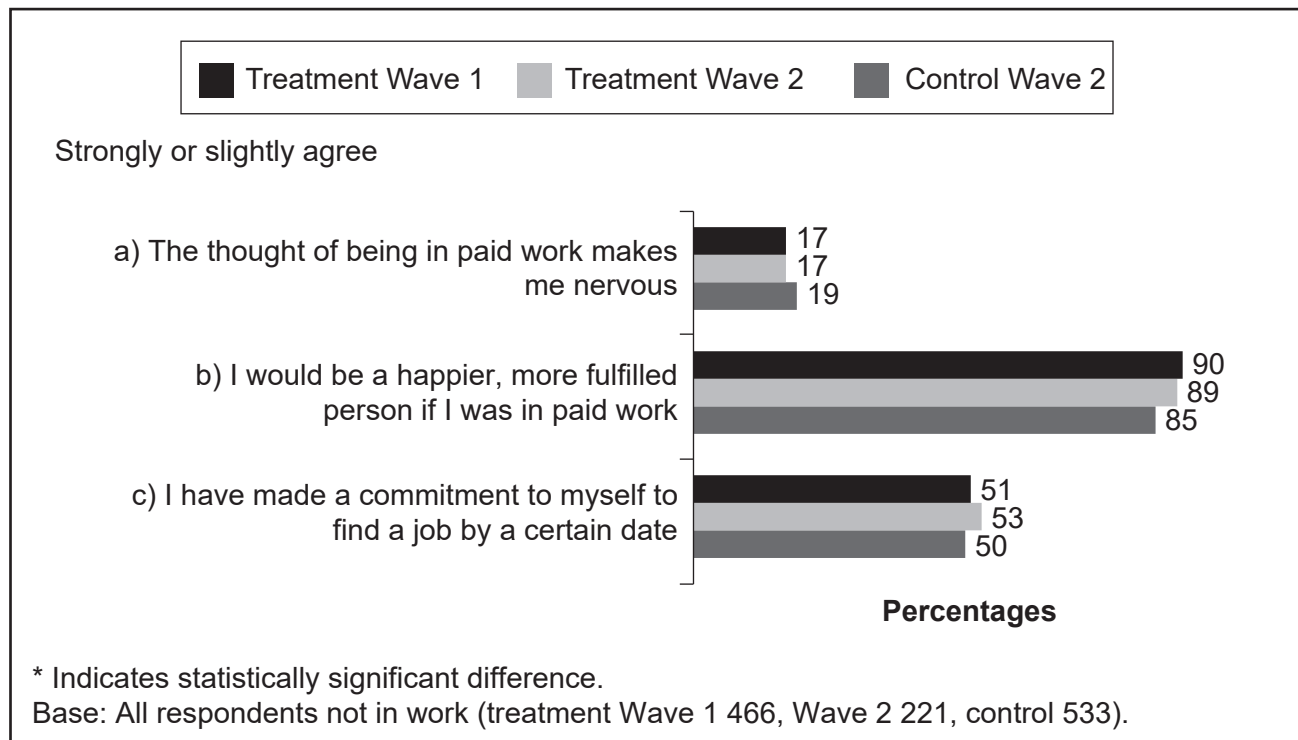
4.3.4   Summary findings on confidence and motivation

The survey findings show that participation in the pilots had a positive impact on respondents' confidence and motivation, specifically in relation to confidence in doing well in job interviews, coping with rejections and knock-backs, and being ready for work.

In the qualitative interviews, increased confidence was attributed to meeting new people, acquiring new knowledge and skills (e.g. cover letters, interview skills), and using a computer. However, job-search activity was not identified by participants as an important factor in increasing confidence.

The pilots also appeared to have a positive impact on attitudes to work, specifically in relation to the importance of keeping a job, and in confidence in finding a suitable job. There was a minority of participants in the survey, however, who felt that the pilots had worsened their confidence and self-esteem. Participation in the pilots also appears to have made respondents more likely to feel that people are put under too much pressure to find work.

4.4   Benefit and work outcomes

This section examines work and benefit outcomes among Supervised Jobsearch participants. This addresses a key overall goal of the pilots, in moving participants into work and/or off benefit[42].

It is important to consider the nature of the participant group when considering work and benefit outcomes. The pilots were aimed at claimants who had difficulties in finding work, and (as seen in section 3.2) a third of participants had not worked for at least five years, or had never worked. As a result, it is reasonable to expect the pilots to have had a limited impact on employment outcomes.

4.4.1   Work outcomes

At the time of the Wave 1 quantitative survey, one in eight Supervised Jobsearch participants (13 per cent) said they were in paid work (Figure 4.10). This increased to 18 per cent who were in work at the time of the Wave 2 interview (a statistically significant increase). However, there was no difference between the treatment and control survey samples at Wave 2 (18 per cent in each case). This suggests that, at this point in time (6–10 months after starting on a pilot), there was no evidence of an impact on employment rates resulting from the pilots.

Looking in more detail, employment rates were also consistent between the treatment and control samples, when looking specifically at the pre-WP and post-WP survey groups. For example, in the treatment sample, 33 per cent of pre-WP respondents were in work at Wave 2, compared with 35 per cent in the control sample (no significant difference).

Overall, pre-WP survey respondents were much more likely than post-WP respondents to move into paid work; this applies to treatment sample respondents at Wave 1 (27 per cent compared with ten per cent), treatment sample respondents at Wave 2 (33 per cent compared with 14 per cent) and control sample respondents at Wave 2 (35 per cent compared with 12 per cent).

Figure 4.10 also indicates that there was no difference identified in the survey between the treatment and control groups in terms of movement off benefit. The same proportion (77 per cent) reported receiving Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit at the time of the Wave 2 interview. Benefit outcomes are discussed in more detail below.

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42   The quantitative data presented within this report is based on a sub-sample of pilot participants who were interviewed – see section 1.6 for more detail on the methodology. A separate impact assessment using the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) administrative data is published alongside this report which compares benefit and employment outcomes for all pilot participants.

Figure 4.10 Employment and benefit outcomes
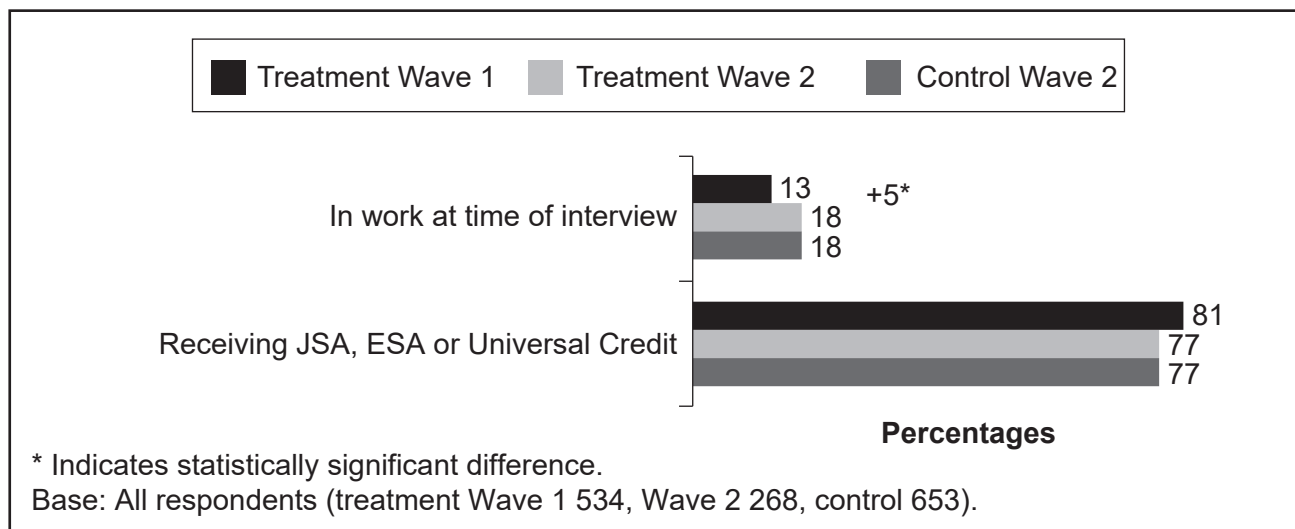
* Indicates statistically significant difference.
Base: All respondents (treatment Wave 1 534, Wave 2 268, control 653).

The qualitative findings can help to understand the reasons why the pilots did not appear to improve employment outcomes (at least in the short term). Critically, when exploring why participants had failed to secure employment, they identified key factors that were unrelated to job search. These revolved around participants' own barriers to work, such as perceived age-related barriers, time spent out of work, and lack of relevant skills and qualifications.

In particular, both participants and providers stressed the importance of the local employment context. For participants, this revolved around the lack of suitable employment available locally. That said, some provider advisers presented a more nuanced reflection. For example, one provider, operating in a semi-rural area, highlighted that public transport did not serve the outskirts of town where many jobs could be found[43], acting as a significant barrier for the participants he supported.

In addition, there was little evidence from the qualitative research to suggest that expanding job search into new sectors led to obtaining work in these areas. For example, a participant reported receiving advice about expanding the types of jobs he could apply for, and he initially regarded this advice positively. He subsequently incorporated this advice into his approach to looking for work after completing the pilot, but was left questioning the value of participating in the pilots, having only managed to secure interviews for cleaning jobs, the types of roles he had been applying for prior to pilot participation.

4.4.2   Benefit outcomes

At the time of the Wave 2 quantitative survey, most Supervised Jobsearch participants said they were on JSA (65 per cent), with ten per cent on ESA and one per cent on Universal Credit, while 22 per cent said they were not receiving benefits (Table 4.2). There were no significant differences in these figures compared with the Wave 1 survey, or compared with the control sample. This suggests that the pilots had not made a significant impact on numbers receiving benefits (or indeed any individual benefits), at least in the timeframe covered by the survey.

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43   The provider in this case suggested that the majority of the Supervised Jobsearch Pilots (SJP) participants seen in their office were looking for unskilled work.

The survey respondents who were not receiving benefits were mostly in work; although seven per cent of respondents reported that they were neither in work nor receiving a benefit. This proportion was the same in both the treatment and control samples, and was also the same among treatment sample respondents at Wave 1.

Table 4.2   Benefits received

	Column percentages		
	Treatment sample Wave 1	**Treatment sample Wave 2**	**Control sample Wave 2**
Jobseeker's Allowance	70	65	68
Employment and Support Allowance	10	10	8
Universal Credit	1	1	1
None of these	18	22	22
Don't know	1	1	1
Base	534	268	653

Base: All respondents.

4.4.3   Employment details

Wave 2 survey respondents who had been in paid work in the previous six months were asked more detailed questions about their current or most recent job. These questions were asked in order to assess the type and quality of work that Supervised Jobsearch participants had moved in to, and how this compared with the control group. The findings in this section should be treated with a degree of caution, due to the low number of respondents answering these questions.

Most respondents that had been in paid work in the previous six months said that their job was for 16 hours or more per week. There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups (84 per cent in the treatment sample and 77 per cent in the control sample); see Figure 4.11.

Less than half of respondents in the treatment sample said that their current or most recent job was a permanent job (44 per cent), while 44 per cent said it was on a temporary or casual basis. Again, there were no significant differences identified in the survey between the treatment and control samples.

Figure 4.11 Type of work

*Indicates statistically significant difference.
Base: All respondents who had been in work in previous six months (treatment Wave 2 86, control 180).
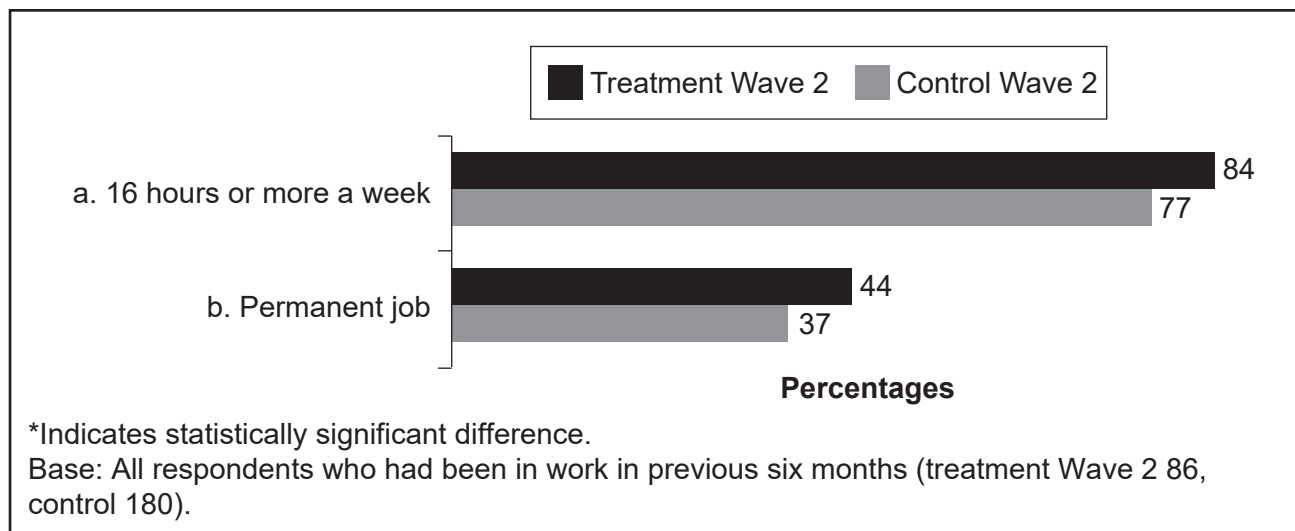
Respondents who were in work at the time of the Wave 2 survey were asked to rate their current job in terms of its quality and security. The survey findings suggest a possible relationship between pilot attendance and perceptions of job security, as treatment group respondents were more likely than those in the control sample to see their job as secure. It is not possible to examine these findings in detail, as only 47 respondents in the Treatment group were in work at the time of the Wave 2 survey.

4.4.4   Summary findings on employment and benefit outcomes

At the Wave 2 survey (six to ten months after starting on the pilots), there was no difference in the proportion of respondents in the treatment and control samples who were in employment. This suggests that, in the timeframe covered by the survey, there was no evidence of an impact on employment rates resulting from the pilots. Similarly, there was no apparent impact on movement off benefits: the same proportions in the two samples were receiving JSA, ESA or Universal Credit at the time of the Wave 2 interview.

Survey analysis suggests that Supervised Jobsearch participants may have moved into more secure work than their counterparts in the control group, but otherwise there were no apparent differences in the type of work undertaken by participants since the pilots, compared with non-participants.

The qualitative findings can help to understand the reasons why the pilots did not appear to improve employment outcomes (at least in the short term). Critically, when exploring why participants had failed to secure employment, they identified key factors that were unrelated to job search. These revolved around participants' own barriers to work, such as perceived age-related barriers, time spent out of work, and lack of relevant skills and qualifications plus the lack of suitable employment available locally.

Overall participant and provider assessment of the pilots

As described in the theory of change model in section 2.3, the pilots explicitly focused on change at the individual claimant level, with the goals of moving claimants into employment (and off benefit) or closer towards employment. In addition to these goals, by running the intervention as a pilot subject to research and evaluation, findings can add to the evidence base on what works to support claimants into employment. To contribute towards this, participants and providers were asked for their overall views of the pilots, and for their thoughts on which elements of the model worked well, which worked less well and what refinements could potentially improve the model overall. These views are presented below.

4.5   Overall views of the pilots

Findings from the quantitative survey provide an overall assessment of Supervised Jobsearch participants' views of the pilots.

As noted earlier in the report (section 3.6.1), participants' expectations of the pilots could have a major influence on their overall feelings towards their experience. In the quantitative survey, there was a wide range of views in relation to expectations of the pilots, ranging from those who said their time on the pilots was 'much better' than expected (20 per cent) to those that said it was 'much worse' (23 per cent). Overall, 39 per cent said that their experience was better than expected (39 per cent), while 34 per cent thought it was worse (Figure 4.12).

Findings varied by different sub-groups of participants:

• Those who completed the pilots were more positive than early leavers (42 per cent and 28 per cent respectively said it was better than expected).

• BAME respondents were more negative than white respondents (47 per cent and 31 per cent respectively said the experience was worse than expected).

Figure 4.12 Was pilot better or worse than expected?

Base: All Wave 1 respondents (534).
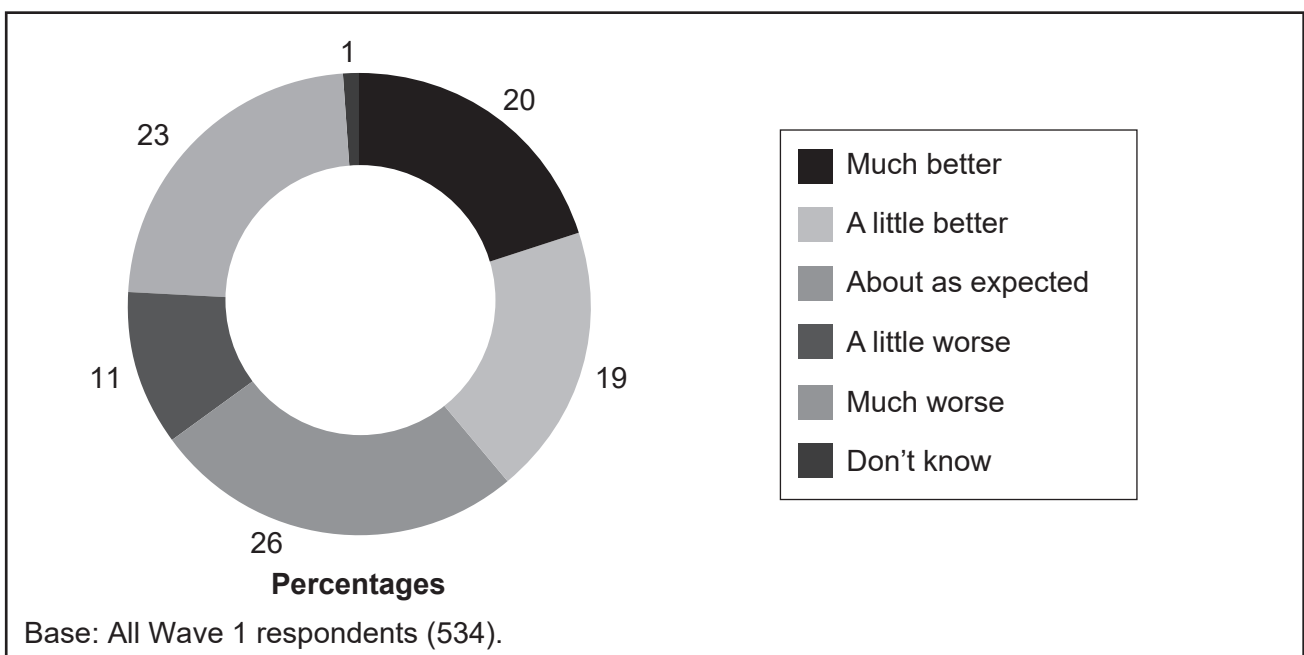
Supervised Jobsearch Pilots trial evaluation

When asked about their overall experience of the pilots, at both waves of the survey there was a fairly even spread of responses from 'very positive' to 'very negative', indicating that the pilots attracted a wide range of views from participants (Figure 4.13). At both waves, just over half of respondents said that their overall experience of the pilots was 'very positive' or 'positive' (54 per cent at Wave 1, 57 per cent at Wave 2), while at both waves 42 per cent said it was 'very negative' or 'negative'. There were no statistically significant changes between Wave 1 and Wave 2, indicating that participants' views of the pilots have remained consistent over time.

There was no significant difference between the views of pre-WP and post-WP participants at either survey wave.

In contrast, analysis of the Wave 1 findings shows that there were some sub-group differences:

• respondents with children were more likely to report a positive experience of the pilots (64 per cent) than those without children (51 per cent);

• disabled participants were less likely to be positive about their time on the pilots (48 per cent compared with 57 per cent of non-disabled respondents); and

• those who left the pilots early were less likely to report a positive experience than those who completed their time on the pilots (45 per cent compared with 56 per cent).

Figure 4.13 Attitudes towards the pilots

Base: All pilot participants – Wave 1 (534); Wave 2 (268).
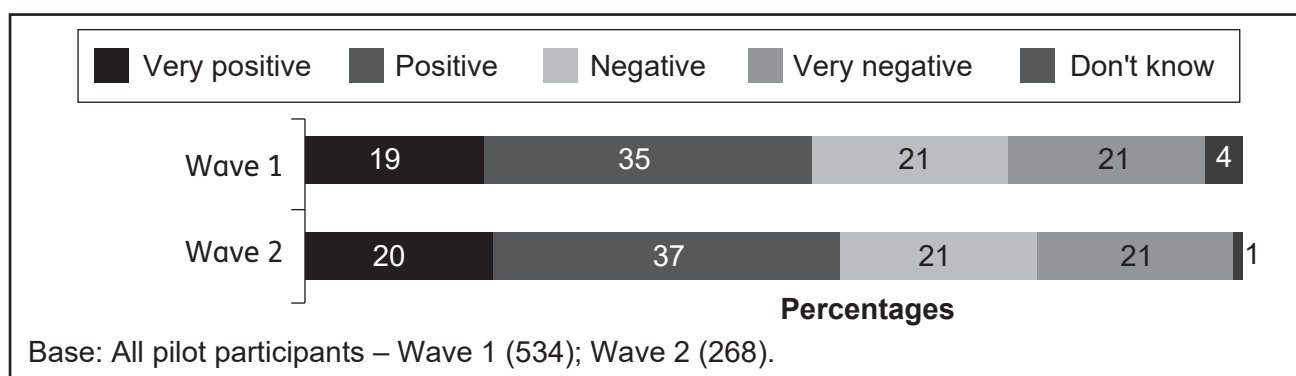
As a follow-up question, at Wave 2 of the survey, Supervised Jobsearch participants who were receiving JSA, ESA or Universal Credit were asked to compare the two types of support: the support they had received on Supervised Jobsearch, and the support they had received recently from Jobcentre Plus since leaving the pilots.

Once again, opinions were divided: 36 per cent found the recent Jobcentre Plus support more helpful, whereas 34 per cent said that the support they got on Supervised Jobsearch was the more helpful (Figure 4.14). Other respondents (28 per cent) said they were equal or felt that they couldn't compare the two.

Figure 4.14 Whether Supervised Jobsearch or existing provision is more helpful

28

1

36

34

Recent support at Jobcentre Plus

Support on Supervised Jobsearch Scheme

Equal/can't compare

Don't know

Percentages

Base: All Wave 2 participants on JSA, ESA or Universal Credit (204).
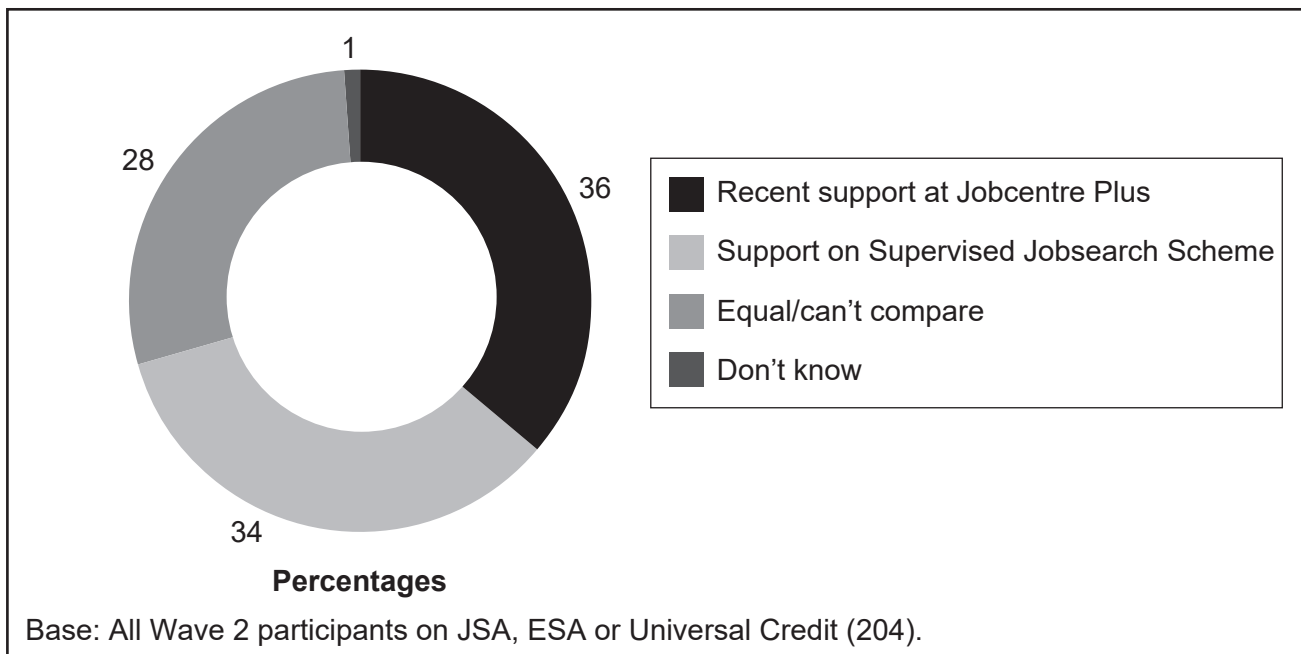
While the quantitative survey findings indicate a broad range of positive and negative views, the qualitative interviews presented a less positive picture. Some elements were generally well received, such as the workplace environment with opportunities for increased social interaction, and one-to-one support from advisers. Other elements, in particular the amount of time prescribed to individual job-search activity, were generally felt to be less successful, and although there was a broad range of experiences and views relating to the pilots, participant satisfaction with pilot involvement overall was generally low.

The qualitative interviews with participants indicated that satisfaction levels appeared to be linked to a range of factors. As discussed in section 4.3.1 these included participants' background and characteristics, for example those with recent work experience and existing CVs generally felt the pilots offered little to their pre-existing job-search approach. Participants' expectations on entry to the pilots also appear to have had an impact on satisfaction levels; where initial expectations were not met this led to lower levels of satisfaction, although as noted in section 3.6 these expectations were often not in line with what the pilots intended to deliver.

In general, participants with higher levels of satisfaction were often those who found employment and felt that this was a result of the support provided through the pilots. Positive experiences were not limited to those who had found work, with some respondents who had still not found work at the point of interview saying that they were 'very satisfied' and found the pilots 'helpful', as one respondent elaborated:

'[Supervised Jobsearch] *has been a positive thing for me in which to take back to my job search and just to identify where I can make further progress into the future'.*

(Participant Wave 1)

For providers, the number of long-term unemployed participants moving into or towards work, or securing other positive outcomes, was viewed as a success.

> *'We've had people go into employment, lots of them… People have transformed their lives, are more confident when they leave here, the social side's grown meeting new people…they're probably in the best position to get a job because they're used to going somewhere new…it's been an experience and I've got a lot out of it.'*

(Adviser, lead provider)

4.6   Elements that worked well

Providers suggested that a number of elements of the pilot model were successful. These included the replication of the workplace environment and the intensity and duration of the intervention. As discussed in section 3.7.6, a key element of pilot design was the replication of full-time work which providers suggested helped to promote daily routine and structure for participants who may have been out of work for some time.

Looking at the **participant** perspective, in the **quantitative survey** participants were asked (without prompting) about the benefits they had gained from attending the pilots. Respondents were most likely to say that their CV had improved (22 per cent), while 15 per cent said the pilots had increased their skills, 15 per cent that it had increased their confidence or self-belief, and 11 per cent said that it gave them useful job interview skills or experience.

Figure 4.15 Benefits gained from attending the pilots (spontaneous)

Base: All Wave 1 respondents (534).
Note: chart includes answers given by at least four per cent of respondents.
Multiple responses allowed.
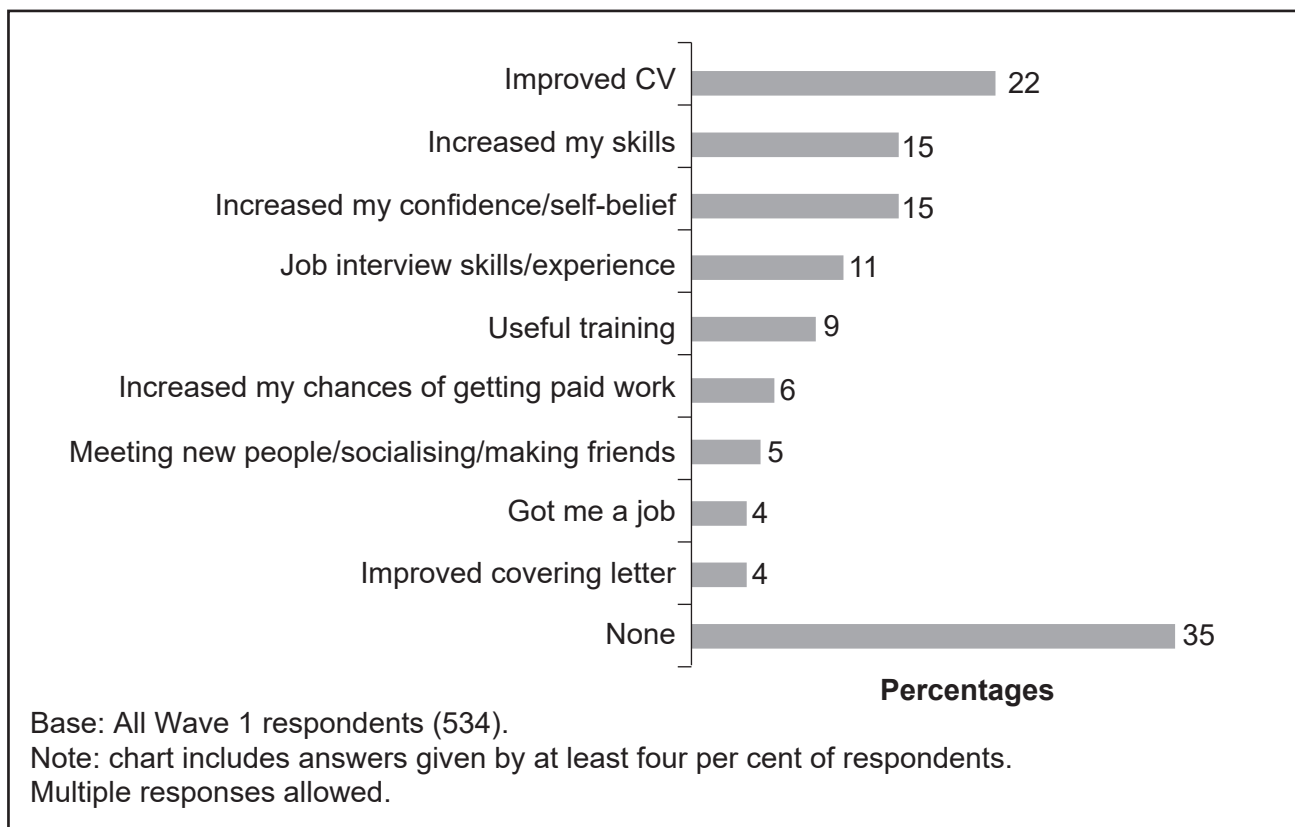
For **participants** in the qualitative interviews, the dominant positive themes included the social aspects of the pilots, such as meeting new people in a similar position to themselves, with the opportunity for peer support. Those who received one-to-one support from advisers also valued this highly, as did those offered the opportunity to learn new skills. In general positive experiences of the pilots were commonly underpinned by strong interpersonal relationships between participants and advisers, and receipt of intensive one-to-one support.

4.7   What worked less well

Providers and participants reported a range of operational difficulties related to the implementation of the pilots which had an impact on service delivery, in particular related to participant referral flows, discussed in section 3.4.

Overall, providers consistently described the pilots as highly prescriptive and inflexible, and expressed a degree of frustration that they were unable to deviate from the model. **Providers** also universally felt that the prescriptive nature of the pilots presented a barrier to their delivery of personalised support to participants. In particular, the requirement that 90 per cent of participant time was spent on individually-based job search[44] was considered a disproportionate focus. Some providers felt this aspect of the model was of limited use to most participants and offered the least benefit to those who had been out of work the longest.

These views on the personalisation of support were echoed in qualitative interviews with some participants who also expressed a strong sentiment that support delivered via the pilots was not tailored or personalised enough.

It is important to note that the degree of prescription within the service model was directly linked to the policy intent to test the impact of a particular regime.

A focus on supervising adherence to the requirement for 90 per cent individually-based job search was also perceived by participants negatively, and to some extent may have undermined the benefits of the intensive support model.

Many respondents to the follow-up qualitative interviews expressed negative views of the pilots if they did not see any evidence of improved outcomes resulting from their attendance. In fact, where participants had achieved success in finding work, they mostly attributed this to their own efforts or to applications submitted prior to the pilots.

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[44]   The service specification states 'Claimants will undertake Supervised Jobsearch activities for up to 35 hours a week (unless their availability is restricted to a shorter period as notified by Jobcentre Plus). This will include other activities such as group sessions to help progress the claimants' aptitude to job search effectively and address barriers which may affect their ability. However, the focus must remain that all activities within the pilots are designed to raise the effectiveness and quality of claimants' job-searching ability (group sessions must not make up more than ten per cent per week).'

In both the quantitative and qualitative findings, there was an overriding view among claimants that the pilots were not adding to their existing knowledge. Four in five quantitative respondents (79 per cent) agreed that they 'already knew a lot of what was covered', while around a third (35 per cent) said that they had not gained any benefits from attending the pilots. Many qualitative participants said that they had learnt or gained nothing new from attending the pilots, while others described attendance as a 'waste of time', or felt that it was inappropriate or not relevant to them.

> *'There was nothing new that I was doing to find work that I couldn't do by myself without supervision'.*

> (Participant, Wave 2)

Other participants suggested that the pilots could be useful for some people with different (lower) skills levels, but often felt that it was not tailored enough to their own needs, skills or experiences. Highly skilled participants reported that the pilot was '*too basic*' and not a good use of their time. At the same time, as discussed in section 3.2.1, the focus within the pilot model on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) meant it was less suitable for participants facing some barriers to employment such as learning difficulties. Furthermore, as discussed in section 3.7.4, there did appear to be some difficulties associated with the delivery of the pilot intervention to groups of participants with such a wide range of skills, experience and support needs.

4.8 Perspectives on refining the package of support and current delivery model

Numerous suggestions were made by **participants in the qualitative interviews** as to improvements that could be made to the pilots. These were drawn from participants' own experience of receiving the support, and from exploring the type of support they felt they would most like to have received. Three in particular came out particularly strongly:

• more intensive one-to-one support from advisers;

• more personalised support, addressing key needs and barriers to getting into work (including access to training); and

• access to employers, including facilitation of work experience and placements.

As noted above in section 3.8.1, **providers** also argued for greater flexibility in the delivery of support. Specific types of support that providers reported they would like to introduce included skills-based training, intensive literacy and numeracy support and, in particular, allowing participants to attend work-based placements and engage with employers directly. Overall they felt that individually-based job-search activity was not in itself sufficient to occupy 90 per cent of participants' time on the pilots and widely considered this a weakness in the model.

Providers believed that an element of job search should remain. Typically, when probed, providers suggested splitting time between job search and other activities equally. Alternatively, if the emphasis on job-search activity was to remain, providers felt that mandating participants for half days or days built around school time (for example 9:30 – 14:45) would be sufficient to search intensively for work, while still instilling the routine and structure of a working day.

In the qualitative interviews, there was also a strong sentiment among **participants** that the overall 13-week duration should be shortened if the focus on individual job-search activity was to be maintained. Alternatively, it was suggested that content should be broadened to offer additional activities to utilise the time available in a more productive way, or that the duration should be determined on a needs basis with individuals with a lower support need attending for two or three weeks, and those with higher needs attending for longer, as required. This echoed interviews with **providers** who felt the intensity and duration was a strength of the pilots as it provided them the opportunity to make substantial progress with some participants, but who would have preferred to be able to offer a broader, more personalised package of support.

5   Conclusions

This chapter offers some conclusions based on the evaluation findings. These are structured around the aims and objectives of the evaluation.

The Supervised Jobsearch Pilots (SJP) aimed to test the impact of a prolonged period of supervised job-search activity, intended to mirror working hours, on two groups of claimants: those who were considered to require support and supervision before their referral to the Work Programme (WP), and those who had already received support from Jobcentre Plus after completing the WP. The intention of the SJP was to make claimants' job search more effective, in order to increase their likelihood of moving off benefit and into work.

The SJP explicitly focuses on change at the individual claimant level and seek to move claimants closer towards employment or into employment (and off benefit). According to this model, in order for claimants to achieve the main outcome of obtaining employment, they must have the requisite job-search skills, approach and attitude towards job search and employment.

This evaluation assesses the pilots' performance against these aims. Specifically, the aims and objectives of the evaluation were as follows:

• To provide details on the support delivered and gather feedback on claimant experience.

• To assess the Supervised Jobsearch model to consider whether it is the most effective design, and to suggest improvements to the provision and provide lessons learnt from service delivery.

• To measure the extent that the pilots move participants closer to work (for example, increases in work-related activity and changes in attitudes to work).

• To complement the impact assessment element of the evaluation in exploring why the pilot interventions did or did not have an impact on benefit and employment outcomes.

5.1   Assess the Supervised Jobsearch model and provide lessons learnt from service delivery

A key assumption within the theory of change model developed to support the evaluation of the pilots was that providers would implement the intervention as specified by the Department. To some extent, the pilot overview indicates that delivery did follow the policy intent of an intensive model which replicated full-time work in terms of the attendance requirements and the office-based environment.

The evaluation did, however, find some evidence that operational issues had an impact on delivery and compromised the testing of the pilot model, as delivery was not always in line with the specification. This issue should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings.

In particular, providers reported some difficulties associated with the flow of participant referrals from Jobcentre Plus. The number of claimants referred to the pilots was lower than anticipated and providers indicated that they had expected a steady referral flow during the first three months of the pilots although the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) specification offered no guarantee as to actual volumes and timing. Providers reported that

in practice very few referrals were received during the first five to seven weeks of the pilots going live, followed by an abrupt increase in volumes during the second month[45].

Negative consequences related to this, reported by frontline provider staff, included overcrowding, lack of desks and resources and insufficient staffing to maintain the minimum staffing ratio as required by the service specification. At times, therefore, the operational issues relating to participant flows during the implementation of the pilots did appear to have a fairly significant impact on delivery at many pilot sites.

In addition, some provider staff reported introducing a degree of flexibility into their delivery of the pilots. This sometimes went beyond delivery of activities that formed part of the intended pilot design, to include greater flexibility into delivery, which was potentially outside the scope of the pilot model.

In assessing the various aspects of the model, it is useful to refer to the elements included in the theory of change, as set out below.

5.1.1   Full-time attendance

In line with the policy intent, this element of the model was described as 'resembling work'. Providers viewed the intensity and duration of the model positively, as they felt it could help to (re)introduce structure and routine for participants who may have been out of work for a significant period of time. Some participants also indicated that the 35-hour week was useful and effective in helping them to make the transition to work easier.

However, despite these positive views of the similarity to the working week, there was an overriding view among participants that the pilots were too long, particularly in terms of the number of hours per week. This is linked to the focus on individual job search (discussed below).

5.1.2   90 per cent supervised job search

The specification for the pilots provided that 90 per cent of activity should be focused on 'supervised job searching.' While no precise definition was provided, the specification did provide examples of supervised activities such as, 'help with job search, job goals, cover letters and interview techniques'. In practice, this was applied to mean job searching in a supervised environment.

Although provider staff clearly recognised the importance of individually-based job-search activity, they felt that the focus on individual job search was not in itself sufficient to occupy 90 per cent of participants' time on the pilots. This was a view widely shared by participants. For example, a number of participants noted that there were insufficient relevant job vacancies for them to apply for to fill the time allocated. Therefore, the requirement that 90 per cent of participant time was spent on supervised individually-based job search was considered a disproportionate focus, and this was widely considered a weakness in the model by provider staff.

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[45]   An expansion of participant eligibility criteria was implemented by Jobcentre Plus in response to low numbers of referrals (see section 1.2).

5.1.3   One-to-one supervision and support

Some participants expressed positive views of the support they received, with advisers able to help them '*straight away*'. There was also some evidence of strong interpersonal relationships forming between participants and advisers, with positive one-to-one support being provided. Participants also expressed positive views about specific types of support, such as interview training. This gave participants useful skills and techniques, and also made them feel more confident and less nervous about being in an interview situation.

However, despite the DWP specification that activities must be individually tailored to meet participant needs, and in contrast to the experiences described above, some participants suggested that they received little or no one-to-one or personalised support.

These differing views are summarised in the quantitative findings: just over half of participants felt that they received about the right amount of support on the pilots, while a third said there was not enough support.

As noted above, operational issues were reported by some providers as sometimes preventing them from meeting the required staffing ratios. To some extent, therefore, this will have affected participants' perceptions of the support they received. At the same time, provider staff indicated that the model itself could make it difficult to provide effective personal support. In particular, providers felt that the model was rigid and prevented them from offering more tailored and personalised support, which was recognised as important as pilot participants were a diverse group.

Overall, where delivery focused on supporting participants, in particular where support was delivered on a one-to-one basis, participant satisfaction levels were higher than where there was a perceived focus on supervising adherence to individual job-search activity. This potentially highlights a degree of tension within the supportive and supervisory aspects of the pilot model.

The importance of one-to-one support can be seen from the suggestions that participants made as to how the pilots could be improved. Two of the most common suggestions were for more intensive one-to-one support from advisers, and more personalised support, addressing key needs and barriers to getting into work, despite the inclusion of these areas of support in the service specification. It is difficult to tease out the extent to which operational difficulties in providing the expected levels of support or the perceived rigidity of the model by some providers led some participants to feel that the support they received was insufficient for their needs.

5.1.4   Access to ICT and developing on-line IT skills

Access to computers and telephones was generally well regarded by the participants who took part in qualitative interviews. Likewise, obtaining adviser support or help using computers or the internet was appreciated by participants, although this did not appear to be available to all respondents, despite the requirement for this within the DWP service specification.

Some participants reported that pilot attendance had developed their knowledge and experience of additional job-searching resources, including on-line websites like Universal Jobmatch and job agencies like, Reed, Indeed, etc., to look for work.

At the same time, there was evidence that the focus on information and communications technology (ICT) meant that the pilot model could be less suitable for claimants facing some specific barriers to employment such as learning difficulties.

5.1.5   Social interaction and peer support

Providers acknowledged the benefits to participants of increased social interaction and peer support which they suggested could help build participant confidence. Attending the pilot site alongside their peers was also identified as a key benefit by many participants. For some this social aspect was the main strength of the pilots. The pilot was also felt to have provided an opportunity to engage with other people, to bond over shared experience and offer a setting to provide and receive peer support.

5.1.6   Non-core activities

A number of 'non-core' activities were identified as part of pilot activities in the qualitative interviews with providers and participants. Participants expressed positive views of these activities such as help or training with literacy or numeracy, counselling or mentoring, and workplace visits. A consistent proportion of quantitative survey respondents (at least four in five) said that these activities had been very or fairly helpful, and positive views appeared to influence favourable perceptions of the pilots overall. Participants who indicated they had not participated in non-core activities, such as workplace visits, said that they would like to have done so.

In line with their desire to introduce greater flexibility into the model, provider staff offered suggestions for types of support that they would like to introduce to the pilots. These include the ability to provide skills-based training, intensive literacy and numeracy support and, in particular, allowing participants to attend work-based placements and engage with employers directly. One of the main suggestions for improvement from participants was also to gain greater access to employers, including facilitation of work experience and placements.

5.1.7   Feedback on participant experience

When asked about their overall experience of the pilots, at both waves of the survey there was a fairly even spread of responses from 'very positive' to 'very negative', indicating that the pilots attracted a wide range of views from participants.

The qualitative findings indicate that participants' attitudes often reflected the extent to which they received intensive one-to-one support from provider advisers, underlining the importance of this aspect of the pilots (as noted above).

The findings also indicate the groups of participants who benefited more or less from participating in the pilots (details from the quantitative survey except where specified):

• Participants with lower skills and/or further from the labour market were more positive about the pilots; specifically, they were more likely to say they gained job-search awareness and skills, and that their confidence and motivation improved. In general, the findings indicate that the pilots may have been most effective in improving intermediate outcomes among those with lower skills or who had been out of work for a longer period of time. In the qualitative interviews those with higher skills were more likely to say that the pilots were too long and that the support was too basic for their needs.

- The qualitative findings highlight that the pilot model may not be suitable for claimants facing some specific barriers to employment, such as learning difficulties, mental health conditions, poor literacy or IT skills.

- Participants with children were generally more positive about the pilots, particularly in relation to gaining job-search awareness and skills, and increasing their self-confidence and motivation.

- Younger participants (aged under 35) were more positive than older participants towards the personal support they received, and were more likely to feel the pilots helped improve their job-search ability.

- Participants with health problems were less positive about the pilots overall, and were less likely than other participants to say that it increased their confidence and motivation. Health problems were also a common reason for leaving the pilots early (particularly in the post-WP group).

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) participants were more critical than white participants, regarding the level of support they received, and were less likely to say that the pilots improved their job-search skills.

It is also clear that attitudes towards the pilots were linked to participants' expectations, with expectations varying considerably. A number of participants described their positive expectations of the pilots based on the information they were given by Jobcentre Plus staff at the point of referral. In other cases, however, some frontline provider advisers felt that participants often failed to absorb any of the information they were given, other than when to attend. This could lead to misunderstandings at the start of the pilots, with some participants unaware of the commitment required. Equally, some participants appeared to have unrealistic expectations of the types of support they could get from the pilots. These findings suggest that setting out clear expectations to participants is important.

5.2 Measure the extent that the pilots move participants closer to work (e.g. increases in work-related activity and changes in attitudes to work).

The design of the pilots (based on random assignment) allows a robust assessment of how they had an impact on Supervised Jobsearch participants' behaviour and attitudes.

The analysis demonstrates that the pilots had a positive impact on a number of intermediate outcomes. Pilot participation had a positive impact on survey respondents' confidence in their job-search skills, specifically in terms of their skills being up-to-date, and having the skills and knowledge to look for work successfully. These positive findings were echoed in the qualitative interviews, with participants feeling their skills had improved in relation to: learning the importance of tailoring job applications to the role, the need to 'sell yourself" and understanding the level of competition for jobs.

The survey findings also indicate that pilot participation had a positive impact on respondents' confidence and motivation, specifically in relation to confidence in doing well in job interviews, coping with rejections and knock-backs, and being ready for work.

The pilots also appeared to have a positive impact on attitudes on work, specifically in relation to the importance of keeping a job, and in confidence in finding a suitable job. However, a minority of participants felt that the pilots had worsened their confidence and self-esteem. Participation in the pilots also appears to have made respondents more likely to feel that people are put under too much pressure to find work.

Some participants felt that the pilots helped improve their job-search awareness and ability. In the qualitative interviews, there were participants who noted improvements in the depth of their job-search activity, a greater sense of routine in their core job-search approach, applying for a broader range of jobs, and paying more attention to individual applications. However, there was an overriding view that the pilots added little to participants' existing ability to look for jobs. This can be seen in the analysis of the impact of the pilots on Supervised Jobsearch participants. The pilots appear to have had a positive impact on job-search intensity – Supervised Jobsearch participants were more likely to have made 20 or more job applications in the previous month, compared with the control sample. However, in terms of the overall proportions making job applications and going on job interviews, there was no evidence of any impact. In fact, those in the post-WP pilot were less likely to be applying for jobs after attending the pilots, when compared with control sample respondents.

In relation to job-search methods, the pilots appear to have increased the use of private employment agencies, and there was a general sense that the pilots encouraged participants to use a wider range of methods of looking for jobs. Despite this, the findings suggest that any changes to job-search activities may have been short lived, with participants appearing to revert to their previous methods after leaving the pilots.

5.3 Complement the impact assessment element of the evaluation in exploring why the pilot interventions did or did not have an impact on benefit and employment outcomes

At the Wave 2 survey (six to ten months after starting on the pilots), there was no difference in the proportion of respondents in the treatment and control samples who were in employment. This suggests that, in the timeframe covered by the survey, there was no evidence of an impact on employment rates resulting from the pilots. Similarly, there was no apparent impact on movement off benefits: the same proportions in the two samples were receiving Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit at the time of the Wave 2 interview.[46]

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[46]   The quantitative research presented within this report is based on a sub-sample of pilot participants who were interviewed – see section 1.6 for more detail on the methodology. A separate impact assessment using DWP and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) administrative data is published alongside this report which compares benefit and employment outcomes for all pilot participants.

The qualitative findings can help to understand the reasons why the pilots did not appear to improve employment outcomes (at least in the short term). Critically, when exploring why participants had failed to secure employment, they identified key factors that revolved around participants' own barriers to work, such as perceived age-related barriers, time spent out of work, and lack of relevant skills and qualifications; also the lack of suitable employment available locally. Despite the positive impacts that the pilots have had (mainly in relation to confidence and motivation), they may have been unable to tackle these various barriers sufficiently to make a difference to employment outcomes.

Appendix A
Survey technical report

A.1 Wave 1 survey

The Wave 1 survey covered pilot participants only (the control sample was interviewed once at Wave 2). Participants were interviewed approximately two to five months after starting on the pilots. The sample included all eligible pilot participants for whom contact details were available. The sample was provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) based on administrative records.

In total, **534 interviews** were achieved at Wave 1. The table below shows the numbers in the sample and outcomes from the survey.

Table A.1 Wave 1 response rates

	N	Population in Scope of study %	Population in Scope of fieldwork %
Number sampled	1,725		
Ineligible (did not take part in pilots)	74		
In scope of study:	1,651	100	
Cases not issued to interviewers (opt outs)	260		
Invalid cases			
Invalid telephone number or not known at number	173		
In scope of fieldwork:			
	1,218	74	100
Non-contact after 15+ calls	446		
Refusals			
Personal refusal	145		
Interview terminated by respondent	29		
	174		
Other reasons for no interview			
Respondent unavailable during fieldwork period	52		
Inadequate English/refused interview in English	12		
Interviews/response rate	**534**	**32**	**44**

A pilot was conducted prior to the main fieldwork, with 20 interviews completed. The pilot interviews are included in the analysis, and the pilot sample is included in the fieldwork figures outlined above.

Fieldwork took place between 20 February and 29 March 2015; interviews were by telephone.

A.2   Wave 2 survey

The Wave 2 sample included:

- Pilot participants: This comprised all pilot participants who were interviewed at Wave 1 and who gave their permission to be recontacted (528 cases), as well as any cases who were not interviewed at Wave 1, but were eligible for inclusion; mostly those who could not be contacted (456 cases): 984 cases in total.

- Control sample: 2,540 individuals who were not selected for the pilots.

In total, **921 interviews** were completed at Wave 2: 268 with the treatment group and 653 with the control group.

Further details on Wave 2 fieldwork are as follows.

Table A.2   Wave 2 response rates

	Treatment sample (interviewed at Wave 1)	Treatment sample (not interviewed at Wave 1)	Control sample
Number sampled	528	456	2,540
Ineligible (did not take part in pilots)	0	11	0
In scope of study:	528	445	2,540
Opt outs	n/a	n/a	366
Used for qualitative sample only	27	0	0
Invalid cases			
Invalid telephone number or not known at number	32	59	391
In scope of fieldwork:	469	386	1,783
Non-contact after 15+ calls	144	302	807
Refusals			
Personal refusal	62	26	191
Interview terminated by respondent	19	8	58
	81	34	249
Other reasons for no interview			
Respondent unavailable during fieldwork period	18	7	55
Inadequate English/refused interview in English	0	1	19
Interviews	**226**	**42**	**653**
Response rate (in scope of study)	43	9	26
Response rate (in scope of fieldwork)	48	11	37

The response rate is very low for the treatment sample cases who had not been interviewed at Wave 1. Contact had been attempted with all of these cases in the Wave 1 survey, so it is not surprising that most could not be contacted at Wave 2.

Wave 2 interviews were conducted between 4 June and 2 August 2015. This means that pilot participants were interviewed approximately six to ten months after starting on the pilots (or at least three months after ending their time on the pilots).

Opt-out letters were sent to control sample respondents only; the pilot sample did not require an opt out as they had already received one prior to Wave 1.

A pilot was conducted prior to the main fieldwork, with 23 interviews completed – 12 with pilot participants and 11 with control sample respondents. The pilot interviews are included in the analysis, and the pilot sample is included in the fieldwork figures outlined above.

A.3   Summary of interviews

The table below shows summarises interview numbers at both waves for the pre-Work Programme (WP) and post-WP groups.

Table A.3   Summary of interviews

	Pre-WP	Post-WP	Not known	TOTAL
Treatment Wave 1	89	445	0	534
Treatment Wave 2	47	219	2	268
Control	166	486	1	653

Original assumptions were based on achieving:

• 800 interviews at Wave 1 – 400 for each of the pilots (pre- and post-WP);

• 1,600 interviews at Wave 2 – 800 interviews with each of the treatment and control sample groups.

The achieved number of interviews was lower than originally anticipated, with a particularly small number of interviews with pre-WP participants. The reasons for this are as follows:

• The starting sample (reflecting number of participants with contact details available) was smaller than expected; this meant that the survey was restricted to a finite number of cases, with a particularly small number of pre-WP cases.

• Response rates were lower than expected, due to:

  – A relatively large proportion of opt-outs. Typically surveys of this nature have an opt-out rate of up to 10 per cent, but this was higher in this survey – around 15 per cent. There were various reasons for opting out, but the high rate overall is likely to reflect the nature of the respondent group, as well as (in some cases) negative experiences of the pilots.

  – A large number of cases that could not be contacted, either because contact details were inaccurate/out-of-date, or because no personal contact could be made despite making 15 or more attempted calls.

- The other distinctive aspect of the survey is that the sample was limited to a relatively small number of individuals who were involved in the intervention (in either the treatment or control group), and all of these cases were sampled. This means that there was no means of increasing the number of interviews (in other surveys it is possible to boost the sample by drawing additional cases or extending the sampling 'window').

In order to optimise the contacts, BMG undertook the following actions:

- tele-matching all unobtainable phone numbers;

- text messages sent to contacts with mobile phone numbers, giving them further information about the survey and asking them to call the BMG Helpline to book an appointment; none called the Helpline; and

- additional contacts (in some cases 30+ calls).

A.4   Statistical confidence

The table below shows the difference required (in percentage points) when comparing two samples; examples are shown for some of the main types of analysis that have been conducted.

These calculations take into account that:

- samples are based on small populations (c. 1,700 treatment and 2,500 control sample cases), which increases the level of statistical confidence;

- where part/all of the sample is longitudinal, statistical confidence is enhanced; and

- data have not been weighted. The decision not to weight the data was based on the close match in the profile of the interviewed sample and the sample population.

Table A.4   Statistical confidence

Comparison	Sample size	Difference required for statistical significance (at 95% level)
Treatment versus control (Wave 2)	268 v 653	4-7 percentage points
Pre-WP versus Post-WP treatment (Wave 1)	89 v 445	7-10 percentage points
Pre-WP versus Post-WP treatment (Wave 2)	47 v 219	10-15 percentage points
Treatment Wave 1 versus treatment Wave 2	534 v 268	4-6 percentage points
Treatment Wave 1 versus treatment Wave 2 (longitudinal sample only)	226 v 226	3-7 percentage points

A.5   Qualitative research with Supervised Jobsearch participants

This section presents technical details about the qualitative interviews conducted with participants.

A.6   Sample and sampling approach

Participants were selected from data collected and delivered by DWP relating to claimants who attended the Supervised Jobsearch Pilots (SJP). All data was transmitted securely from the DWP to BMG Research. It was important to include key variables in the sample. Data received from DWP provided a number of variables, including claimant address and contact details and whether they had attended the Work Programme (WP).

To allow for sufficient time to conduct fieldwork, 80 records were 'cut' from the survey sample data to progress initial interviews. However, this cut of the survey sample data was latterly supplanted by participant leads received from the quantitative survey.

A.7   Recruitment

As with the survey, claimants in the selected sample were sent a letter explaining what the study was about. Claimants were provided an opt-out period within which the recipient could reply to opt out (by freepost, email, or by telephone). All materials were framed sensitively to ensure that participants were clear about the basis and purpose of the research, what it would involve, and that they were not obliged to take part. All qualitative interview participants were issued a £15 Love2Shop voucher as a thank you payment for their participation.

All interviewees at the first wave were asked whether they would be happy to be contacted for a second round of interviews to be conducted in several months. Of the 78 respondents, 48 participants agreed to be recontacted for a second wave interview (of these, follow-up interviews were conducted with 32 participants interviewed at the first wave).

A.8   Conduct of interviews

Interviews were conducted at each participant's convenience, typically within the working day but also between 6–8pm Monday to Friday to facilitate participation and ensure the diversity of the sample. The majority of interviews were conducted by telephone, though some were conducted face-to-face, at provider sites.

All interviews were recorded on encrypted devices, with the participant's consent, and transcribed verbatim for detailed analysis. Interviews lasted around 35 minutes. The discussion was directed by a topic guide which explored the participants' views and experience of the SJP. Topic guides were used to help ensure a consistent approach across interviews and between members of the Research team.

After the interview, participants were sent a personal thank you letter along with their incentive voucher.