



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Response to the proposal for the future of Shipley Jobcentre

Response to consultation

July 2017

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Background

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) announced new proposals on Thursday 26 January 2017 to relocate some of its Jobcentre Plus offices.

Jobcentre Plus operations have changed in recent years as people make more use of online and telephone services, generally only attending offices for appointments or for help in researching job vacancies.

To reflect this, achieve more efficient use of DWP premises and save public money, the following change was proposed to move Shipley Jobcentre to Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre.

Guidelines around the movement of jobcentres, referred to as 'ministerial criteria', have been used for many years across the whole of the UK network. They originated from a desire to standardise the circumstances when considering the movement of one jobcentre to another.

DWP believes that it is reasonable to expect claimants to travel 3 miles or 20 minutes by public transport from their existing jobcentre. Where it is proposed to move or close an office, and the move to a new jobcentre is outside these criteria, DWP has the option to consult publicly about these changes. The proposal to move the jobcentre at Shipley to Bradford falls outside these criteria:

- distance: 4.1 miles
- public Transport: approximately 23 minutes
- car: 14 minutes

The public consultation paper, ***Proposal for the future of Shipley Jobcentre***, was published on 30 January 2017. It invited comments from everyone with an interest in the future of this jobcentre. This included the closure of the building with the services provided being transferred to Bradford Eastbrook Court.

DWP's estate strategy

On 31 March 2018, DWP's PFI PRIME (Private Finance Initiative for the management of the estate) contract with Telereal Trillium expires. This 20-year contract covers the majority of DWP's current property portfolio of 966 sites. This provides an opportunity to review which offices are needed in the future, taking account of the increased use of online services, the reforms being implemented over the coming years and the anticipated demand on services.

The roll out of Universal Credit and reforms of Jobcentre Plus, have increased the number of interactions claimants now have with DWP online. For example, eight out of ten claims for Jobseeker's Allowance are now made using digital channels and 99.6% of applications for Universal Credit are submitted online. At the same time, DWP has seen record levels of employment across the UK, with the claimant count dropping to around 800,000.

As a result, 20% of the space DWP currently occupies is no longer being used: even allowing contingency for any medium term increase in demand. This offers a major opportunity for both modernisation and rationalisation: over the next 10 years, DWP expects to save £180m per annum on average as a result. When considering how to achieve this, DWP's priority has been to offer the best possible service to claimants while delivering a good deal for the taxpayer.

Summary of responses

Fourteen responses to the consultation proposals were received.

DWP is grateful for all the contributions made in response to the consultation.

The respondents have been categorised as follows:

- 3 responses were from claimants
- 10 responses were from individuals or members of the public
- 1 response was from an organisation

Response themes

The themes are summarised as follows.

Travel time

Seventy-nine per cent of responders were concerned about the increase in travelling time. These related specifically to longer journey times, the inconvenience and increased difficulties.

Typical comments:

"I suffer from chronic lymphocytic leukaemia and have dizzy spells. [If] the local jobcentre at Shipley closes this will mean I have to walk to Bradford, this could affect my health being prone to dizzy spells."

"I feel it is rather disingenuous to say the recommended jobcentre replacement is only 23 minutes away by public transport. That hides a half mile walk from the train station through the city centre, something that will be an intimidating and difficult task for folk with mobility issues, depression, anxiety and other mental health issues, and those struggling with fatigue related conditions, many of who, are unable to qualify for ESA."

"At the moment I walk to Shipley Jobcentre - 3.5 miles, to sign on. I am never late. So a walk of 7 miles in total will double. I am 58 and consider myself to be fit but not even I will be able to walk 14 miles so I will have to use public transport."

“...you say that the distance from Shipley Jobcentre to the alternative proposed in Bradford is four and a half miles. However many people having to use this jobcentre will be travelling from distances of up to 6 miles (in the other direction). Therefore the total distance they would have to travel to the proposed jobcentre in Bradford could be over 10 miles.”

Response

DWP believes that it is reasonable to expect claimants to travel to an office within 3 miles, or 20 minutes by public transport from their existing jobcentre. Shipley Jobcentre falls outside these criteria so DWP chose to consult publicly. Through consultation, the catchment area of each jobcentre has been investigated and the specific travel times and public transport routes have been compiled, see [Annex C](#)

DWP’s work coaches personalise the support provided for each claimant based on individual need and circumstance. Where claimants have limitations due to a health condition or disability or because of caring responsibilities, then this is taken into account when arranging any attendance. DWP has various ways of interacting with vulnerable claimants, including:

- face-to-face
- by email
- by telephone
- by post
- by SMS

However, DWP recognises that some claimants will be taking an unfamiliar journey: work coaches will support claimants over the transition period until they become familiar with new travel arrangements. Claimants can also request to attend a jobcentre that is closer to their home. Work coaches will help signpost claimants in such circumstances.

Travel cost

Fifty-seven per cent of respondents expressed concern about the potential increase in travel costs and the impact this would have on disposable income.

Typical comments:

“Peak time travel is considerably more expensive and as well as the morning, start pretty much mid afternoon, will there be attempts to make sure folk can have appointments to avoid these extra costs on what will already be expensive train fares?”

“When I have to pay to sign on it will be an impossible strain on my budget. I already don’t eat on alternate days.”

“By closing this will mean a further commute for residents which means travelling by either bus or taxi of which most residents suffer with finances and therefore will not attend.”

“Closure will cause even more hardship to clients already hit by other initiatives, who need to use its services. These are often people who through no fault of their own require this service. These are people who have no surplus whatsoever to pay for transport to Bradford for example.”

“Many of our residents claim benefits and closing Shipley Jobcentre will have an impact on them along with others who live in the neighbouring areas. They will be faced with additional transport costs and journey times to attend [alternative] jobcentres. Some jobcentre customers walk several miles to Shipley Jobcentre and back in order to save money.”

Response

DWP acknowledge that the proposals included in the consultation may increase travel costs for some claimants when they are required to attend a jobcentre. This will be particularly so for those who currently live within easy reach of their current jobcentre.

DWP are able to reimburse travel costs for claimants and customers, taking into account their particular circumstances, who are asked to attend the jobcentre outside of their minimum requirement of attendance. This is not new and is the case for any claimant required to attend a jobcentre throughout the UK.

Support to meet travel costs is also available to eligible claimants via the Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card. Claimants can also request to attend a jobcentre closer to their home, should there be one. Work coaches will help signpost claimants in such circumstances.

Access to services/community impact

Thirty-six per cent of respondents expressed concern about the adverse effect, on the local community, of removing access to services and support for vulnerable benefit claimants and those seeking work. They raised specific concerns about Universal Credit roll out and the loss of access to services at Shipley Jobcentre for claimants in parts of West Yorkshire.

Typical comments:

“Presumably many folk on the Airedale line will prefer to go to Keighley or Skipton rather than into the city – are these centres able to take on extra people?”

“The closure of this centre will massively affect the communities it serves. Windhill is a community that is deprived and suffers with poverty, with funding cuts to the local community centre which offers advice this has already impacted the local community with fewer advice sessions available for the public.”

“Please reconsider this proposal as it does not make any sense at all. Amalgamate offices where there are more than one in a town. Do not close offices where there is no alternative jobcentre.”

“I've spoken to a number of Shipley residents and they are worried about the impact on vulnerable people but also on the local economy. Shipley is not an affluent town and cannot afford to lose out on local trade. The likelihood is that if claimants are sent to Bradford to sign on that they will spend money whilst they are in Bradford. Shipley stands to lose a large HMRC office in the next few years too and the loss of local jobs will have a serious effect on the town.”

Response

DWP is not reducing its services and is committed to retaining an accessible jobcentre network. This proposal ensures that DWP can respond better to customer demand, support the move towards Universal Credit and increase flexibility to deliver services across the full working day.

DWP fully recognises the value of the developed relationship between claimants, work coaches and with partners. These will continue after services have moved to Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre.

Sanctions

Twenty-one per cent of respondents expressed concern that the number of sanctions issued would increase if the proposed jobcentre closures went ahead.

It was been stated that longer more complex journeys by public transport could lead to increased lateness or failure to attend appointments. This might then affect the time available to claimants to search for jobs. Concerns have been expressed about the effect on public transport services of external factors such as:

- congestion
- length of travel

Typical comments:

“If this closure was to go ahead, I believe that a people would struggle to attend their appointments and may end up running the risk of being sanctioned.”

“Waiting for trains can easily mean it will take an hour and half to get there and back. Surely this opens more potential for the administration of sanctions should folk be delayed by public transport issues.”

“...and if your money is sanctioned, so you literally have no money, what then, especially if you are not feeling the best...”

“There is concern that those who are late for or miss appointments due to public transport issues may be sanctioned.”

Response

The National Audit Office has estimated that a million jobseekers missed appointments between July 2015 and December 2015 compared with only 34,000 sanction referrals. This reduction is specifically due to the ongoing work to ensure claimants know and understand expectations with their work coaches.

Concern about public transport will continue to be considered on an individual basis. DWP does not expect this proposal to result in additional sanctions, as a direct result of the impact of travel journeys beyond claimant's control.

DWP recognises that some claimants will be taking an unfamiliar journey so work coaches will support them over the transition period until they become familiar with new travel arrangements.

It should also be noted that claimants, including those with vulnerabilities, are only asked to meet reasonable requirements. These take into account their individual circumstances, capability (including health conditions), disability and caring responsibilities.

Outreach

Fourteen per cent of respondents expressed the view that a 'footprint' or outreach facility should exist in the local community. People acknowledged that this type of service would not replace the jobcentre but could provide advice, support or guidance for claimants or jobsearch in the event of any closures.

"There may be room in the library for you to move in there, but Shipley needs the full service. I have paid taxes all my life and I should be entitled to some help when I need it."

"Should Shipley Jobcentre close then we envisage an increase in demand and we would like a DWP Work Coach to be assigned to Windhill Community Centre to provide additional help and advice."

Response

DWP are committed to retaining a jobcentre network and continuing to serve people in all areas of the UK to make sure they can continue to access the tailored services they need. When a full-time jobcentre closes following a public consultation, we will put an 'outreach' service in place within the local community.

Outreach is a vital front-facing service to claimants. Host organisations offer access to their facilities as part of the ongoing partnership activities with DWP. This allows work coaches and partner organisations to work together to support the joint needs of claimants. DWP are currently working with partner organisations within the local area to develop an outreach service following the closure of Shipley Jobcentre. What this service will offer will be publicised ahead of the closures.

Vulnerability

A number of responses referred to the most vulnerable customers, living in and around Shipley and the adverse effect that closing the jobcentre would have on the community.

Typical responses:

“I sincerely hope you will reconsider what will be a devastating decision for the most vulnerable of our community.”

“It is a matter of great shame to me that we treat our most vulnerable people with so little respect. If we need more money in the system to manage sensible provision then it should not be taken from the pockets of the unemployed but of the tax payer.”

Response

DWP has been mindful of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and has carried out local jobcentre level consultation to inform understanding of the effect of the proposal. Careful consideration has been given to the wider effect on the local communities. DWP will maintain services to claimants, whether in their existing jobcentre where a decision is made to retain that office or, where their existing jobcentre will close, at an alternative site.

DWP recognises that these proposals represent a major change that may have a greater impact on some groups with protected characteristics than others, as evidenced by the consultation responses, and consideration has been given to how any such impacts can be mitigated.

DWP has had due regard to the impact of this proposal throughout its development, as evidenced by the high-level equality analysis that was undertaken before the proposal was finalised and by the consultation and full Equality Analysis that has just been undertaken.

DWP recognises the value of the developed relationship between claimants and work coaches, and the established links would continue after services have moved to Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre.

Conclusion and next steps

DWP has considered the points raised by all of the people and organisations that have responded to the consultation. The points raised by respondents do highlight difficulties raised in making these changes, but DWP has to balance the need to provide services along with the budget it has to deliver those services.

After careful consideration of the responses, it is DWP's view that these do not provide a basis to amend or change the proposal to close Shipley Jobcentre and relocate services to Bradford Jobcentre. The merge of the two offices was explored but is not viable in reverse.

Consequently, the recommendation of this report is to proceed with the proposal to close Shipley Jobcentre and transfer services to Bradford Jobcentre.

Annex A: questionnaire

The consultation paper invited responses to the following questions:

Question 1: Do you agree with the proposal? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposal?

Question 2: Will the proposal to close Shipley Jobcentre have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

Question 3: If you currently use Jobcentre Plus services at these Jobcentres, what impacts are there on the time and cost taken to travel to your new Jobcentre?

Question 4: Are there any other particular impacts of the proposals that DWP should take into account when making a decision?

Question 5: Are there alternative services that could be provided that would be a benefit to some claimants? For example, this could be a member of Jobcentre Plus staff based in a community venue to provide help with looking for work. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

Question 6: Please provide any additional comments that you have.

Annex B: list of respondents

In addition to members of the public and claimants who responded to the consultation, the following named individuals and organisations provided a response:

- North East Windhill Community Association

Annex C: travel information

Shipley

Post code	Nearest Office	Keighley Jobcentre (BD21 5AG)		Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre (BD1 5AH)		Guiseley Jobcentre (LS20 8PS)		Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	
		Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car
BD16 1GL	Keighley Jobcentre (BD21 5AG)	22 mins (every 10 mins)	16 mins	38 mins (every 10 mins) or train 26 mins	24 mins			30 mins (every 10 mins)	19 mins
BD16 1UW		45 mins (every 10 mins)	22 mins	49 mins (every 10 mins)	20 mins			37 mins (every 10 mins)	13 mins
BD16 1WA		32 mins (every 10 mins)	20 mins	45 mins (every 10 mins)	20 mins			35 mins (every 10 mins)	18 mins
BD16 1UQ		44 mins (every 10 mins)	22 mins	38 mins (approx every Half Hour)	22 mins			45 mins (every half hour)	15 mins
BD16 3HT	Keighley Jobcentre (BD21 5AG)	28 mins (every 10 mins)	12 mins	53 mins (every 10 mins) 41 mins by train	30 mins			43 mins (every 10 mins)	22 mins

Post code	Nearest Office	Keighley Jobcentre (BD21 5AG)		Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre (BD1 5AH)		Guiseley Jobcentre (LS20 8PS)		Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	
		Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car
				(every 10 mins)					
BD16 3LT		52 mins (every 10 mins) 2 buses, 43 mins train/bus	20mins	55 mins (1 bus) Train/Bus 47 mins (which includes 20 mins)	30 mins			54 mins (every 20 mins)	23 mins
BD16 3AY		40 mins (every 10 mins)	16 mins	1 hr 5 mins (every 10 mins)	23 mins			50 mins (every 20 mins)	
BD16 4QX	Keighley Jobcentre (BD21 5AG)	37 mins (every 10 mins)	15 mins	55 mins (every 10 mins)	30 mins			40 mins every 10 mins	19 mins
BD16 4AG		38 mins (every 10 mins)	15 mins	57 mins (every 10 mins)	30 mins			40 mins (every 7 mins)	20 mins
BD16 4JD		24 mins (every 10 mins)	12 mins	45 mins (every 10 mins)	30 mins			30 mins (every 10 mins)	20 mins
BD16 9	non geographic	non geographic							

Post code	Nearest Office	Keighley Jobcentre (BD21 5AG)		Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre (BD1 5AH)		Guiseley Jobcentre (LS20 8PS)		Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	
		Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car
BD17 5LG	Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre (BD1 5AH)	Bus and Train 55 mins (includes 30 mins walking) (every 25 mins) Bus Only 1 hr 10 mins	25 mins	50 mins (every 10 mins)	30 mins	2 buses 30 mins (every 10 mins)	14 mins	47 mins (every 10 mins)	18 mins
BD17 5BH		Bus 52 mins includes 28 mins walk (every 10 mins)	22 mins	49 mins (every 10 mins)	30 mins	2 buses 30 mins- 40 mins (every 10 mins)	15 mins	1 hr7 mins every hour (33 mins walk)	20 mins
BD17 5EA		Bus 53 mins include 29 mins walk (every 10 mins)	22 mins	50 mins 13 minute walk (every 10 mins)	30 mins	2 buses 30 mins- 40 mins (every 10 mins)	16 mins	55 mins every hour (16 mins walk)	21 mins

Post code	Nearest Office	Keighley Jobcentre (BD21 5AG)		Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre (BD1 5AH)		Guiseley Jobcentre (LS20 8PS)		Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	
		Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car
BD17 5EE		2 buses 1 hr 5 mins	22 mins	30 mins walking 1 hr 20 mins	30 mins	2 buses 1 hr 12 mins every 10 mins)	16 mins	2 buses 1 hr	21 mins
BD17 6AU	Guiseley Jobcentre (LS20 8PS)	42 mins 2 buses every 1 hr	23 mins	33 mins every half hour	18 mins	17 mins every half hour	8 mins	30 mins every 15 mins	13 mins
BD17 6UF		44 mins 2 buses every 1 hr	23 mins	46 mins every hour	25 mins	16 mins every half hour	8 mins	35 mins every half hour	18 mins
BD17 6JX		2 buses 58 mins	20 mins	47 mins (every 20 mins)	25 mins	39 mins 2 buses every hour	12 mins	34 mins every 20 mins	16 mins
BD17 6ER		48 mins 2 buses every 1 hour	23 mins	41 mins every 1 hr	22 mins	17 mins every half hour	8 mins	23 mins every half hour	16 mins
BD17 7SX		Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	42 mins every half hour	22 mins	33 mins every half hour	23 mins	22 mins every half hour	11 mins	27 mins every 10 mins
BD17 7ED	38 mins every half hour		22 mins	27 mins every half hour	24 mins	20 mins every half hour	11 mins	27 mins every 10 mins	12 mins

Post code	Nearest Office	Keighley Jobcentre (BD21 5AG)		Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre (BD1 5AH)		Guiseley Jobcentre (LS20 8PS)		Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	
		Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car
BD17 7EY		42 mins every half hour	22 mins	26 mins every half hour	25 mins	17 mins every half hour	10 mins	24 mins every 15 mins	13 mins
BD17 7LY		40 mins every half hour	22 mins	31 mins every 20 mins	26 mins	31 mins every half hour	14 mins	34 mins every 10 mins	13 mins
BD18 1JH	Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	54 mins every half hour	22 mins	31 mins every half hour	27 mins			30 mins every half hour	9 mins
BD18 1QN		1 hr 5 mins 2 buses every half hour	30 mins	37 mins every half hour	28 mins			45 mins (every hr 15 mins)	11 mins
BD18 1PN		57 mins 2 buses every half hour	25 mins	29 mins every half hour	29 mins			32 mins every 20 mins	11 mins
BD18 1AQ		54 mins 2 buses every half hour	23 mins	33 mins every half hour	30 mins			23 mins every half hour	7 mins
BD18 2AA	Westfield House	40 mins (every 10 mins)	18 mins	27 mins every 10 mins	31 mins			15 mins every 4 mins	9 mins

Post code	Nearest Office	Keighley Jobcentre (BD21 5AG)		Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre (BD1 5AH)		Guiseley Jobcentre (LS20 8PS)		Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	
		Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car
BD18 2JP	Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	36 mins every half hour	21 mins	32 mins every half hour	32 mins			29 mins every 4 mins	9 mins
BD18 2BW		37 mins every half hour	23 mins	34 mins every half hour	33 mins			27 mins every 4 mins	11 mins
BD18 2HF		51 mins every 10 mins	23 mins	36 mins every half hour	34 mins			24 mins every 4 mins	7 mins
BD18 3JL	Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	29 mins every half hour	13 mins	35 mins every 10 mins	35 mins			22 mins every 10 mins	12 mins
BD18 3EY		25 mins every half hour	12 mins	33 mins every 10 mins	36 mins			19 mins every 10 mins	12 mins
BD18 3BP		36 mins every 10 mins	18 mins	28 mins every 10 mins	37 mins			17 mins every 7 mins	9 mins
BD18 4BU	Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	34 mins every 20 mins	15 mins	29 mins every 20 mins	38 mins			30 mins every 10 mins	14 mins
BD18 4HD		34 mins every 20 mins	13 mins	34 mins every 10 mins	39 mins			26 mins every 10 mins	14 mins

Post code	Nearest Office	Keighley Jobcentre (BD21 5AG)		Bradford Eastbrook Court Jobcentre (BD1 5AH)		Guiseley Jobcentre (LS20 8PS)		Westfield House Jobcentre (BD1 3EP)	
		Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car	Distance Time By Public Transport	Distance Time By Car
BD18 4RA		39 mins every 20 mins	16 mins	39 mins every 10 mins	40 mins			28 mins every 10 mins	11 mins
BD18 4QR		32 mins every 20 mins	18 mins	29 mins every 10 mins	41 mins			20 mins every 10 mins	9 mins

Travel costs:

Train from Shipley to Bradford is £2.30 return off peak and £2.80 anytime day return and is a day ticket for a bus costs £4.