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# Plan for Jobs Cross-cutting Evaluation Wave 1 & 2 synthesis report

May 2024

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

Between March and April 2020, claimant unemployment increased by 69 per cent to 2.1 million as a result of restrictions on business operation and social mixing passed into law in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Scenarios developed by the Bank of England and Office for Budget Responsibility at this time suggested that the unemployment rate could rapidly increase to 10%<sup>1</sup>. The Government's Plan for Jobs (PfJ), announced on 8 July 2020 was designed to respond to this increase in unemployment. More than £7 billion was allocated for measures designed to support the UK labour market. The PfJ also included measures overseen by the Department for Education (DfE) that provided routes into work, apprenticeships, and traineeships. Aspects overseen by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) aimed to help maintain job search intensity for the unemployed, improve job matching and brokerage for employers and jobseekers, and to develop the skills needed to fill vacancies.

This report provides findings from the Plan for Jobs Cross-cutting Evaluation. It considers five strands of DWP provision under the Plan for Jobs (PfJ): Kickstart scheme, Job Finding Support (JFS), the Youth Employment Programme, Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) and increased capacity on the Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs). Each of these programmes targeted claimants in the Intensive Work Search (IWS) regime.

Restart is the subject of a focused evaluation, so Restart participants were not intentionally sampled for the survey strand of this study. Five of the ten case studies included Restart participants. Some respondents to the survey had started Restart since being included in other sample groups (e.g. as non-participants in Plan for Jobs). They were excluded from analysis as they were not representative of Restart participants generally.

This multi-strand evaluation aimed to assess how well DWP's parts of PfJ were able to respond to the economic shocks caused by the restrictions on social distancing and business operations put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation also aimed to explore how well employment services were joined up and how decisions on referral and targeting were made. The research presents a snapshot of PfJ participants, looking across the whole support package rather than an in-depth exploration of each strand.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://obr.uk/docs/dlm\\_uploads/Coronavirus\\_reference\\_scenario\\_commentary.pdf](https://obr.uk/docs/dlm_uploads/Coronavirus_reference_scenario_commentary.pdf)

# Methodology

A mixed methodology approach was taken for the evaluation, comprising:

- Ten Local Authority case-studies completed between October 2021 and August 2022
- A wave 1 survey of 8,325 respondents who had taken part in one of the strand provisions between December 2020 and November 2021 ('participants') and those who had not ('non-participants'). Wave 1 fieldwork was conducted between 17<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The differing target audiences for, and design of each of the PfJ strands, meant that the length of time people had been in IWS or on their strand provision differed. More information on start dates or length of time on IWS can be found in Appendix 2. Overall, 4,042 participants took part, comprising the following numbers from each strand:
  - Kickstart: 874
  - SWAPs: 790
  - JFS: 848
  - JETS: 817
  - Youth Offer: 526
  - Restart: 273<sup>2</sup>
  - Non-participants: 3,462
  - Early leavers who started a PfJ strand but left before completing it: 735
- Cluster analysis of wave 1 survey data from participants and non-participants who were unemployed at the time of the survey to better understand the barriers to employment.
- Sixty follow-up qualitative interviews with both participants and non-participants drawn from the wave 1 survey sample. This focused on customer experiences since the end of Plan for Jobs strands and future support needs.
- A wave 2 survey of 6,950 respondents of those who had taken part in one of the strand provisions ('participants') and those who had not ('non-participants'). Wave 2 fieldwork was conducted between 1<sup>st</sup> November and 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022. As at wave 1, the length of time in IWS or on / since strand provision varied due to the design of the strands and their target audiences. The sample tables in Appendix 2 also detail start dates or length of time on IWS for wave 2 respondents. The following number of respondents took part, including 2,991 participants:

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<sup>2</sup> Restart participants were excluded from the analysis as they were not included in the original sample. Some participants in other strands and some former non-participants started on Restart between the sample being drawn and the survey commencing. These Restart participants were not representative of Restart participants as a whole, so they were excluded from analysis and reporting.

- Kickstart: 526
  - SWAPs: 519
  - JFS: 394
  - JETS: 799
  - Youth Offer: 498
  - Restart: 255
  - Non-participants: 3,568
  - Early leavers: 391
- The wave 2 survey comprised 1,338 longitudinal interviews with people who had completed the wave 1 survey and 5,612 from a boost sample of people who had either joined a PfJ strand during a similar time period but had not completed the wave 1 survey (participants) or had not taken part in a PfJ strand (non-participants).
  - Sixty follow-up qualitative interviews with both participants and non-participants drawn from the wave 2 survey sample. This focused on customer experiences since the end of their time on Plan for Jobs strands as well as future support needs amongst customers who had a change of employment status between wave 1 and wave 2.

## Findings

### Implementation challenges

Roll-out of the PfJ strands took place during a dramatic increase in the number of Jobcentre sites and staff to meet the growing pressures of a dramatically rising claimant count which was projected to rise further. The simultaneous introduction of several new employment programmes required staff (old and new) to learn a substantial amount of new information at once. This led to challenges in Jobcentre staff accurately referring claimants to appropriate provision or being able to address some common misconceptions amongst staff around the suitability of the different programmes for different claimant types.

There was evidence of Jobcentre managers responding to these delivery challenges by providing staff training aimed at improving the referral processes where managers saw evidence of these being incorrectly implemented. In addition, when social distancing requirements allowed, contracted providers found it helpful to work from Jobcentre offices to facilitate communication with Work Coaches and improve the quality of referrals.

Other challenges encountered in the early phases of delivery centred on the perceived quality of PfJ provision during its initial rollout. In some locations, where customer feedback was initially poor, this affected staff's inclination to make referrals and their likelihood to recommend the provision to other customers. However, staff

also acknowledged that customer feedback about provision could change over time and improve once the provision became more established.

The extent to which Jobcentre staff viewed PfJ strands as giving additional options to customers also affected referrals. In some areas, staff stated that customers were already well served by existing provision and so were reluctant to refer customers to new programmes offering a similar service. The case studies found that geographical areas with existing strong partnership working practices were best able to embed the new provision with existing provision, helping to maximise the benefits for customers where PfJ provision offered additional support or services that were not available locally (e.g. the Kickstart scheme).

Feedback from Jobcentre staff indicated that on balance, referrals to employment support were primarily based on customer need, including work readiness and desired work outcomes. However, staff spoke about perceived pressures to meet referral profiles for the newly introduced PfJ strands. Jobcentre staff stated that this affected their ability to consistently make customer-led referrals.

In addition, the unemployment rate did not increase as much during the COVID-19 pandemic as indicated by some of the early projections and began to drop significantly from March 2021 onwards. This meant that the claimants joining the PfJ strands were further from the labour market than had been anticipated. Among Jobcentre and provider staff, employment outcomes were therefore felt to be slower to achieve than had been expected.

## Customer health profile

Across all PfJ strands, physical and mental health conditions, which can act as a barrier to work, were prevalent. Around half of participants on any provision had a health condition or disability. This was lowest for JETS (48%) and highest for Youth Offer (63%). Non-participants were most likely to have a health condition or disability (66%). Over half (55%) of those who left the provision early had a health condition. In the case study research, Jobcentre staff reported a higher than expected number of claimants with a health condition, particularly mental health conditions. Staff felt that the PfJ strands were not always sufficiently supportive for these customers.

## Experiences of Plan for Jobs strands

**At wave 1, two thirds or more of participants on each strand knew what to expect and found the provision useful.** Understanding of what support to expect from the strand was highest for Kickstart participants (75%) and lowest amongst JFS participants (65%). The perceived level of usefulness of the support followed a similar pattern. Nearly eight in ten Kickstart participants (79%) and around two thirds of JFS participants (65%) agreed that they found the programme useful in helping them to find employment or progress in their career.

**Nearly seven in ten participants reported being satisfied with the support received through each strand.** Youth Offer and JETS participants were most satisfied, whilst JFS participants were least satisfied. Participants with a long-term

health condition or disability were more likely to say that the programmes were not tailored to their needs, a consistent theme across all strands.

Approximately half of participants experienced at least one barrier to participating in their strand, most commonly health-related barriers, either physical and/or mental health, or childcare responsibilities.

## Outcomes

**At wave 1 around 80% of participants across each strand achieved an employment-related outcome<sup>3</sup> as a result of taking part in their strand.** Kickstart and SWAPs participants were most likely to have improved or gained new skills or to have gained relevant work experience. This may be a reflection of the design of these strands. Increased confidence in their ability to look for work was broadly consistent across Kickstart, SWAPs, JFS and JETS. Youth Offer participants were least likely to agree with this statement (20%). The case study research found that this may be a reflection of the low self-esteem and intersecting barriers which Youth Offer customers started with, as opposed to the quality of the provision.

**At wave two of the quantitative survey, more than four in ten (41%) of those who had participated in a PfJ strand stated that they were currently employed compared to around three in ten (31%) of non-participants<sup>4</sup>.** Those who took part in a SWAP (53%), Kickstart (48%) or JFS (48%) were significantly more likely to be employed than respondents to the survey overall<sup>5</sup>.

**Considering the sustainability of employment outcomes, employed participants were most often on permanent or open-ended job contracts (45%).** Smaller proportions were on zero-hours contracts (15%), casual / flexible contracts (11%) or temporary / seasonal contracts (8%).

**Three quarters of employed participants (75%) were satisfied with their job,** compared to 72% of employed non-participants.

**Two thirds (66%) of employed participants agreed that progressing in their current job in the next 12 months was important.** Those who found their provision useful were more likely to say they wanted to progress in their current jobs, suggesting that PfJ provision may have enabled them to aspire towards furthering their careers.

**Overall, two thirds of unemployed participants had not had a job in the time between the two survey waves (or the last 12 months for the boost sample)<sup>6</sup>.** More than half of all unemployed strand participants (except Youth Offer) had applied

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<sup>3</sup> Employment related outcomes were defined more widely than securing a job and included outcomes such as feeling more confident looking for work, attending job interviews, gaining relevant work experience, making contacts with employers and being referred to other DWP or non-DWP work-related support programmes.

<sup>4</sup> Employment outcomes cannot be solely attributed to participation in the programme, given the multiple reasons which could lead to an individual achieving an employment outcome, or not.

<sup>5</sup> All participants in PfJ strands and non-participants.

<sup>6</sup> The longitudinal survey sample were asked about 'since the previous survey', the boost sample were asked about the past 12 months.

for a job in the past three months. This was highest amongst Kickstart (71%) and SWAPs participants (71%).

**At wave 2, the main barrier to working identified by unemployed participants was their physical or mental health condition (47%),** regardless of the strand they participated in. Related to this, unemployed participants were most likely to identify support to manage their physical or mental health condition (29%) as helpful to moving in to work.

**Both waves of the qualitative follow-up interviews identified the importance of a strong relationship with their Work Coach or provider staff.** This was instrumental in helping participants improve their confidence and move into, or closer, to employment. Having had tailored support from a consistent Work Coach was likely to have longer lasting effects on participant confidence and motivation to find work or progress in work.

## Recommendations

At a systems level, DWP provision is part of complex and varied local employment support landscapes. In commissioning new provisions, there is therefore a need to ensure that new programmes add value to this existing support offer, and do not undermine or duplicate existing successful programmes through the introduction of competing targets, for example.

To mitigate against the potential of undermining existing programmes and services, (new) Work Coaches should be regularly briefed on changes to the provision landscape and provided with support to help identify which provision would best meet customer needs.

The case study research highlighted that where there was a high degree of join-up and coordination between local employment services, the efficacy of the system in matching customers to appropriate provision (and therefore supporting their entry into employment) was seen to be enhanced. DWP should consider whether, in commissioning services, it is also possible to invest in ways to strengthen these local partnerships and ways of working (e.g. through co-location and/or data sharing arrangements)

DWP should work in partnership with policy owners (such as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) to consider how the transition from the European Social Fund to the Shared Prosperity Fund will affect these local partnership structures (and particularly whether it poses any risks to their sustainment), and the potential implications this has for the delivery of future employment support services.

Although the work of Partnership Managers was often praised by DWP staff and wider partners, DWP should continue to consider what long-term role Jobcentre staff can play in these partnership structures and how this fits with the Department's aims and objectives. In some areas, non-DWP partners felt that their focus on inclusion and finding sustainable employment outcomes for the local population (both the



inactive as well as the unemployed) was at odds with the Department's perceived focus of moving customers into any employment as quickly as possible.

Where possible, customers should be signposted to support available to help with particular work barriers such as a lack of skills or financial difficulties. Similarly, support needs to be tailored to those with physical and mental health conditions as well as those with caring responsibilities to cater for their needs and flexibility requirements.

As most customers report continuous barriers to sustained employment or progression after completing the programme, these include high travel costs or lack of relevant skills to progress. Options for ongoing support should be considered where appropriate to ensure any employment outcomes can be sustained long term.

In delivering future services, DWP should look at how existing contracts with providers can be used to respond quickly to changing labour market dynamics. By the time it became operational, some PfJ strands were not seen to respond effectively to the needs of DWP's customer base. DWP should consider whether services can be adapted to best respond to the changing needs of the local population and address local labour market needs.

Across the case study research, common barriers to work entry that were not easily resolved included language barriers and health (particularly mental health conditions). Further training and guidance may be required to ensure that Work Coaches feel equipped to support customers with these needs.

In terms of employer engagement, consideration should be given to how Jobcentre districts can best capitalise on the new employer relationships that were developed over the course of the pandemic.

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# Authors credits

Joanna Crossfield, Director, headed up the Ipsos team responsible for the research. Jack Watson, Research Manager, was responsible for the day-to-day management of the study. Grace Atkins, Senior Research Executive, worked on the fieldwork, delivery, and analysis for this project.

# Glossary and abbreviations

<b>Programme</b>	The six in-scope DWP Plan for Jobs (PfJ) strands aiming to help Intensive Work Search customers get (back into) work
<b>Strand</b>	One of the six Plan for Jobs support strands aimed at different groups of Intensive Work Search customers
<b>Customers</b>	All customers receiving benefits from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
<b>Participants</b>	All DWP customers taking part in one of the Plan for Jobs strands
<b>Non-participants</b>	All DWP customers eligible for but not engaged in any of the Plan for Jobs strands
<b>Early Leavers</b>	All customers who started a Plan for Jobs strand but did not complete it
<b>Job Finding Support (JFS)</b>	A minimum of 4 hours of support for those recently unemployed and claiming benefits for less than 13 weeks; (contracted strand)
<b>Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS)</b>	Up to 6 months of support delivered by Work and Health Programme (WHP) providers aimed at those unemployed between 13 weeks to a year; (contracted strands)
<b>Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs)</b>	Short training and work placement linked to a current job vacancy in a specific sector or area of work
<b>Kickstart</b>	6 months paid job placement aimed at 16- to 24-year-olds unemployed for 6 or more months
<b>Youth Offer</b>	Support for 16- to 24-year-olds provided through the Youth Employment Programme (YEP), Youth Hubs (YH) and Youth Employability Coaches (YEC)
<b>Restart</b>	Up to 12 month contracted employment support, originally aimed at those unemployed for 12-18 months and now for those unemployed for longer than 9 months
<b>ESOL</b>	English for Speakers of Other Languages
<b>Employer Advisor</b>	DWP staff, based in Jobcentres, who work directly with employers to help them fill vacancies, advising on recruitment strategies and methods

**CAQDAS:** Computer Assisted Qualitative Data  
**CSCS:** Construction Site Certification Scheme  
**DfE:** Department for Education  
**DWP:** Department for Work and Pensions  
**EA:** Employer Advisor  
**ESA:** Employment Support Allowance  
**ESF:** European Social Fund  
**ESOL:** English for Speakers of Other Languages  
**FSF:** Flexible Support Fund  
**GVA:** Gross Value Added  
**HGV:** Heavy Goods Vehicle  
**IWS:** Intensive Work Search  
**JETS:** Job Entry Targeted Support  
**JFS:** Job Finding Support  
**JSA:** Jobseeker's Allowance  
**MCA:** Mayoral Combined Authority  
**NCS:** National Careers Service  
**PfJ:** Plan for Jobs  
**REEP:** Rapid Estate Extension Programme  
**SIA:** Security Industry Authority  
**SME:** Small and Medium-sized Enterprise  
**SPOC:** Single Point of Contact  
**SWAP:** Sector-based Work Academy Programme  
**UC:** Universal Credit  
**WHP:** Work and Health Programme  
**YEC:** Youth Employability Coach(es)  
**YEI:** Youth Employment Initiative  
**YEP:** Youth Employment Programme  
**YH:** Youth Hub  
**YO:** Youth Offer

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and first national lockdown in March 2020, which placed restrictions on business activity and social movement, led to a significant economic shock. Claimant unemployment (the measure of people claiming benefits and required to be available and seeking work) increased by 69 per cent between March and April 2020 to 2.1 million ([IES, 2020](#)), driving a sharp increase in the number of people starting new claims for Universal Credit. Scenarios developed at this time by the Bank of England and the Office for Budget Responsibility suggested that the unemployment rate could rise to 10% and decline more slowly than GDP recovered<sup>7</sup>.

The Government's Plan for Jobs (PfJ), announced on 8 July 2020, set out a response to this crisis with more than £7 billion allocated for measures designed to support the UK labour market. The PfJ also included measures overseen by the Department for Education (DfE) that provided routes into work, apprenticeships, and traineeships. Aspects overseen by DWP aimed to help maintain job search intensity for the unemployed, improve job matching and brokerage for employers and jobseekers, and to develop the skills needed to fill vacancies. These were:

- Rollout of a new **Job Finding Support** (JFS) service. A national offer for claimants who had been unemployed for 13 weeks or less, delivered online through private sector providers. The service intended to help claimants become familiar with current recruitment practices, utilise their transferable skills and develop a personalised job finding action plan. The service launched in January 2021 and the final referrals were made in January 2022.
- **Kickstart**, a programme providing six-month jobs, funded by the Government, for 16–24-year-olds receiving Universal Credit and unemployed for six months or more. The programme aimed to create up to 250,000 jobs for young people eliminating hiring costs while also improving workplace skills and providing employability support. It was open to referrals until the end of March 2022.
- Commissioning of **Job Entry Targeted Support** (JETS) for claimants who had been out of work for between 13 weeks and one year. The provision gave claimants up to six months of support, including skills analysis and a job search action plan. JETS was launched in England and Wales in October 2021, commissioned through the Work and Health Programme. In Scotland, the service began in January 2021. JETS was open to referrals until September 2022.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://obr.uk/docs/dlm\\_uploads/Coronavirus\\_reference\\_scenario\\_commentary.pdf](https://obr.uk/docs/dlm_uploads/Coronavirus_reference_scenario_commentary.pdf)

- The **Restart** programme, launched in June 2021, initially offered a 12-month personalised programme of support for claimants out of work for 12 to 18 months. The referral point was reduced to nine months of unemployment from January 2022. Restart does not operate in Scotland as support for long-term unemployed claimants is devolved.
- A more than doubling of places on **Sector-based Work Academy Programmes** (SWAPs) and other measures (e.g. the Lifetime Skills Guarantee), to help jobseekers get the right skills for work. SWAPs are not available in Wales due to devolved responsibilities. Similar employment support was available funded through the Welsh Government, though it is not evaluated in this report.
- The **Youth Offer** was launched in September 2020 and replaced the Youth Obligation Support Programme. The Youth Offer was initially available to 18-24 year olds and was later extended to 16-17 year olds in December 2021. The Youth Offer brings together three strands of support for young people; The **Youth Employment Programme**<sup>8</sup> (YEP); **Youth Employability Coaches**<sup>9</sup> (YECs); and **Youth Hubs** which offer co-located and co-delivered services with a range of partners located in non-Jobcentre community space. The Youth Offer is intended to continue until April 2028.

These measures were supported by the recruitment of an additional 13,500 Work Coaches and an expansion of Jobcentre offices, through the rapid creation of new temporary sites.

Following a three-month suspension of any conditionality attached to benefit claims for customers actively seeking work during the early months of the pandemic, conditionality was reintroduced in July 2020.

There followed a period of changing national guidance with regards to social distancing, business closures and requirements for working from home for those who could. In England, all social distancing regulations were lifted in summer 2021. In Wales and Scotland, social distancing measures remained in place until early 2022.

The longer-term labour market crisis that was predicted by the Office for Budget Responsibility and The Bank of England as a result of the pandemic did not emerge. Other influences, such as an increase in economic inactivity, and the labour market effects of leaving the European Union, meant that for much of 2021 and 2022, the

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<sup>8</sup> The YEP lasts for 13 weeks during which time the young person will continue to work with a Work Coach at the Jobcentre by phone, face to face or online for continued support and coaching. YEP customers receive two additional appointments: the Employment and Skills Review, which is conducted in Week 2; and the Progress Review, which is conducted by Week 11.

<sup>9</sup> A Work Coach may refer customers to a YEC if they have complex needs or other barriers to work. Examples of complex needs a young person suitable for referral to a YEC are: Care Leaver, Ex-Offender, Gang Member or at risk of serious violence, Homelessness, Drug/Alcohol addiction, Refugee, Modern Day slavery, chaotic lifestyle and caring responsibilities (this list is not exhaustive) YECs are based at Jobcentres or Youth Hubs and provide support for up to 6 months. They can also provide 6 weeks of in-work support for customers starting work.

level of unemployment fell. By July 2022, the unemployment rate was 3.8 per cent and there were around 1.3 million job vacancies, about 50 per cent higher than before the pandemic. At this point, there were more job vacancies than people unemployed for the first time in 50 years ([IES](#), 2022).

## 1.2 Research objectives

The multi-strand evaluation aimed to assess how well DWP's parts of PfJ were able to respond to the sharp increase in unemployment in 2020 and meet the needs of unemployed claimants. The evaluation also aimed to explore how well employment services were joined up and how decisions on referral and targeting were made.

The research objectives for the case study strand were to understand how the PfJ provision supported claimants to find work and to explore the interactions of PfJ with local contexts. The case study research used a systems approach by focusing on interactions within and between PfJ provision, as well as interactions between PfJ provision and the wider offer beyond PfJ. The case study research aimed to highlight key interactions and interdependencies, identify any gaps in implementation, and surface reasons for varying engagement in PfJ strands between areas. The case study strand also offers a deep dive into how PfJ affected, and was affected by, structural changes in sectors and sub-regions, as well as how provision was delivered differently to reflect different local operating contexts and needs.

The research objectives for the survey and follow up qualitative strands were to explore the barriers, enablers and motivators to participating in the PfJ strands and to gaining employment. The survey also gathered customer feedback on PfJ and aimed to identify the differences between participants and non-participants and understand experiences and outcomes for participants without a sustained work outcome. This research does not include any impact or cost-benefit analysis of Plan for Jobs provision, and therefore cannot definitively ascribe employment-related outcomes to participation in strands.

## 1.3 Methodology

A mixed methodology approach was taken to the evaluation, comprising:

- Ten Local Authority case studies completed between October 2021 and August 2022
- Two wave longitudinal survey of respondents who had taken part in one of the strand provisions ('participants') and those who had not ('non-participants'), achieving 8,325 interviews at wave 1 and 6,950 interviews at wave two, including 1,338 longitudinal interviews. Wave 1 fieldwork was conducted between 17<sup>th</sup> March and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and wave 2 fieldwork between 1<sup>st</sup> November and 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022
- Cluster survey analysis from unemployed subsample of participants and non-participants to better understand the different types of barriers to employment

- Sixty follow-up qualitative interviews with both participants and non-participants drawn from the wave 1 survey sample conducted between September and October 2022
- Sixty follow-up qualitative interviews with both participants and non-participants drawn from the wave 2 survey sample conducted in March and April 2023

More information on the Local Authority case studies, case study data analysis, the participant and non-participant survey including the sampling and weighting approach, cluster analysis and follow-up qualitative interviews can be found in the appendix.

## 1.4 Interpreting the findings in this report

This research presents a snapshot of Plan for Jobs participants. The sample for the survey and follow-up qualitative interviews was drawn from customers who had started their provision between December 2020 and November 2021. Restart was not included in the survey samples for this research (to enable its main evaluation to take place) and is therefore covered in less detail in this report. Intensive Work Search participants include those who are waiting for a Work Capability Assessment (WCA), or for the outcome of a WCA. The outcome of this may change their work search requirements.

The **survey data** for each strand (excluding Youth Offer) were weighted to their respective participant profile. The survey data for non-participants were weighted to the profile of all eligible customers not engaging with Plan for Jobs. In addition, all survey data were weighted by gender, length of claim, and region. Early leavers data is unweighted.

Only findings from the survey which are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level have been reported as different in the commentary (although charts and tables may include non-statistically significant differences). All tables and charts report weighted data and include the unweighted base for reference.

The survey results are subject to margins of error, which vary depending on the number of respondents answering each question and pattern of responses. Where figures do not add to 100 per cent, this is due to rounding or because the question allows for more than one response.

**Qualitative research** is detailed and exploratory. It offers insights into people's opinions, feelings and behaviours. All participant data presented should be treated as the opinions and views of the individuals interviewed. Quotations and case studies from the qualitative research have been included to provide rich, detailed accounts, as given by participants.

Qualitative research is not intended to provide quantifiable conclusions from a statistically representative sample. Furthermore, owing to the sample size and the purposive nature with which it was drawn, qualitative findings cannot be considered

representative of the views of this PfJ cohort as a whole. Instead, this element of the research was designed to explore the breadth of views and experiences, in order to develop a deeper understanding of attitudes towards progression and support preferences.

# 2 Plan for Jobs in the Context of Pre-existing Employment Support

This chapter outlines the varying local contexts into which the PfJ strands were introduced across the 10 case study areas included in this research. It provides an insight into the pre-existing employment support landscape in these areas and the organisational and partnership structures that supported this provision. Drawing on Jobcentre staff, partner and customer interviews, it presents findings on how the introduction of the PfJ strands affected and interacted with this system. The case study research was completed between October 2021 and August 2022.

The chapter is split into two sections. Section 2.1 outlines the nature of the local employment support system that was present across case study areas when PfJ was introduced. Section 2.2 provides an overview of the how the introduction of PfJ interacted with local Jobcentre staffing structures and ways of working, as well as local partnership structures (including work with employers) across case study areas.

The findings in this section draw on the 10 case studies from Local Authority areas across the three nations of Great Britain. They covered a range of different socio-economic contexts from metropolitan cities (Manchester, Glasgow, Cardiff); to ex-industrial urban (Blackburn, Middlesbrough, Peterborough, Waltham Forest); and ex-industrial rural areas (Cornwall, Rhondda Cynon Taff, North Lanarkshire).

## 2.1 Employment Support Landscape

### 2.1.1 Local labour market context

At the time of the research, vacancy rates were viewed by DWP staff and partners to be high across all areas, with the most opportunities in urban city locations. The range of vacancies available to customers during this period were similar across areas and included: factory and warehouse roles, logistics (with HGV drivers in particularly high demand), construction hospitality and retail, health and social care, administration, and security.

### 2.1.2 Local employment support – devolved powers and funding

Across the areas included in the case study research, additional provision was available to customers beyond PfJ provision. The extent of this varied between areas. The most commonly mentioned funding source for additional provision at the

time of the research came from the European Social Fund (ESF). This was widespread in the Scottish and Welsh case study areas, as well as areas of England with high levels of deprivation (Middlesbrough, Cornwall).

Areas with significant devolved powers, particularly for skills funding (Wales, Scotland, Manchester and London) or spending powers related to their Adult Education Budget (combined authority areas – Manchester and London) could contribute additional spending to employment support programmes. In some cases, this included coordinating their spending with ESF funding to enhance the scope of their offer.

Where they were in place, these additional powers and funds were used to deliver localised employment provision aimed at providing tailored and flexible one-to-one employment support to groups who faced the most significant barriers to labour market participation. These were 16- to 24-year-olds, the long-term unemployed, and/or individuals who faced complex barriers to employment (e.g. health, childcare responsibilities). Where this support was present, Jobcentre staff generally said that they had made good use of it prior to the introduction of the PfJ measures.

At a strategic level, where additional, local, employment support provision was most prevalent, this supported the development of strong models of partnership working between Local Authorities (whom this funding was primarily channelled through) and DWP district-level staff. In many cases, these partnerships worked collaboratively to share local vacancy information and identify training needs in the area. The Manchester combined authority area was also able to share data internally (though not with DWP) on locally administered and devolved programmes using a centralised system. This enabled them to look at referral trends and levels of demand for services, to inform the future planning of support.

In some cases, devolved funding and powers were used to address perceived gaps in PfJ provision. For example, in Glasgow, the Local Authority used funding from the Scottish Young Person's Guarantee<sup>10</sup> to create a scheme that replicated and ran in parallel with Kickstart, but with broader eligibility criteria to make the scheme accessible for school leavers (16-17 year olds) and young people who were unemployed but not in receipt of UC.

## 2.2 Overview of Plan for Jobs Support System

This section provides an overview of the interdependencies between the DWP-funded elements of PfJ, Jobcentre staffing structures and ways of working, as well as local partnership structures across case study areas.

The Jobcentre staffing structures used to implement and refer to PfJ are first described, including the new roles created. The training and awareness raising undertaken to assist staff to understand and make referrals to PfJ strands are then

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<sup>10</sup> A £60 million intervention aiming to connect every 16–24-year-old in Scotland with an employment, education, training or volunteering opportunity.



discussed, before detailing what affected customer referrals to PfJ strands, and customer starts.

## **2.2.1 Staffing structures**

The number of Jobcentre offices in the Local Authority areas covered by the case study research varied considerably (from 1 to 9 sites). Jobcentre offices also varied substantially in size, accommodating anywhere between 20 and 150 members of staff.

Following the onset of the pandemic, new roles in Jobcentre offices were created and new staff recruited to support the large influx of new customers and delivery of the new employment support programmes. This included the recruitment of additional Work Coaches, as well as the creation of new job roles such as Kickstart District Account Manager, Youth Hub Work Coaches and Youth Employability Coaches.

While Employer Advisors (EAs) were typically based in Jobcentre offices and worked with local employers to address their recruitment needs, the other roles worked at district or cluster level, with responsibility for more than one office. The nature of developments to staffing structures depended on the size of the population covered by the Local Authority area, with areas with larger volumes of customers seeing more widespread changes and the creation of more new roles.

The number of new staff recruited at once presented challenges in training and seemed to have influenced the continuity and quality of customer experience. It was common for customers to say they had seen several Work Coaches during their claim, and that this sometimes presented a challenge in establishing trust.

The location in which services were provided also changed following the onset of the pandemic. Providers communicated with Jobcentre staff and customers remotely during periods where COVID-19 social distancing restrictions were tighter. As restrictions eased, some external providers of PfJ provision returned to Jobcentre sites on a regular basis. This was seen to be positive for customers as it supported a better quality referral and handover process and allowed provider staff to build a better relationship with customers.

After January 2021, Jobcentre districts experienced further staffing and resourcing changes. In several of the areas, new Jobcentre sites opened following expansion (e.g. North Lanarkshire, Middlesbrough, Waltham Forest). Some of these were Rapid Estate Extension Programme (REEP) (temporary) sites. Other areas had opened specialist facilities, such as Youth Hubs, and in Motherwell a Resource Suite had opened which created a space for collaboration for partners. Site changes could increase travel times. For example, several customers in North Lanarkshire reported that the opening of a new site meant their journey to the Jobcentre office was now longer.

## **2.2.2 Staff awareness of PfJ**

The introduction of PfJ required Jobcentre staff to quickly learn a large amount of information. Initially, staff felt the scope of knowledge and the pace of learning

required was overwhelming. Gradually, and as strands developed into a definitive form, staff felt they gained a fuller understanding. However, customers and providers suggested that, throughout delivery, Jobcentre staff understanding of eligibility criteria and the specific support contained in each strand was not consistent.

When PfJ strands were introduced, training sessions were regularly delivered by provider staff. In the case of Kickstart, customer-facing staff were informed of ongoing developments during internal meetings or over email and relied on informal knowledge-sharing among colleagues to process key points from regular changes in guidance.

In several case study areas, Jobcentre managers delivered sessions on how to complete good quality referrals after having observed inappropriate referrals. Others delivered training following recruitment waves to upskill new staff. Existing Work Coaches or Team Leaders also acted as single points of contact for specific PfJ strands as they were introduced. Besides liaising with contracted providers, they were responsible for sharing information with operational staff, responding to staff questions about the strand, and monitoring referrals.

Generally, staff developed a good understanding of the support of most relevance to their customer group. However, as several PfJ strands came to an end, and Jobcentre offices were restructured as a result, it was unclear whether staff were appropriately trained on other PfJ strands as they increased in relevance to their caseload. For example, some Youth Work Coaches were not trained on JETS initially as they had focused on Kickstart. They felt that their knowledge of JETS was not comparable to that of colleagues.

To address knowledge gaps on particular provisions, areas used targeted forms of awareness-raising for Work Coaches. In one area, staff had visited a local community provider to see the delivery of their provision first-hand; in another case, providers used Jobcentre sites to carry out speed-networking sessions with Work Coaches.

Communication channels for updating staff about job vacancies and vacancies on provision were seen by staff as broadly effective. Information about Kickstart jobs and SWAPs was usually communicated to customer-facing staff by EAs. Some Jobcentre offices had created Microsoft Teams channels for this purpose, others used a digital note taking app (OneNote) and others relied on daily or weekly internal meetings.

### **2.2.3 Customer referrals and starts**

This section outlines staff experience of making customer referrals to PfJ strands, before examining the influences on referrals and starts.

#### **Experience of making referrals**

The demographics of caseloads impacted staff experience of referral processes meaning that these varied across case studies and strands. For instance, in areas with a high proportion of customers with health conditions, staff felt they required a longer appointment time than was available to provide sufficient support during the referral process to ensure accessibility. This was mirrored in the experiences of

customers. For example, mental health conditions prevented customer starts, particularly amongst younger customer groups or vulnerable people who found it difficult to meet new people or travel to new places. Some Jobcentre staff and customers did not see the referral process to PfJ strands as being sufficiently supportive to meet these needs.

The referral experience for Restart was considered time intensive during its initial rollout in late 2021 and early 2022. Work Coaches reported that after explaining the provision to the customer, they were required to liaise with a Restart Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and advisors to first establish capacity for a referral, and then arrange a warm handover. Work Coaches stated that the three-way handovers (involving Work Coach, customer and provider) were a positive influence on Restart starts, enabling customers to have a supported handover, and improving communication between Work Coaches and contracted provider staff. However, during this initial period Work Coaches reported that the appointment and administration time they had available was insufficient to complete these activities.

The timing of the introduction of Restart, when unemployment was lower than had been forecast, in combination with a drive to meet the expected number of referrals led to inappropriate referrals in some cases. In several case study locations, staff said eligible customers were hard to identify based on the initial eligibility criteria or were very distant from labour market (e.g. due to long-term health conditions).

The Youth Hub strand of the Youth Offer was described in several case studies as having an effective and smooth referral process. For example, the secondment of Youth Work Coaches to Youth Hubs facilitated a warm handover. This was seen to be an effective means of streamlining the registration process and Work Coach to start building a relationship of trust with the young person and support their continued engagement straight away.

The Youth Employability Coach and Youth Hub strands of the Youth Offer, although valued, were part of several referral options for young people in some areas resulting in uncertainty about the most appropriate referral routes. In one area, other referral options were available through the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and ESF funding and support and were widely used by Work Coaches working with young people. In many cases, this provision was favoured due to a wider range of barriers addressed through this support and frequent and well-established positive feedback from customers. In another area, this was echoed by wider partners, who felt that the Youth Employability Coach and Youth Hub strands of the Youth Offer had complicated an extensive provision landscape for young people.

### **Influences on customer referrals to PfJ strands**

There were several influences on Jobcentre staff referrals to PfJ strands which fluctuated over time as strands were introduced. For example, JETS providers in several areas saw their referrals decline following the introduction of Restart; and in certain areas Jobcentre staff felt obliged to meet JETS profiles and referred to this strand rather than JFS.

**Changes to staffing, for example due to expansion or turnover, was identified as another factor influencing referrals.** In some offices, these changes affected Work Coaches' collective knowledge and confidence about the best referral routes for customers. Staff in offices with a lot of new starters were not as well placed to draw on colleagues for advice and support as offices where new staff worked alongside those with more experience.

**The perceived quality of PfJ provision during the rollout phases impacted referrals.** In some locations, quality concerns initially resulted in lower numbers of referrals. Where customer feedback was initially poor, this affected future staff referrals and their likelihood to recommend the provision to other customers on their caseload. However, staff also acknowledged that customer feedback about provision could change over time and improve once it became more established. There was also evidence that a positive reputation among customers increased the chance they would recommend support to friends and family also seeking work. There were examples of customers prompting Work Coaches to see if they could be referred to specific strands.

**The perceived likelihood of the provision leading to an employment outcome for a customer could influence referrals.** For example, in several areas, SWAPs were viewed as a useful provision for giving customers work experience and employment-related training in different sectors, which in some cases could lead directly to employment. In one area a SWAP tool helped staff to effectively and quickly identify provision that was best suited to a customer, and staff frequently made referrals to SWAPs in this case study. However, some staff interviewed in a few case study areas were reluctant to refer to SWAPs as they perceived the strand as having limited success in gaining employment outcomes for customers:

*"I think a lot of the SWAPs say that there will be interviews and jobs offered at the end and I don't really think I've had any that have had a job offer on a SWAP so I think maybe people who have done them once maybe wouldn't do a SWAP again because it hasn't led to anything even though it might have enhanced their CV."*

Jobcentre staff

**Jobcentre staff were sometimes unsure about customer eligibility for PfJ strands where customers had taken part in other provision recently.** While staff tended to prioritise referrals to DWP-funded provision where customers were eligible, they were unclear about customer journeys across the entire scope of support. Staff felt it could be more clearly articulated and explained during the introduction of new strands how they complemented and worked within the wider employment support system. Introductions tended to focus on the mechanics of the strand being introduced rather than how it fitted into the wider system of support.

**The extent to which staff viewed PfJ strands as giving additional options to customers affected referrals.** In some areas, staff stated that customers were already well served by existing provision. For example, in a Welsh case study, the

Communities for Work programmes<sup>11</sup>, offered one-to-one employability support and had well-established referral routes. Consequently, staff reported referral numbers were lower than profiled for JFS and JETS during the initial stages of delivery.

Jobcentre staff felt that on balance, referrals were based on customer need, including work readiness and desired work outcomes, as part of an aim to provide personalised support. However, **staff in some case studies reported feeling pressure to meet referral profiles to PfJ strands. Jobcentre staff stated that this affected their ability to consistently make customer-led referrals due to pressure to meet profiles.** For example, in some case studies, expectation to refer to Restart during its initial rollout (late 2021/early 2022) was felt particularly acutely, however, this perception was not limited to Restart. Work Coaches reported that referral profiles for mandatory provision were a higher priority than voluntary programmes and reported feeling pressure to meet referral profiles over any other metric at this time. Jobcentre managers also spoke of regularly reviewing referral profiles for their office and being held accountable for meeting these by their District managers. In cases where referral profiles were not being met, they would consult with staff, seek to understand why and put improvement plans in place to gradually increase the number of referrals to a particular programme over time. Examples were given of putting improvement plans in place for referrals to JETS as well as to support the take-up of Kickstart provision. Accordingly, pressure to meet referral profiles was reported to be a significant influence on referrals, and one that was sometimes seen as being at odds with the aspiration to provide customer-focused support.

**In some cases, staff felt that there was a gap between the customer demographics and the strand profile and capacity.** For example, there was some difficulty reaching strand profiles in one case study because eligible customers included a high proportion of customers with health conditions and ESOL requirements which staff felt would benefit from other provision as priority:

*“I think [Work Coaches] find [reaching profiles] challenging because of the makeup of the caseload... A lot of [customers] were deemed not suitable straight away because they were ESOL... it's the same with health.”*

Jobcentre manager

**The importance of Jobcentre staff and the subcontractor having a strong positive partnership had a significant role in the decision to refer eligible customers to PfJ strands.** Contracted providers found it helpful to work from Jobcentre offices on a regular basis to facilitate communication with Work Coaches.

### **Influences on starts**

Whether customers started on a particular PfJ strand was influenced by a range of factors. In the case of SWAPs, for example, **customer starts were seen to be**

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<sup>11</sup> Communities for Work is a community-based employability advisory service, provided by Welsh government working in partnership with Local Authorities and DWP, for people living in Communities First areas who are not in employment, education, or training and who face complex barriers to employment.

**influenced by the perceived quality of opportunities available**, and how well these matched customers' desired work goals. Some customers felt they were encouraged to participate in SWAPs by their Work Coach, but the specific provision they had been referred to lacked alignment with their work goals and interests.

**Alignment to customer work goals was also important to customers starting a Kickstart job.** In some locations, customer-facing staff reported being given additional time to match customers with Kickstart vacancies, to make referrals, and deliver some light-touch employability support to young people, which was felt to enable good matches between customers and the available positions. The speed of the Kickstart referral process was seen to be effective in supporting customers to take up the placement by providing an efficient and positive experience for them.

**Another influence on customers starting on PfJ strands was effective customer monitoring and communication.** Areas that had monitoring systems in place described them as useful in tracking the take-up of customer referrals. In one area for example, Jobcentre staff would set follow-up reminders 15 days following an initial referral to check on customer progress. In the case of customer disengagement or failure to start the provision, Work Coaches would be notified by the provider and would increase the frequency of their appointments with the customer.

**In several areas, staff attempted to pre-empt barriers to customers starting on PfJ strands by explaining to customers what communication they could expect from providers following a referral.** For example, staff would inform customers that calls from providers may appear as an unknown number, or that providers would call customers to remind them of upcoming appointments. The timeliness of a referral was also seen to influence whether customers successfully started a PfJ strand. Jobcentre staff reported that it was helpful to make referrals a week before provision started; any further in advance would mean customers were less likely to start as their circumstances and motivation could change.

On the JETS strand, **staff felt that the remote nature of this provision contributed to customer disengagement, and lower starts.** To address this, in one area, staff provided supporting information about JETS to customers before their initial call with the provider. This practice was seen to work well in getting customers to consider whether the support was suitable for their needs and was felt to have a positive impact upon customer starts.

The remote delivery of JFS was also reported to affect starts across case study locations. Additionally, customers who lacked IT skills said this affected their confidence and motivation to engage with JFS given the strands use of digital platforms. Staff commented more generally that in-person support may have higher start rates than support delivered virtually. Some staff and stakeholders suggested that ignoring a phone call, email or text was easier for customers than missing an in-person appointment.

*"I think [remote delivery] gives people an easy excuse not to turn up. It's easier to miss a call than miss an appointment that you have to be face-to-face for."*

Subcontracted manager

However, in several case study locations, some customers reported instances where they were referred to a PfJ strand but were given limited, or no information about what the provision entailed. This could contribute to customers not wanting to engage in the provision.

## **2.2.4 Partnerships and joint working**

The interconnectedness and interdependencies between employment support services and related support is demonstrated through Jobcentre joint working with employers, careers services, training providers, and health services. Jobcentre staff worked with other public sector organisations, as well as voluntary and community sector organisations and the private sector to create a local environment and employment support system that would facilitate customers to find work.

The emphasis and scope of partnerships varied between areas, depending on customer need, and resources. As noted in section 2.1, local and national government had significant involvement in the co-ordination and development of employment support, especially where they had devolved powers and/or received substantive European monies.

The main findings from across the case studies showed that:

- The introduction of the Kickstart scheme alongside tight labour market conditions drove employer engagement across areas. This brought new employers into contact with the Jobcentre for the first time. This was further supported through the expansion of SWAPs and employer engagement work being undertaken by providers delivering PfJ strands (i.e. JETS). This engagement brought with it opportunities and challenges. Jobcentre and provider staff attempted to work with employers to remove barriers to accessing their job vacancies for customers. This could include negotiations around the entry criteria as well as travel arrangements and agreed shift times.
- The use of careers services was inconsistent across areas. Customers who were new or were returning to the labour market, or who were seeking a new occupation, stated that they would have benefitted from speaking with someone about possible job options and the pathways to achieving these goals. However, local careers services were not always used in this way, unless they had additional contracts to deliver and/or were strongly integrated into area partnership networks, which in turn gave them a greater presence and voice in the local employment support system. In several cases, Work Coaches would use their local careers service to support customers with their CV and interview skills where needed. However, with the commissioning of the JFS programme, which offered similar support, the use of careers services for this purpose was seen to decline.
- Partnerships with education providers were present in all areas. This provided customers with access to short training courses to increase their work readiness and gain necessary licences in some cases (e.g. CSCS card, SIA licence).

However, long-term skills development programmes such as traineeships and apprenticeships were not a consistent part of this offer.

These findings are discussed in more detail below.

## **Employer engagement during the delivery of PfJ**

### ***Kickstart***

Across all areas, the introduction of PfJ led to an increase in engagement between Jobcentre staff and local employers. The driving force behind this was Kickstart, which was seen as a high-profile national initiative. It gave employers including Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) a reason to contact and work with Jobcentre offices, given their role in helping to advertise and promote vacancies to customers and support employers with recruitment to positions. Given the scale and profile of this strand, frequently these employer relationships with the Jobcentre were new, and encompassed a variety of sectors and positions. To support the management of employer relationships created by Kickstart, Jobcentres increased capacity at a district and office level by establishing Kickstart District Account Managers as well as EA roles.

A common challenge encountered across all case studies relating to Kickstart, was employers having unrealistically high expectations about the skills and experience of recruits. Jobcentre staff spoke of receiving vacancies for roles that required several years' experience, or qualifications up to degree level. In these instances, staff worked with employers to explain that the purpose of Kickstart was to provide opportunities to young people at risk of long-term unemployment. In these cases, employers were encouraged to look again at their job descriptions and ensure the placement was accessible to customers.

Despite this work, some Jobcentre staff still felt that Kickstart could have done more to provide opportunities to young people with multiple barriers to employment, as opposed to those who were relatively work ready. It was felt that, with more time and planning, the scheme could have had a stronger emphasis around inclusivity, particularly enabling opportunities for disabled customers. In one of the case study areas this concern was partly tackled by DEAs working with Kickstart employers to discuss feasible accommodations to support customers and promoting the Access to Work scheme, but this was not consistent between areas.

### ***SWAPs***

The number of SWAPs available was expanded as part of the PfJ. While this was not always visible to Jobcentre staff interviewed in some case study areas at the time of the research (October 2021 - August 2022), SWAPs were widely used across these locations (excluding Wales) and were viewed to be an effective recruitment tool for different employers. For EAs, SWAPs were an important part of the offer and in some areas were often the first strand mentioned when trying to secure employer engagement. In practice the SWAP model was flexible, and more flexibilities on how the model was implemented were granted during the pandemic. For example, in areas where SWAPs were delivered by smaller employers, following an initial health and safety briefing session training could take place on the job. In these cases,



customers gained experience of working in the role they were trying to secure almost immediately, with opportunities provided for job shadowing. Jobcentre staff generally regarded SWAPs positively: the scheme was seen to be an effective means of quickly securing job outcomes for customers. However, some staff noted that suitable SWAPs were not always available at the times needed by customers, while others questioned the quality of the employment outcomes secured by some customers, particularly where their employers were recruitment agencies.

### ***Employer links through other PfJ programmes***

Outside of the Jobcentre, providers delivering other PfJ strands could also have employer connections that customers could capitalise on as part of their job-search. Across all areas, for example, providers delivering JETS had local employer contacts that they would use to source and advertise vacancies to customers. These links were managed by a dedicated employer account manager. According to provider staff, another advantage of this close relationship was that employer account managers could advocate on a customer's behalf, more easily get them shortlisted for interview and could seek constructive feedback from their interview if they were unsuccessful.

### ***Tightening labour market conditions***

The tightening of the UK labour market (rising levels of job vacancies) drew new employers to engage with the Jobcentre to help address recruitment challenges. Across the case study areas, Jobcentre staff drew on their recent knowledge of collaboration with employers from Kickstart, and extended capacity for employer engagement, to support employers to fill vacancies using similar methods. For example, across all case study areas, Jobcentre staff noted an increase in the number of jobs fairs they facilitated compared to before the pandemic. To support jobs fairs, staff could make the recruitment process easier for both employers and customers by completing an initial customer screening and shortlisting. This meant that the job fairs were spaces where employers could focus on recruitment and spend time interviewing customers. In some cases, this resulted in job offers on the day, or an invitation to a second interview following a short conversation (10-15 minutes) at the job fair. In some areas, job fairs were felt to be most effective where they were sector specific as this helped ensure that attendees had a genuine interest and motivation in taking up the roles available.

Tight labour market conditions enabled Jobcentre staff to try to negotiate with employers on the accessibility of opportunities, overcoming barriers to work relating to transport and health in some instances, although these were the exception rather than the rule. In some cases, Jobcentre staff gained experience of negotiating with employers on these topics as part of Kickstart, before applying it to their practice more broadly. For example, staff spoke of seeking flexibility from employers on shift start times to make opportunities more accessible to customers who relied on public transport or had childcare responsibilities. Jobcentres and partners supporting employers to recruit customers with health conditions led to targeted employer events for those willing to make adaptations as a way of seeking to address a

widening gap in outcomes. Such employer events were seen as effective opportunities to improve outcomes for customers with health conditions.

*“An employability event about disability for employers and it’s for all Scotland in Glasgow and we got 150 employers already signed to come along. It’s about trying to get people with health conditions an opportunity into work.”*

Jobcentre staff

Outside these examples, Jobcentre staff reported a mixed picture of employer willingness to adjust recruitment practices or adapt roles for customers with health conditions and/or disabilities. For example, in one area, Jobcentre staff discussed that the process for moving customers with health conditions into work was lengthier, as liaising with employers on reasonable adjustments took time and some employers wanted to fill vacancies more quickly.

### **Integration and delivery of careers services during PfJ**

Government-funded careers services are devolved, with different arrangements and branding in England (the National Careers Service), Wales (Careers Wales), and Scotland (Skills Development Scotland). In case study areas, there were also organisations across the voluntary and community sector, which provided support for customers to identify their skills, improve CVs and provide interview and application guidance.

The extent to which careers services were well-linked with the Jobcentre varied between case study areas. How Jobcentre staff used careers services to help customers also differed, reflecting the different types of intervention that careers support can provide. Referrals were made for reasons such as seeking information about courses, to tailor CVs for specific job applications and identify transferrable skills. However, Jobcentre staff were not consistently aware of the variation in types of support that careers services offer.

Customers, especially those starting work and leaving education, returning to work after time off, or seeking to move into new sectors (for example due to changes in job availability due to the pandemic), reported that more detailed and extensive careers interventions would have been helpful. For example, in one case study several customers said career support was not provided by Jobcentre staff, and they felt encouraged to apply for jobs outside of their work interests. There were examples where customers felt they would have benefitted from career counselling, including guidance on how to change sectors and plan to work towards a more sustainable and life-long career. Customers reported doing their own research but felt they did not know where to look or which guidance to follow.

*“[I would like] just to get some advice to try and see what type of career path I should go down, maybe some advice if I am looking into one specific career path how I should go about it.”*

Kickstart participant, 16-24, England

There were examples across the case studies where partnerships with careers services were strong. Where organisations contracted to supply careers services held contracts on other funding streams, this was seen by Jobcentre staff to be helpful to ensuring joined-up and integrated service delivery with opportunities for cross programme referrals. In one case study where careers and Jobcentre staff worked particularly closely, staff at careers services were part of several partnership boards and delivered a monthly newsletter to Jobcentre staff to keep them updated with changes to provision. Jobcentre staff in this area reported feeling confident about the purpose and role of careers services. The good integration of careers services with Jobcentres in the area was reflected in the customer interviews, several of whom had received careers support.

### ***Introduction of JFS and its effect on the use of careers services by Jobcentres***

When the Job Finding Support (JFS) strand of PfJ was introduced, Jobcentre customer-facing staff across all case studies noted that they became less likely to refer to government-funded careers services than previously. In case studies undertaken in 2022, after JFS stopped taking referrals (January 2022), Jobcentre staff reported their referrals to other government-funded careers services increased as a result.

The influence of JFS on the number of Jobcentre referrals to careers services was compounded during the early months of its operation by the national lockdown. Prior to the pandemic co-location had been commonplace, with careers staff often working from Jobcentre offices. However, during the pandemic, staff from careers services were generally unable to do so. This physical distance was an added reason cited by staff for a fall in referrals to careers services while JFS was available. The large number of newly recruited Work Coaches was also cited as a cause. Newly recruited Work Coaches did not have existing relationships with careers workers, and careers staff found it challenging to build awareness and understanding of their services during a period of high workloads and remote working.

The effect of JFS on careers services locally was tempered, again, by the strength of local working relationships and the level of integration and joint working between national careers services, DWP and Jobcentre staff in each area. In the Welsh case studies there was a history of joint-delivery of Welsh Government programmes by Careers Wales and the Jobcentre, for example.<sup>12</sup> Jobcentre staff felt that the closeness of these ties and day to day working relationships meant that when the JFS strand was introduced, referrals to careers support remained relatively consistent.

### **Education and training providers**

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<sup>12</sup> Staff in these organisations had worked closely, both strategically collaborating on shared priorities, and operationally where they had co-located to jointly support customers into work through programmes such as Working Wales, and Communities for Work. These programmes provided additional employment support through interview preparation, CV guidance and could assist customers with finding employment and apprenticeships.

Throughout the case study areas, education and training providers worked with Jobcentres to deliver short vocational courses, ESOL, and SWAPs to customers. The courses aimed to increase customer skills and employability and support their job entry. Generally, Jobcentre and provider staff reported being able to find opportunities for customers to increase work readiness through training and qualifications. Frequently accessed short courses included those to gain licenses, such as Construction Site Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards, HGV licenses, Security Industry Authority (SIA) licenses, first aid, and manual handling qualifications, alongside courses for building confidence, resilience, supporting mental wellbeing and developing soft skills such as communication.

Apprenticeships and traineeships as routes into work were less utilised by Jobcentre staff across all case study areas when working with customers. This was because of a reduction in the number of opportunities available during the delivery period, a result of the effect on work environments of social distancing and the uncertain economic outlook. This intersected with lack of clarity amongst Jobcentre staff about which providers might enable customers to access these options.

When asked about partnerships with education and skills providers, Work Coaches discussed the benefits of the Youth Hub as a space for presenting the range of support to customers. Staff felt apprenticeships and traineeships had a place within this context. In one Youth Hub, two local providers provided links to apprenticeships and traineeships for interested customers. In another Youth Hub based at a college, there were regular meetings between Jobcentre and college staff to discuss recruitment onto courses.

Based on the evidence collected from Work Coaches about the nature of the skills provision they promote to customers and the disruptive impact of the pandemic on work-based learning opportunities, the consistent integration of skills-based routes to work within employment support appeared to remain a challenge.

## 3. Plan for Jobs Customer profiles and journeys

This chapter covers the characteristics and profiles of participant and non-participant customers and how these characteristics could act as a barrier to finding work. The characteristics are representative of the cohort at a particular snapshot in time, rather than across the whole PfJ period. The chapter outlines the typical customer journey through each strand and discusses how employment-seeking activities (from customers' points of view as well as wider feedback from staff, providers and local stakeholders) interacted with support received from outside the Jobcentre. Furthermore, the chapter discusses barriers to taking part in PfJ, reasons for leaving early and satisfaction with the strands before discussing the characteristics and specific barriers of unemployed customers.

Findings in this chapter are based on descriptive and cluster analysis of the quantitative survey data from 8,325 completed survey interviews in wave 1. More detailed information and a breakdown of interview responses can be found in Appendix 2.

### 3.1 Plan for Jobs customer profiles

Age and length of time claiming Universal Credit were conditions of participating in some of the strands. For example, Kickstart was for 16- to 24-year-olds and JFS for those claiming less than 13 weeks. In these cases, these reflect the design of the strand, rather than providing insight into the participating population. Where this is the case, these qualities have not been reported on.

Around half of participants had a physical or mental health condition or disability. A smaller proportion faced barriers to employment relating to their caring responsibilities, language skills or other barriers.

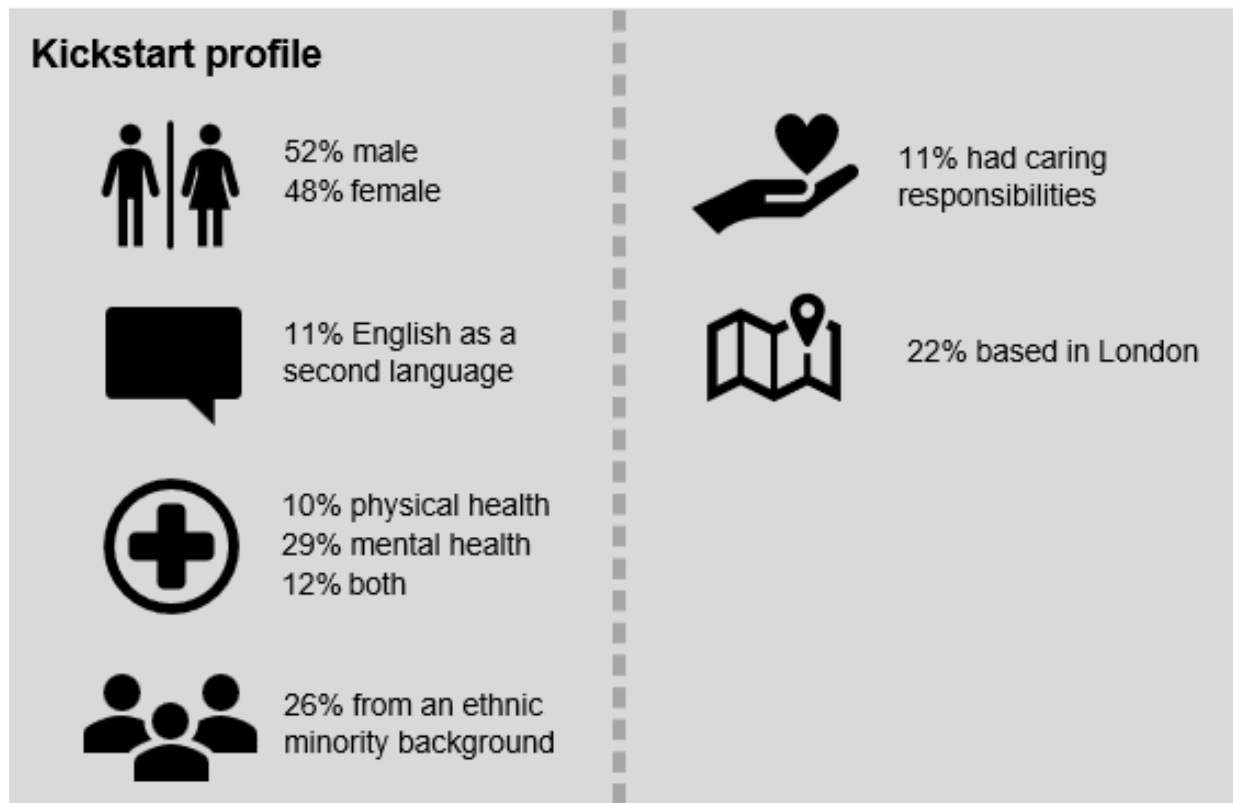
Out of the five provision strands studied, Youth Offer participants had the highest proportion of physical and mental health conditions or disabilities (63%). One in ten (10%) reported having physical health conditions, 33% reported having mental health conditions and 20% had both.

Across the provision strands, SWAPs and JFS participants had the highest number of participants who spoke English as a second language (25% SWAPs, 26% JFS). Around a quarter (26%) of non-participants spoke English as a second language. Amongst early leavers, this was around one in five (19%).

Over 3 in 10 of SWAPs, JFS, JETS, Youth Offer participants and non-participants were **from an ethnic minority background**.

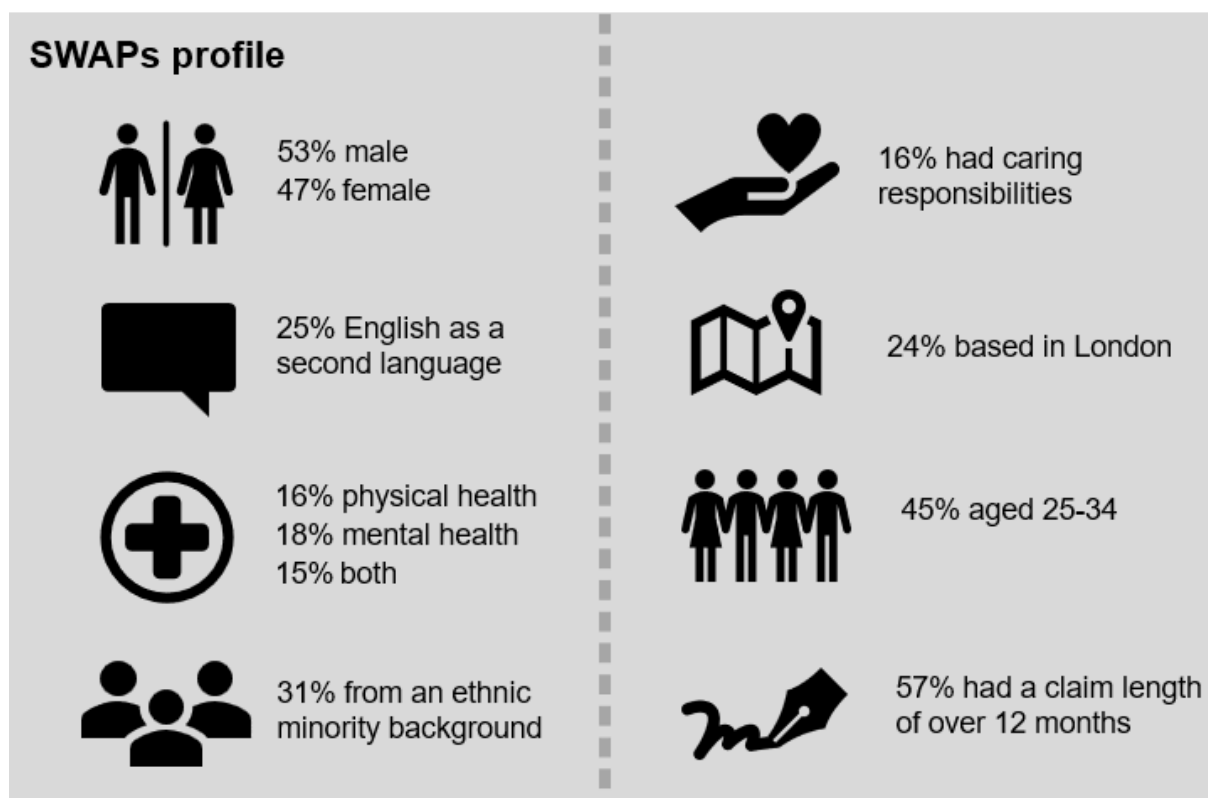
### 3.1.1 Kickstart

Kickstart was a 6-month job funded by the Government. It was targeted at 16- to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit who had been unemployed for 6 months or more. On this programme, the employers were responsible for providing employability support. The Kickstart participant profile is outlined below:



### 3.1.2 Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs)

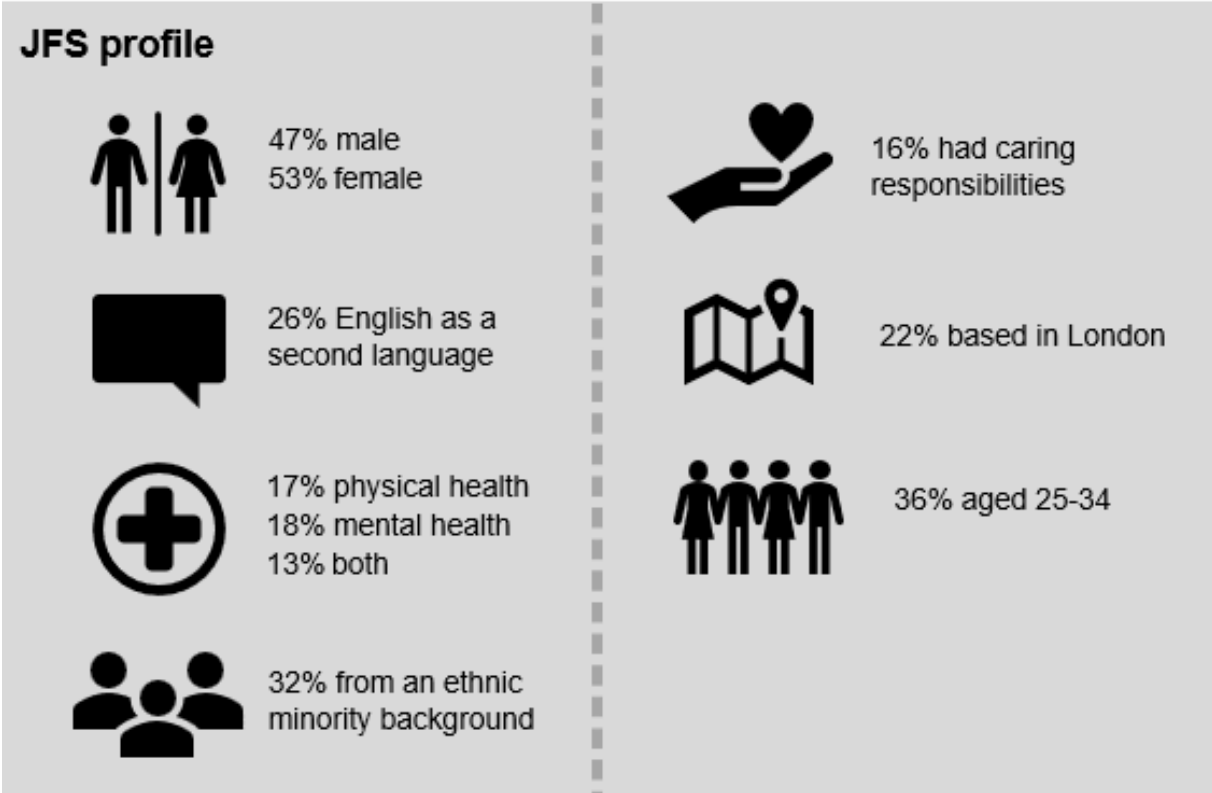
Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs) are for Jobseekers claiming either Universal Credit, Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Participants gain work experience of up to six weeks with an employer in the industry, where new skills can be learnt on the job. Placements are typically in care, construction or warehouse work, the public sector or hospitality. The programme consists of three parts: pre-employment training, work experience in the sector and a job interview or help with applications<sup>13</sup>. SWAPs participants in this sample were UC claimants only. The SWAPs participants profile is outlined below:



<sup>13</sup> Some SWAP starts were recorded without all three elements being received, so at times it was difficult to confirm whether claimants were on a SWAP. Participants were allocated as a SWAP participant only if they identified having received specific support.

### 3.1.3 Job Finding Support (JFS)

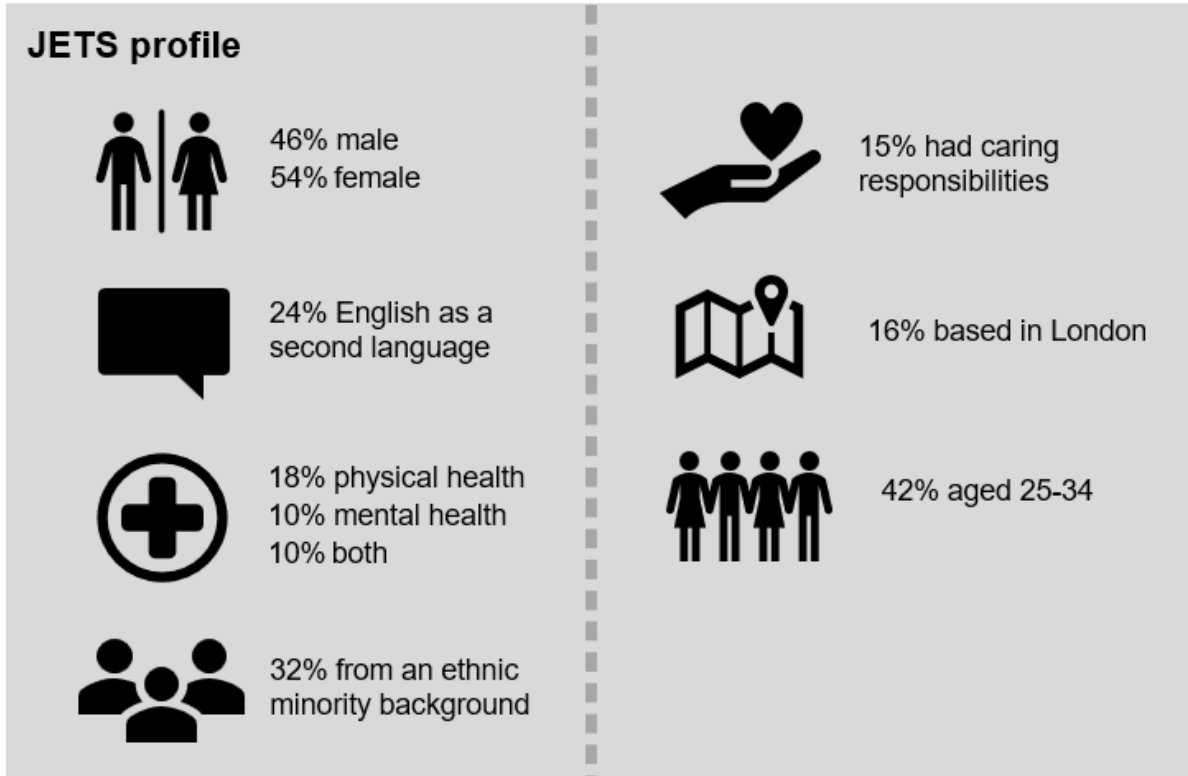
Job Finding Support (JFS) was aimed at unemployed people over 16 years old who had been claiming benefits for up to 13 weeks. The target was for participants to complete this provision in 10 working days. The support was delivered by a private sector provider and included one-to-one support, a mock interview and sector specific job advice. The JFS participant profile is shown below:





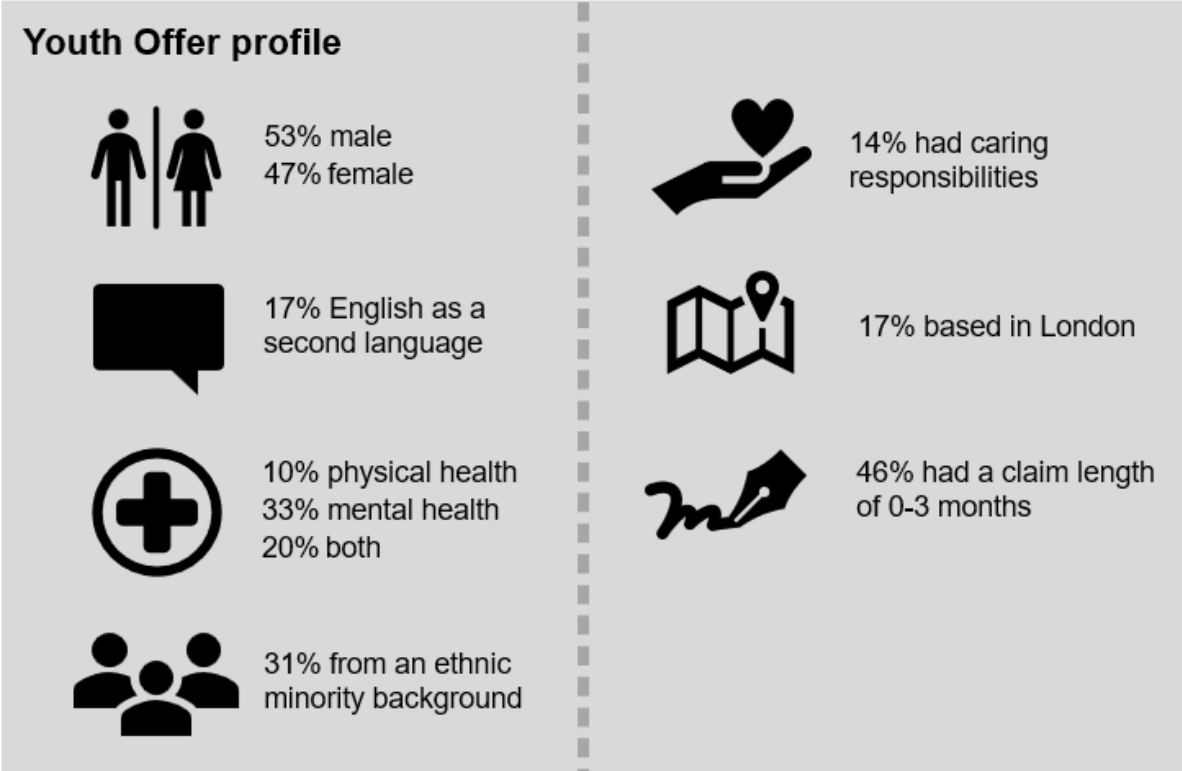
### 3.1.4 Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS)

Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) lasted up to 6 months and was delivered by partner organisations. The type of support provided included skills analysis, job-search advice, interview support and improving IT skills. It was targeted at unemployed people who had been on Universal Credit or Jobseekers Allowance between 13 weeks to 1 year. The JETS profile is shown below:



### 3.1.5 Youth Offer

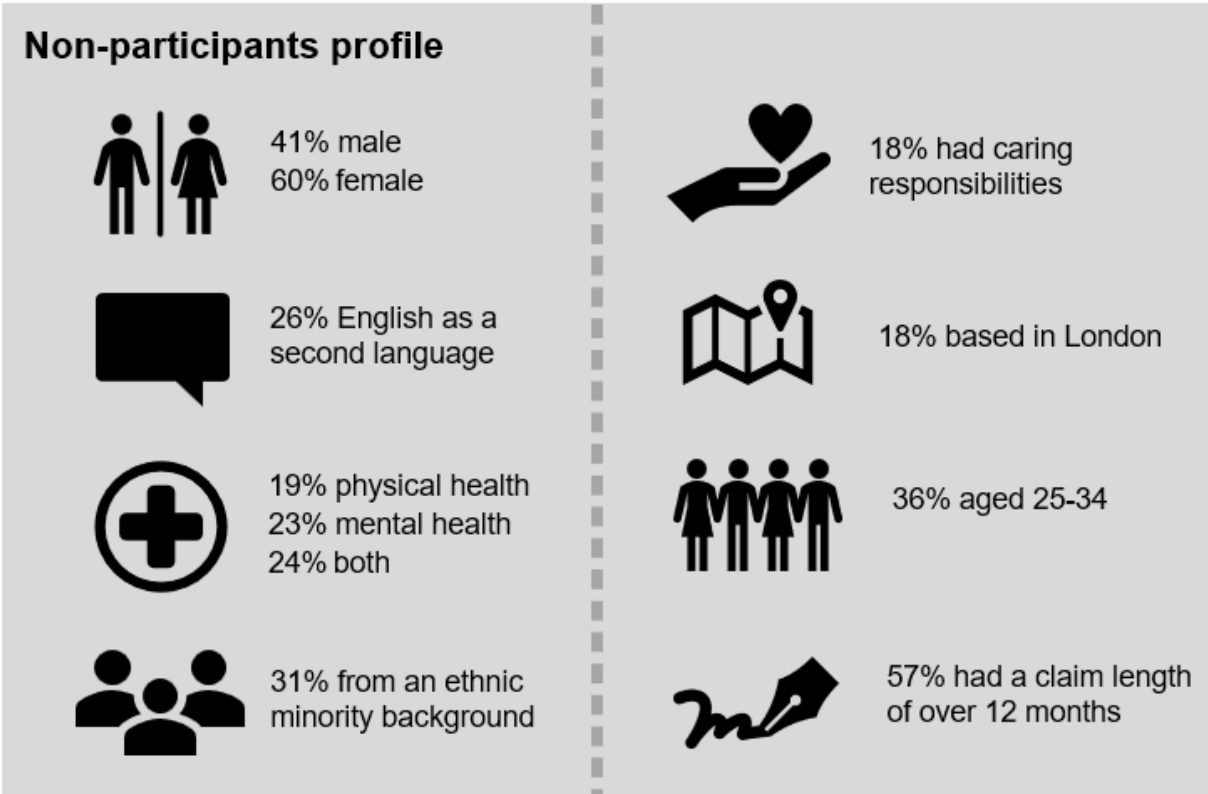
The Youth Offer includes the Youth Employment Programme, Youth Hubs support and support from Youth Employability Coaches. This is targeted at all 16- to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit in the Intensive Work Search Regime. It aims to provide in-depth interview training and CV and job application support. At wave 2 of the survey, 28% of Youth Offer participants had also taken part in Kickstart. The Youth Offer participant profile for this survey is shown below:



### 3.1.6 Non-participants

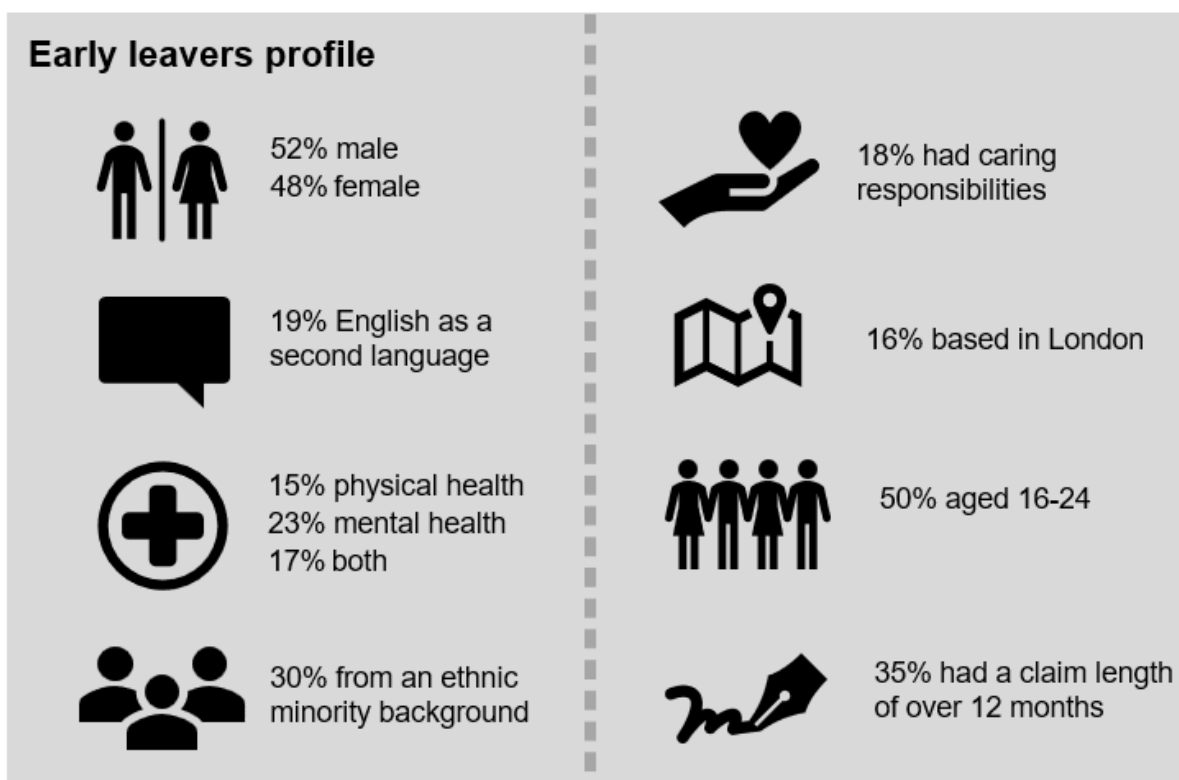
Non-participants were defined as UC customers in Intensive Work Search who reported in the survey that they had not taken part in any of the PfJ strands. Non-participants did not participate in PfJ for a range of reasons, most commonly because they found a job themselves. Other common reasons were a health condition or believing the support was not relevant to them.

Two thirds (66%) of non-participants reported having physical or mental health conditions, with one in five (19%) having a physical health condition and around a quarter (23%) having a mental health condition. The remainder (24%) reported having both. Non-participants have higher levels of reported physical or mental health conditions than participants in any of the strands. Just over half (55%) of early leavers had any health condition. The profile is shown below:



### 3.1.7 Early leavers

Early leavers were defined as those who responded that they had been involved in a strand but did not complete it. The most common reason for leaving a provision early was because people had found a job themselves, which they did not attribute to taking part in the provision. Half (50%) of JFS, 45% of YEC, 42% of JETS and 40% of YEP early leavers left the programme for this reason. Other reasons for leaving the programme included health-related reasons (24% of YEP early leavers, 20% of SWAPs early leavers and 17% of Kickstart and YH early leavers); the programme not being relevant (18% for JETS, 17% for YH and 15% for YEP early leavers); perceptions that the support/service received was poor (8% for YEP, 7% for Kickstart and JETS early leavers) or difficulty using or accessing digital technology/internet (11% of JFS early leavers, 10% of SWAPs and 7% of JETS). The overall early leavers profile is shown below:



### 3.1.8 Cluster Analysis with Unemployed Customers<sup>14</sup>

#### Segment Groups

Unemployed people vary in their degree of readiness and in their confidence to find work. Often, people have similar behaviours, experiences and attitudes which co-occur to form common barriers or bridges to moving into employment. Cluster analysis was used to identify clusters (segments) within which individuals were as similar as possible to one another and as different as possible to individuals in other clusters. Profiling these segments by people’s socio-demographics, behaviours, attitudes and experiences paints a picture of who the people are in each group and their common characteristics, barriers and bridges to work.

Data from unemployed participant and non-participant subsamples were combined to create a common segmentation model across these two subsamples. Youth Offer participants and their comparison counterparts were excluded from the analysis<sup>15</sup>.

Four segments of unemployed groups were identified based on responses to the statements in the survey, which are detailed further below. The four segments were: Struggling Unemployed, Staying Afloat, Work Ready, and Adept but Withheld. Profiles of the participant and non-participant segment groups can be found in Appendix 2 and Table 3.1 illustrates which groups participants and non-participants fell into.

**Table 3.1: Proportion of participants and non-participants within each group**

	Participants	Non-participants
Struggling Unemployed	8%	33%
Staying Afloat	33%	28%
Work Ready	38%	20%
Adept but Withheld	21%	20%

The Struggling Unemployed group were least likely to be found among the participant sample and most likely to be found among the non-participant group. The Work Ready group were most likely to be found among the participant group and, along with Adept but Withheld people, least likely to appear in the non-participant sample. It is not clear to what extent this represents an effect of the programme on participants or reflects differential selection effects for participation in the PfJ programme. However, the cluster analysis is still able to illustrate some common themes between individuals and outlines differing degrees of work-readiness amongst both

<sup>14</sup> Further detail on the methodology and purpose of the Cluster Analysis is included in Appendix 2

<sup>15</sup> Youth Offer Youth Employment Programme participants receive only Work Coach support so for the purposes of this analysis it was not deemed suitable to include them with participants who were receiving more intensive support.

participants and non-participants and identifies groups of unemployed people distinguished by their confidence and aspirations.

The following sections explore each of these sub-groups in more detail. Comparisons are made to other segments, identified by their name, or to the cluster population overall.

### **Struggling Unemployed**

**This group demonstrated the least confidence about their ability to start or sustain work.** They agreed that they were not ready to handle a job to a greater extent than people who were Work-Ready or Staying Afloat. They were also much less confident in their skills to find and undertake work than those in other segments.

**For a proportion of the Struggling Unemployed, their lack of confidence was due to health-related barriers to work.** They were particularly likely to experience long-term health conditions. They faced compound challenges, with higher levels of anxiety, lower levels of wellbeing and less technical competence than other groups.

This group is likely to need support to manage their health condition as a precursor to or part of employment support. They would also benefit from digital skills support and job-searching support.

#### *Participants*

Only 7% of Plan for Jobs participants fell into the Struggling Unemployed sub-group.

Over three quarters (76%) of Struggling Unemployed participants reported a physical or mental health condition/illness in the last 12 months. They were more anxious and had lower levels of wellbeing than any other group (average life satisfaction of 4.8 compared to 6.2 overall amongst participants, average feelings of anxiety at 7.4 in comparison to 5.8 overall participant average). This group also perceived much higher levels of challenge from their physical and mental health as a barrier to finding work; 62% reporting this compared to 32% overall. Additionally, nearly four in ten (39%) stated that support to manage their health condition would make it easier to find work, compared to around two in ten (19%) overall.

Over half (56%) of Struggling Unemployed participants felt they could use the internet to access online government services, but this was much lower than the 85% figure for unemployed participants across all strands. Around one-third felt they could do so with help, compared to 12% across all strands. Over a quarter (26%) reported their poor employment record made it difficult to find work.

#### *Non-participants*

Struggling Unemployed were the most common group amongst non-participants (33%). They showed a similar pattern of attitudes and behaviours as the participant Struggling Unemployed, but their challenges were often more pronounced. Life satisfaction levels were lower for Struggling Unemployed non-participants than participants (4.1 compared to 4.8) and anxiety levels were higher (8.0 compared to 7.4).

Nine out of ten (89%) Struggling Unemployed non-participants reported having a health condition in the past year with 76% reporting that this made it difficult to find work. Around half (51%) felt that support for their health condition would help them find work.

This group were less likely to report being able to use online government services. Less than half (45%) felt they could use an online government service, compared to seven in ten (69%) non-participants in total. Around a third (31%) felt they would be able to access government services online but with help. Fourteen per cent reported they were not able to do so at all, compared to 6% overall. One in ten (11%) reported receiving support in the last year with writing a CV or covering letter, compared to around two in ten (21%) overall.

### **Staying Afloat**

**This group tended to believe they were ready for work and had the skills to do so. However, they lacked confidence in their ability to find work, suggesting this may be their primary barrier.** The Staying Afloat group were most similar to the Struggling Unemployed.

#### *Participants*

This group made up a third (33%) of the unemployed participant population. They were characterised by generally low levels of wellbeing (5.7 mean) and high levels of anxiety (6.4 mean). Nearly six in ten (59%) reported having long-term health conditions with nearly four in ten (38%) saying that these made it difficult for them to get a job. Nearly one-quarter (24%) thought support for their health condition would improve their chances of finding work.

This group had high confidence in their ability to use online government services: the majority (80%) felt able to do so. Around one-quarter (26%) reported that their poor previous employment record was holding them back.

#### *Non-participants*

Unemployed Staying Afloat non-participants comprised 28% of the total non-participant group. The wellbeing of Staying Afloat non-participants was lower than that of their participant counterparts (5.4 mean score on life satisfaction compared to 5.7 participants, 5.8 mean score felt the things they do in life are worthwhile compared to 6.4 mean score for participants). However, wellbeing and anxiety levels were around the overall average among all non-participants.

Around two-thirds (65%) of Staying Afloat respondents reported long-term health conditions, with nearly half (46%) reporting that these made it difficult for them to find work. Just over a quarter (27%) felt that support for their condition would help them find employment.

Just under three quarters (72%) stated they were able to access online government services without help.

### **Adept but Withheld**

**People in the Adept but Withheld group had high confidence in their skills, job search and application skills but felt they were not yet ready to handle a job, which could be due to a higher proportion of this group having a health condition or disability.** The Adept but Withheld group were more alike the Work Ready group than the Struggling Unemployed or Staying Afloat groups in their attitudes and digital access, however they were more likely to face health challenges which may have contributed to their hesitancy to work.

#### *Participants*

Adept but Withheld participants made up around a fifth (21%) of the participant group. These participants tended to be just above average in their wellbeing (6.5 mean compared to 6.2 overall participant average) and have average anxiety levels (5.9 mean compared to 5.8 overall participant average). They were least likely to report that a poor employment record acted as a barrier to work, around one in ten (11%) compared to an average of nearly two in ten (18%).

#### *Non-participants*

As with their participant counterparts, Adept but Withheld non-participants tended to be average on many of the profiling variables. The exceptions included wellbeing, where they tended to have better than average wellbeing (5.9 mean) and ability to access government services online, which over eight in ten (81%) reported compared to nearly seven in ten (69%) overall.

### **Work Ready**

**The Work Ready unemployed group faced the fewest barriers to work, had higher levels of wellbeing, lower levels of anxiety, better health, and better technical competence.** This group were most likely to strongly disagree with the idea that they are not quite ready to handle a job and to strongly agree they have the skills to do a job well. They were also very confident in their job search and application skills.

#### *Participants*

Work Ready respondents were more likely to be found in the participant group (38%) than the non-participant group (20%). They reported the highest levels of wellbeing (6.8 mean) and the lowest levels of anxiety (5.0 mean) compared to other segments. Additionally, they were least likely to report a long-term health condition (35%). Amongst those who did report a health condition, this group were least likely to report that it made it difficult for them to get a job (20% agreed with this, compared to 32% average across all participant subgroups).

They were also most likely to report being able to access government services online (93% were able to do so without help).

#### *Non-participants*

Work-Ready non-participants showed above average levels of wellbeing (6.1 mean) and lower levels of anxiety (5.4 mean) than other non-participant segment groups.



However, their levels of wellbeing were lower than their participant work-ready counterparts (6.8 mean).

Nearly one-half (47%) reported a long-term health condition but less than one-quarter (23%) thought this made it difficult to get a job. In turn, only around one in seven (14%) felt that they needed support for their health condition to help them find employment.

Nine in ten (90%) reported they were able to access online government services.

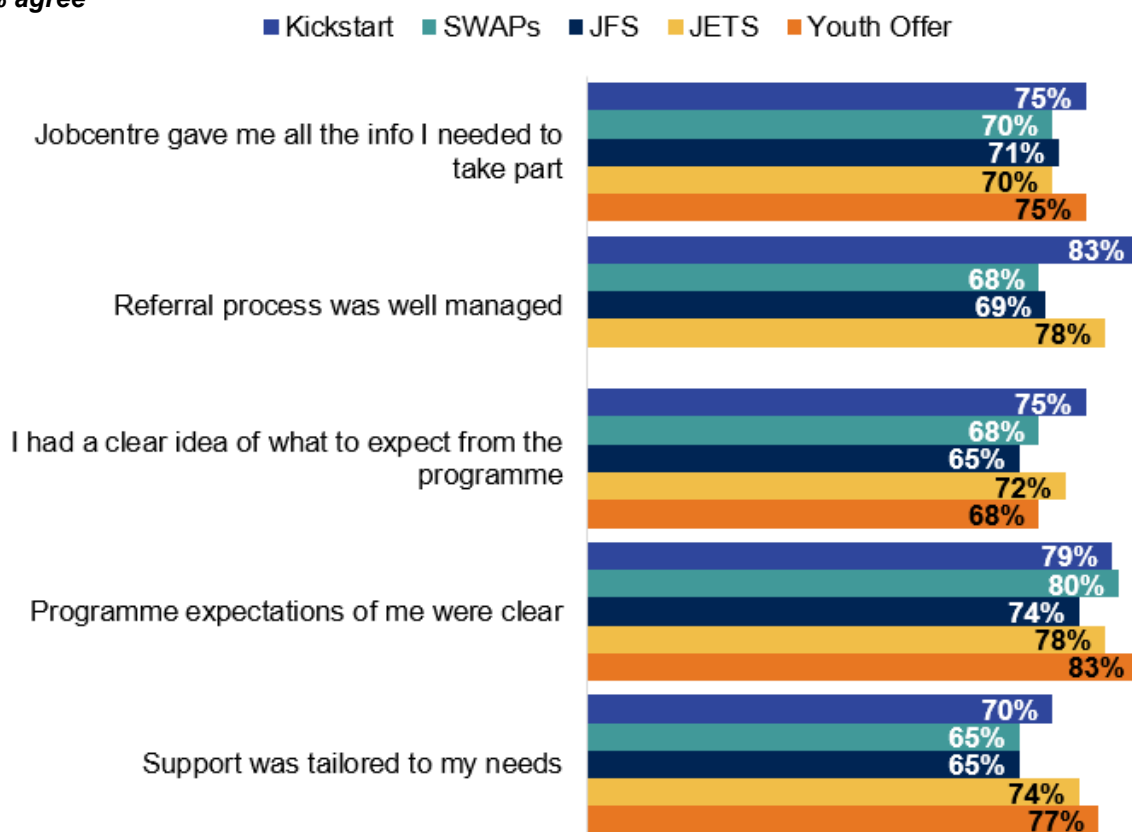
## 3.2 Experiences of Plan for Jobs strands

### 3.2.1 Deciding to take part

Most participants said they had all the information they needed to decide whether to participate in their strand (see Figure 1). Furthermore, the majority reported that they had a clear idea of what to expect from the programmes and that the referral process was well managed.

The extent to which participants felt that the support was tailored to their needs varied across strands. Youth Offer participants (77%) were more likely than SWAPs (65%) or JFS (64%) participants to report that the support was tailored to their needs. Participants with mental health conditions or both physical and mental health conditions were less likely to agree that the programmes were tailored to their needs.

**Figure 1: Thinking about the programme, how much do you agree or disagree with the following? % agree**

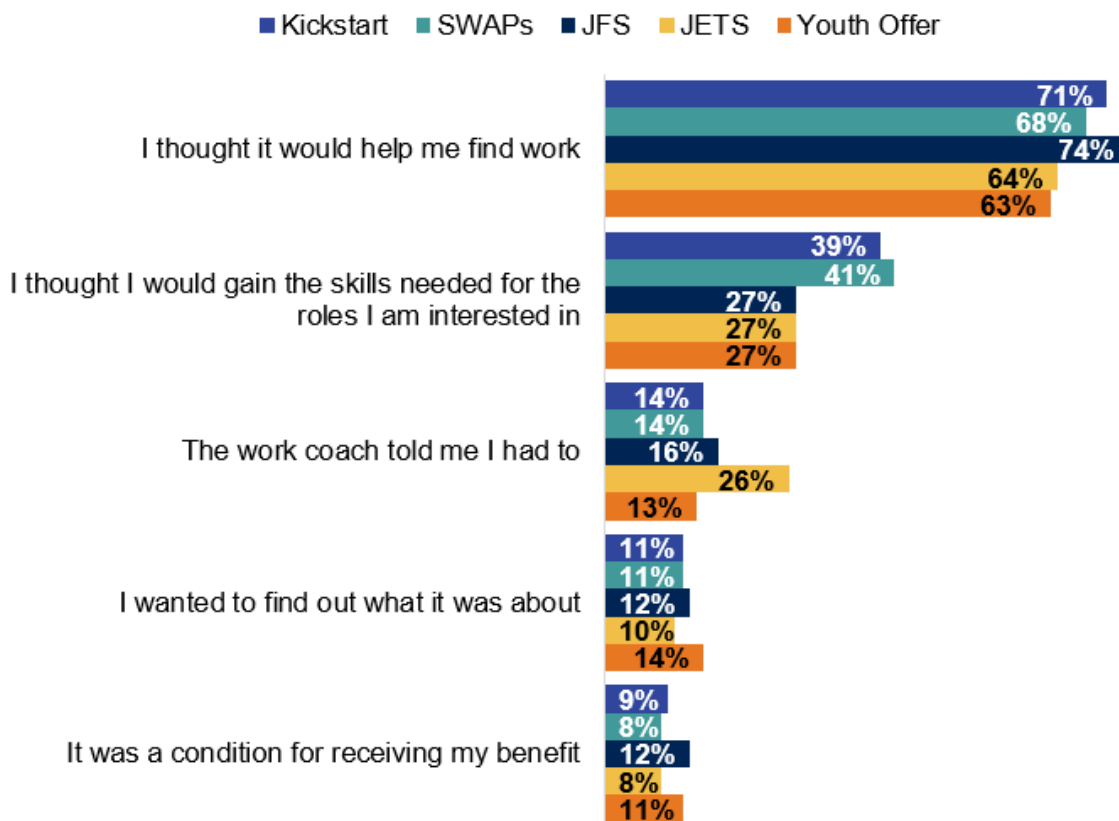


*Base: All except those who never engage with a Work Coach from the Jobcentre, excluding 'prefer not to say', 'not applicable', 'not stated'. Kickstart (132-858); SWAPs (95-691); JFS (173-794); JETS (202-784); Youth Offer (32-239). Base sizes vary as not all questions were asked to all participants.*

The main reason why participants decided to take part in one of the strands (see Figure 2) was the hope that the programme would help them find work, reported by at least six in ten participants across all strands. JETS and JFS participants were most likely to report that they took part because their Work Coach had told them that they had to (JETS 26%, JFS 16%). Comparing the motivations for participation

across age groups, older participants (50+) were more likely to say their Work Coach told them to join, while the younger groups wanted to learn new skills.

**Figure 2: Why did you decide to take part in this programme?**

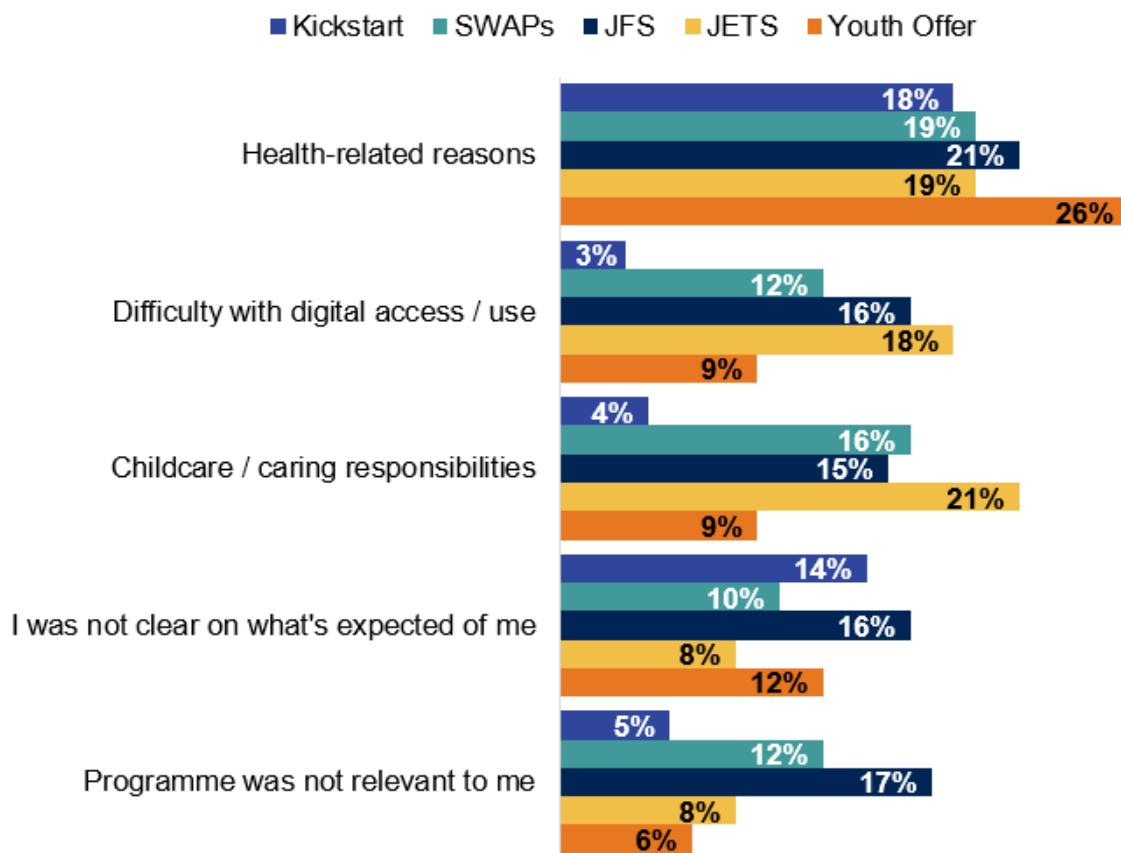


Base: All participants excluding 'prefer not to say', 'not applicable', 'not stated'. Kickstart (859), SWAPs (547), JETS (810), Youth Offer (175).

### 3.2.2 Barriers to taking part

Approximately half of the participants experienced at least one barrier whilst taking part in the programme (Figure 3). Health-related reasons and childcare responsibilities were commonly experienced. Youth Offer participants were most likely to report health-related barriers (Kickstart 18%, SWAPs 19%, JFS 21%, JETS 19%, Youth Offer 26%). The barrier of childcare or caring responsibilities was most common amongst JETS participants (Kickstart 4%, SWAPs 16%, JFS 15%, JETS 21%, Youth Offer 9%). Other common challenges included difficulty accessing digital technology or the internet, caring responsibilities, lack of clarity about the programme expectations or the perception that the programme was not relevant.

**Figure 3: What, if any, barriers or challenges have you faced when taking part in the programme?**

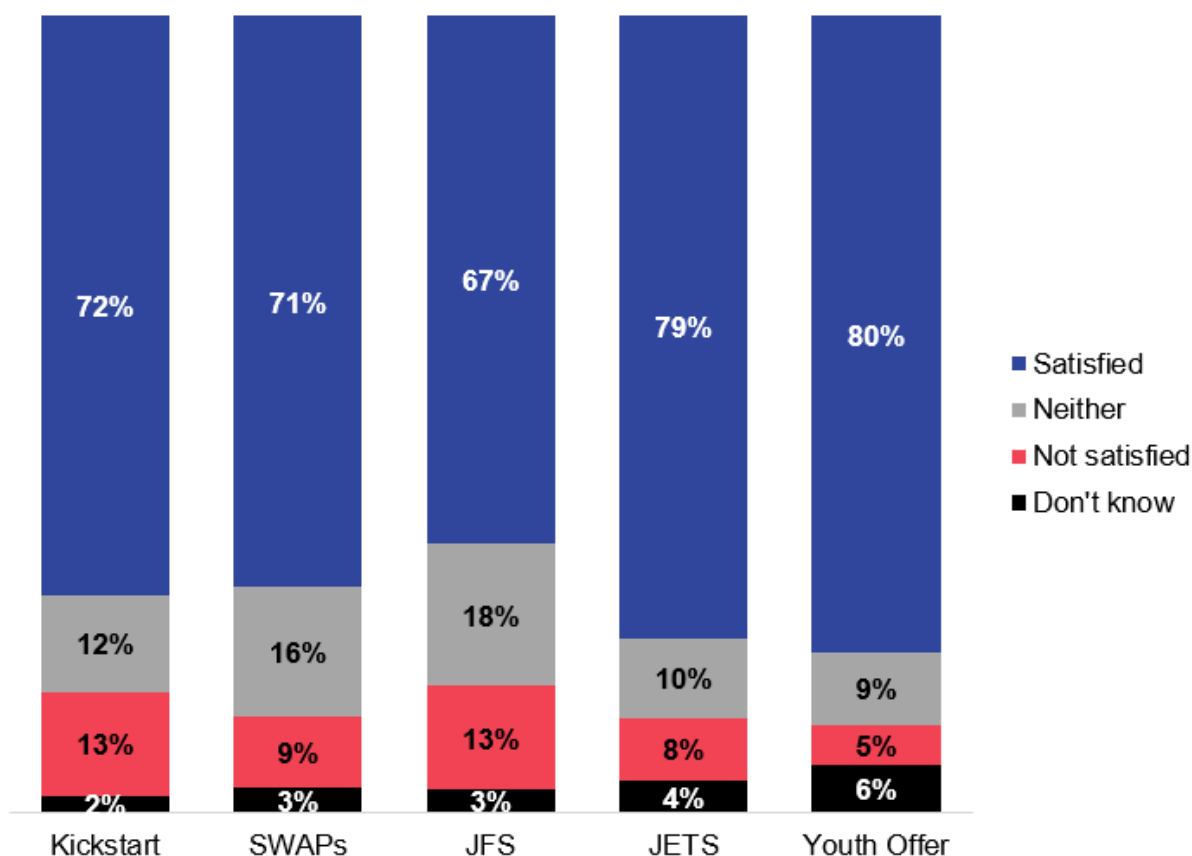


*Base: All participants excluding those who report 'no barriers', 'not stated', don't know and prefer not to say Kickstart (408), SWAPs (241), JFS (364), JETS (348), Youth Offer (69).*

### 3.2.3 Satisfaction with the support received

Nearly seven in ten participants reported being satisfied with the support received through each of the strands (Figure 4). Youth Offer and JETS participants were most satisfied, whilst JFS participants were least likely to say that they are satisfied with the support that they received. Participants who received support with identifying and applying for jobs reported slightly higher rates of satisfaction with taking part in the programme compared to people who received skills training. They were also more likely to be employed or experience other positive outcomes because of taking part in the programme.

**Figure 4: How satisfied are you with the support you received/are receiving from the programme?**

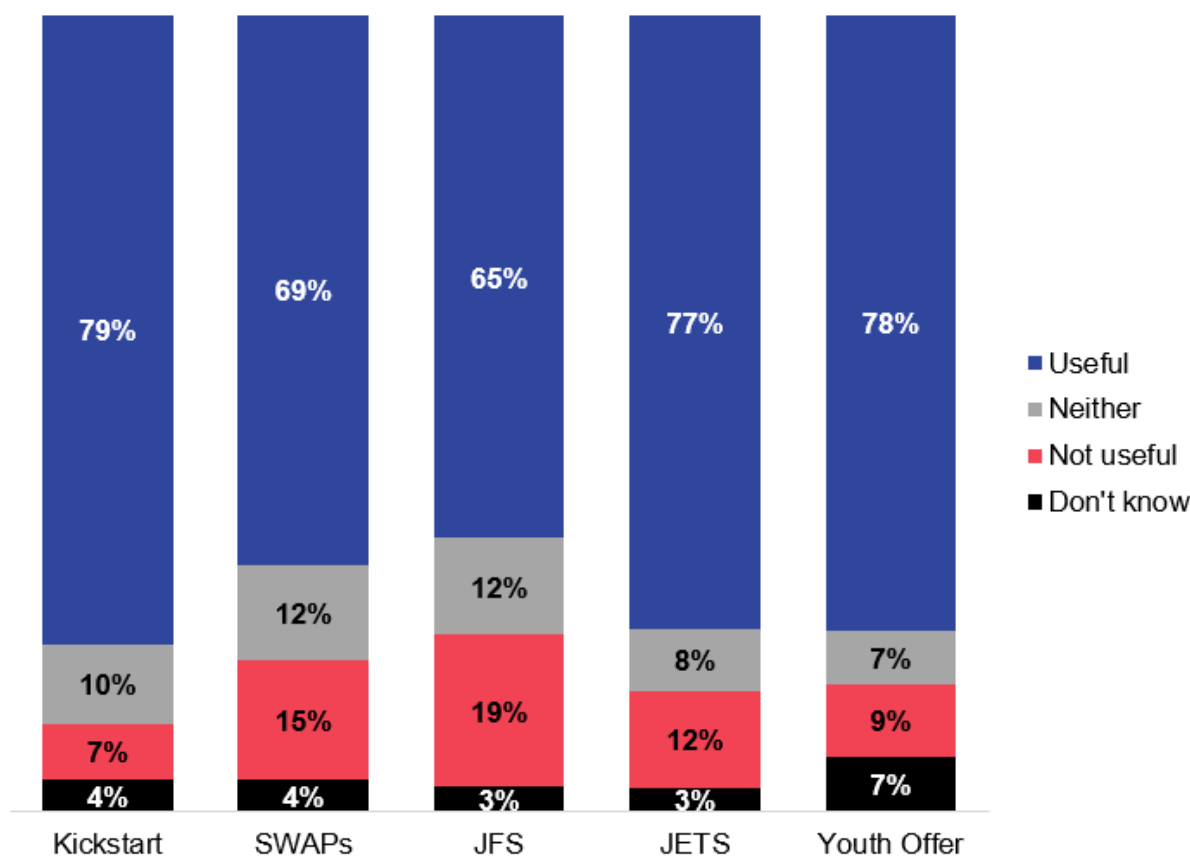


Base: All participants except 'prefer not to say', 'not applicable', 'not stated'. Kickstart (856), SWAPs (545), JFS (708), JETS (736), Youth Offer (172).

### 3.2.4 Perceived usefulness of the programme

The perceived usefulness of the programme varied depending on the strand and employment outcome. Kickstart, Youth Offer and JETS participants were more likely to say that they had found the programme useful in helping them find work or progress. This was particularly common amongst those who found a job as a result. Across most strands, people who experienced an increase in their confidence or found a job which they credited to taking part were more likely to report that the programme was useful in progressing their careers.

**Figure 5: How useful was the programme in helping you to find employment or progress in your career?**



Base: All employed and in a strand excluding Restart, except 'prefer not to say', 'not applicable' and 'not stated'. Kickstart (628), SWAPs (356), JFS (315), JETS (183), Youth Offer (146)

In the qualitative research, participants who found the programmes useful felt they gained skills in identifying and applying for different positions and to successfully secure a job. Those with English as their second language were more likely to say that support with applying for jobs were helpful to them. Customers who gained a job felt that was the most useful element of the support. Support which enabled customers to move into work included identifying relevant opportunities, interview skills, or practical or financial support where necessary (computers, clothes, funding etc).

*“It was very useful because I had to gain my skills working in a different environment with different people, which will help me progress to a better role”.*

*“My working coach many times sent me different job offers. And when I finally got a job, he helped me financially (£30 for safety shoes)”.*

JETS Participant

Participants who said that the programmes were useful reported receiving career mentoring and felt that the staff supporting them were competent, helpful and supportive. Customers who received mentoring felt their mentors understood their priorities and abilities and they appreciated the support provided. Customers typically

felt supported and listened to when the Jobcentre staff took into consideration their needs, barriers, and career aspirations:

*“They actually listen to you as a professional, look at your skills, what would suit you, but even when seeking something totally different, they support you. They look at you as a human being, listening to people, is key to why they’re successful”.*

JETS Participant

Those in the qualitative research who did not find their strand helpful often reported that the support was too basic, did not help them find the job that they wanted or was not suited to their needs. Customers with substantial work experience felt that the programmes were aimed at those who are new to the labour market because the support was not tailored enough for specific sectors and complex job applications.

*“The course wasn’t long enough. The training materials were too simplistic and dumbed down to the lowest common denominator. It focussed on one job role, not on filling out more complex application forms”.*

SWAPs Participant

Some of the participants felt that the programme was not useful because they were pushed to go into job interviews to ‘tick a box’, whilst they were hoping to find sustainable employment in a specific sector. Similarly, customers felt that the programmes were not useful when the support did not consider their challenges related to health issues, caring responsibilities, or forced them to apply for jobs they were overqualified for.

*“They sent me for two other interviews but both roles were entirely unsuitable, both times the interviewers said they wouldn’t employ me because I was way overqualified and would leave asap when a more suitable role came up”.*

JFS Participant

Lastly, customers who did not find the programmes useful often noted that they never heard from the programme provider, communication was not as frequent as expected or lacked relevant information and details:

*“I have been told every week since October that JETS would contact me with a view to help me find suitable employment. It is February and I am still yet to hear from them”.*

JETS Participant

### **3.2.5 Gaps in employment support**

The case study strand identified gaps in support for customers seeking work. While staff were able to use flexible or local funding sources to fill some, others were outside the scope of commissioning and represented system level barriers to work. Collaboration between partners was used to identify and respond to strategic (significant) gaps in support, to enable groups of customers to access local vacancies (where additional resources were available). There were examples

throughout the cases, for example of additional skills support being procured, including ESOL. Operational Jobcentre staff used the Dynamic Purchasing System to source provision or support for particular customers or small groups (e.g. for autistic customers) where gaps in a PfJ support offer were identified.

The opportunity for paid work through Kickstart was felt to be particularly valuable. Stakeholders felt that this strand had been vital in building the employability of young people, building skills, and providing recent work experience. Staff felt that a similar model could benefit other customer groups, for example customers needing to transfer to work in a different sector, or over 50s with health conditions. In Wales, Jobs Growth Wales Plus (launched in 2022) delivered a similar model for 16–18-year-olds.

Following increases in the cost of living, the quality of work customers could access was considered. Staff mentioned that retraining programmes - lengthier than the current short vocational courses, which tend to provide licences to practice - would be useful in order to support customers to upskill. In the medium-term this would enable them to work in higher paid employment and leave them less vulnerable to unemployment in future. Support of this type was seen as vital in helping tackle in-work poverty and low wages.

In several areas, access to mental health support was identified as being in short supply resulting in waiting lists. A lack of support with mental health could contribute to lower outcomes among this group. More generally, customers with mental health conditions discussed how interactions with the employment support system contributed to their anxiety. For example, having to travel long distances to appointments, to meet in unknown places or offices with security guards, or customer perceptions of the tone their Work Coach adopted with them. By contrast, in the Youth Hub strand, where customers met Work Coaches in Hubs, an environment outside the Jobcentre, customers described feeling more relaxed and better able to open and engage in conversations about support needs and relevant work opportunities. For example, some customers commented that they viewed Youth Hubs as friendlier and less intimidating environments compared to the Jobcentre as they were generally less busy and did not have a visible security presence. In these cases, these perceived differences made customers more likely to engage in the support offer.

Participants in the case study research were also asked about local gaps in the employment support system. ESOL provision came up frequently in these discussions across areas, with staff highlighting long wait times and/or the length of time it took customers to progress through these courses as issues they faced in supporting customers who did not speak English into work. These issues were more prevalent in areas that were ethnically diverse (e.g. Blackburn, Manchester, Waltham Forest) or areas that had recently taken in refugees (Middlesbrough, Glasgow).



## 4. Outcomes and individual level barriers to progression

This chapter analyses whether PfJ as a cross-cutting strategy was achieving its goals, drawing on the first wave of survey findings. It covers participant and non-participant outcomes as well as differences in outcomes between participants, non-participants, and early leavers.

All outcomes in this chapter are self-reported. Customers who became employed might well have benefitted from taking part in a strand but could have gained employment due to several other contributing factors. Within this chapter, participants are compared to non-participants where applicable to provide a comparative benchmark on employment outcomes.

### 4.1 Outcomes across strands

This section provides an overview of early outcomes at wave 1, highlighting the differences in job readiness and other outcomes; it outlines what happens to participants without a sustained work outcome and how motivation and wellbeing were associated with these outcomes. It also investigates what differences in experience occur between those on voluntary and mandatory strands.

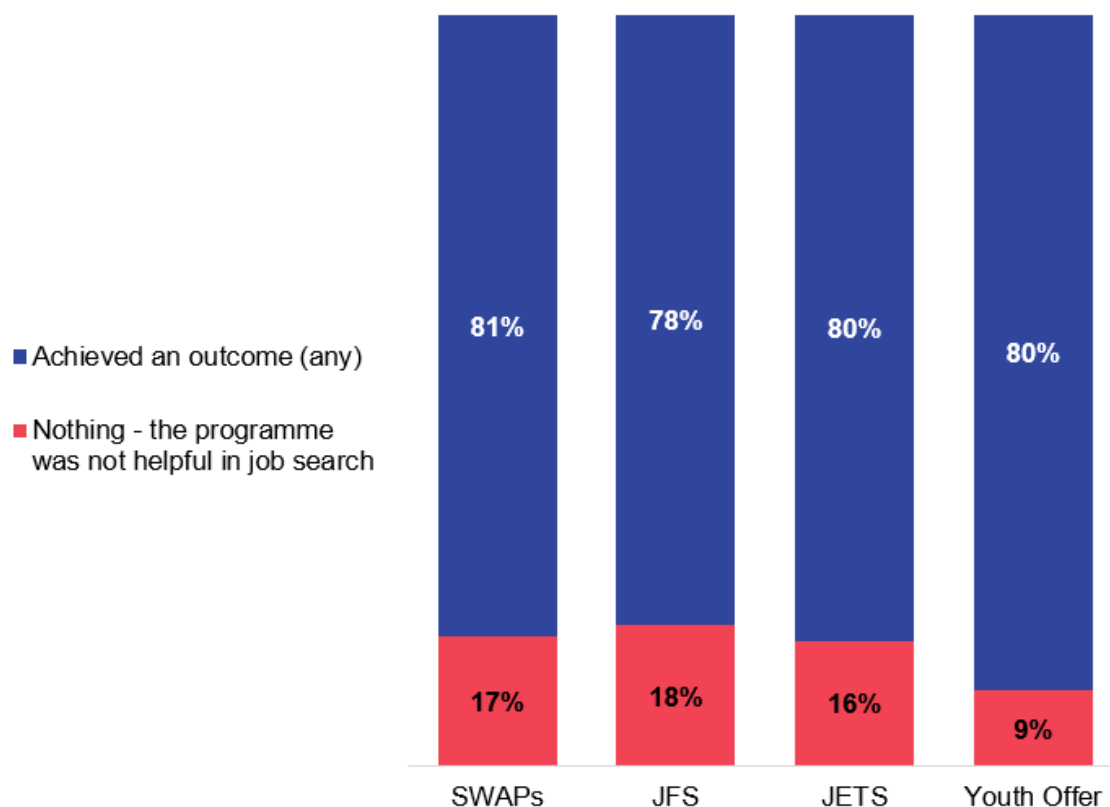
The overview of outcomes includes: employment outcomes, work-related confidence, other positive outcomes, satisfaction with their current job/employment status, to what extent these outcomes can be attributed to participation in one of the PfJ strands, and priorities and aspirations related to job searching over the next 12 months. As well as the wave 1 survey findings, this section draws on data collected as part of the case study research to help explain differences in outcomes between PfJ strands.

#### 4.1.1 Employment outcomes

##### **Overall outcomes attributed to the programme**

As a result of taking part in the programme, around four in five participants from each strand said they had achieved an employment related outcome of any kind (that is, finding a job, attending job interviews or applying for a job) which they attributed to taking part in the programme (figure 6).

**Figure 6: What happened as a result of taking part in the programme?**



*Base: All participants excluding 'prefer not to say', 'not applicable', 'not stated'. SWAPs (790); JFS (697); JETS (817); Youth Offer (168) \*Please note that the data is self-reported and has not been verified, it is also not possible to reliably attribute the outcomes to Plan for Jobs based on the survey data alone*

All strands had a similar proportion of people who achieved any employment outcome (SWAPs 81%, JETS 80%, Youth Offer 80%, JFS 78%)<sup>16</sup>. Those who received additional support outside of their strand, for example from a charity, friends and family or another provider were more likely to report any positive outcome.

Around one in six SWAPs (17%), JETS (16%) or JFS (18%) participants felt their strand was not helpful in their job search. JFS participants with physical and/ or mental health conditions were significantly more likely to report that the programme was not helpful and that they achieved no employment outcomes as a result of taking part (32%). Of all strands, Youth Offer had the lowest proportion of participants who felt the programme was not useful (9%).

**Specific employment outcomes attributed to the strand**

At the point of the wave 1 survey, SWAPs (28%) and Youth Offer (26%) had the largest proportion of customers who reported they had found a job or were starting one (figure 7)<sup>17</sup>. The proportion of JFS (16%) and JETS (14%) participants who had

<sup>16</sup> Kickstart included a job as part of the programme design, so findings on job outcomes have not been included here.

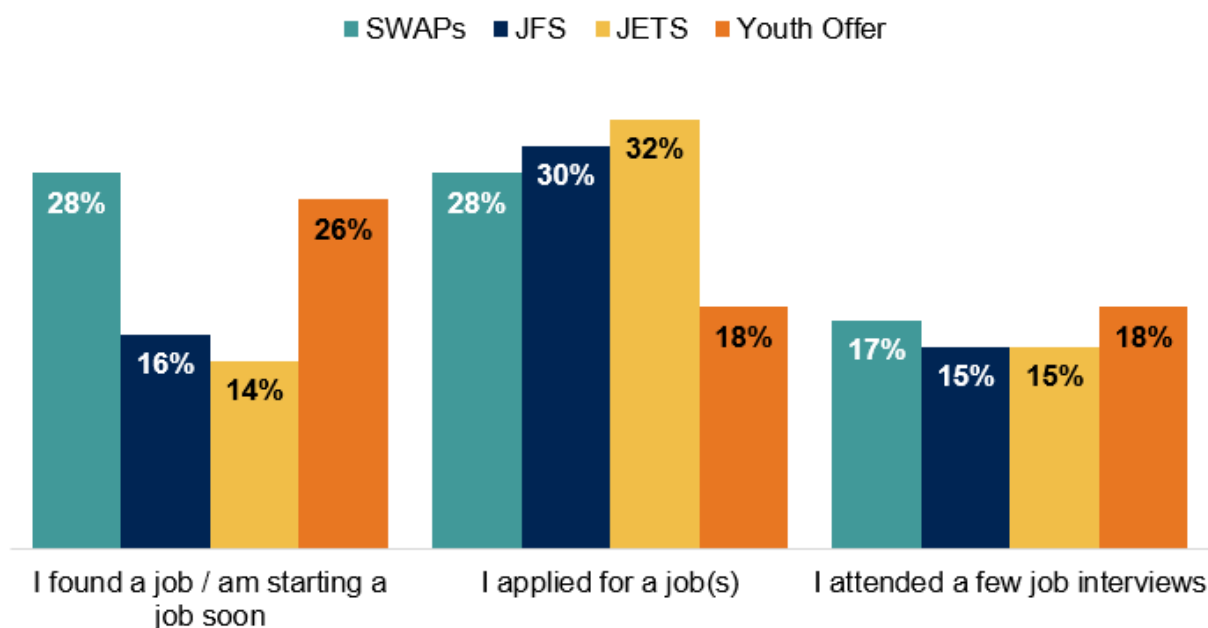
<sup>17</sup> More people may have secured a job and attributed it to something else, as participants were asked whether they attributed that outcome specifically to the programme.

found a job or were starting a job soon and attributed it to their time on the programme was significantly lower.

Around three in ten SWAPs (28%), JFS (30%) or JETS (32%) customers had applied for a job, compared to nearly one in five Youth Offer participants (18%).

A similar proportion from all strands, around one in six, indicated that they had attended job interviews due to taking part in their strand (Youth Offer 18%, SWAPs 17%, JFS 15%, JETS 15%).

**Figure 7: What happened as a result of taking part in the programme?**



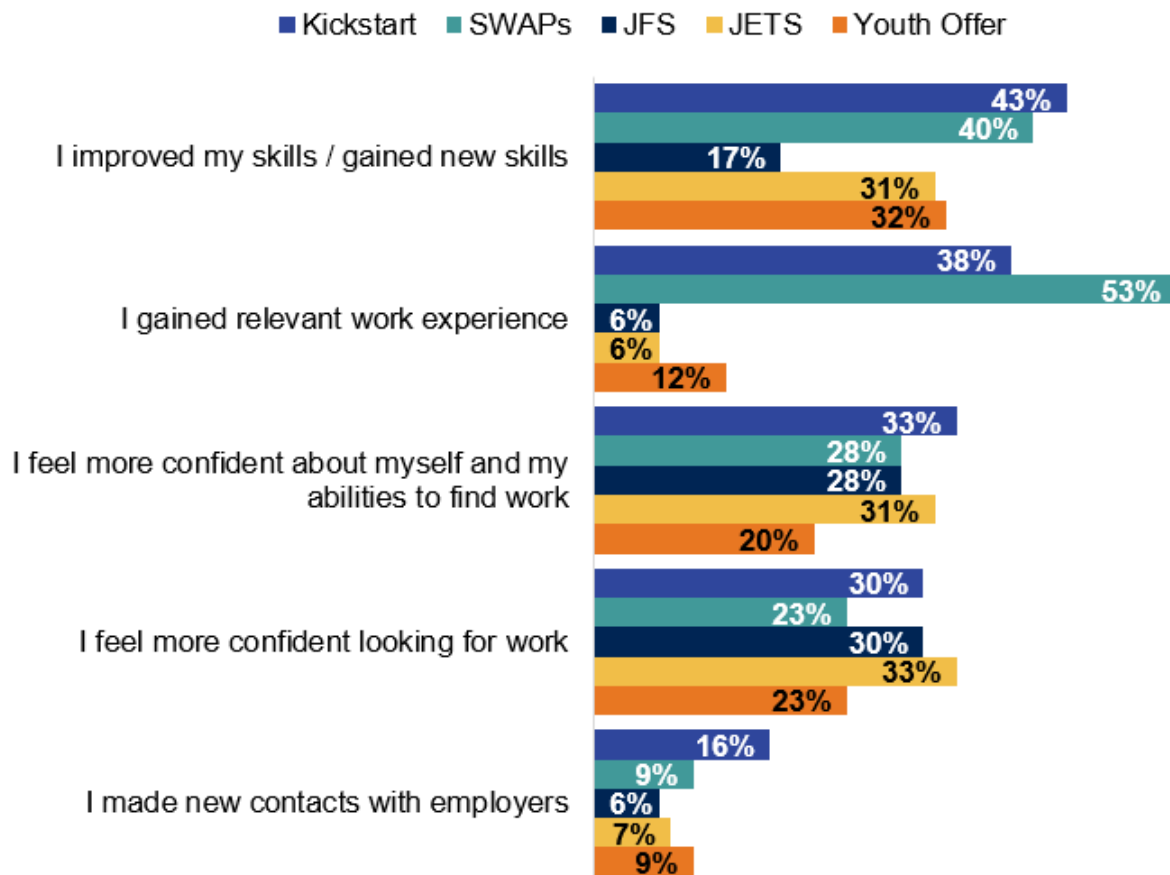
*Base: All participants excluding 'prefer not to say', 'not applicable', 'not stated'. SWAPs (790); JFS (697); JETS (817); Youth Offer (168) \*Please note that the data is self-reported and has not been verified, it is also not possible to reliably attribute the outcomes to Plan for Jobs based on the survey data alone*

In the quantitative survey, participants were also asked about wider employment outcomes. Kickstart and SWAPs participants were most likely to report that they improved or gained new skills (Kickstart 43%, SWAPs 40%) or gained relevant work experience (Kickstart 38%, SWAPs 53%) (figure 8). Around a third of both JETS (31%) and Youth Offer (32%) participants felt they had improved their skills or gained new ones. JFS participants were the least likely to feel taking part in the programme had improved their skills (17%). This reflects the nature of both provisions, with Kickstart and SWAPs explicitly including a job or work placement, whereas other provisions focussed more on moving participants towards work-ready status and applying for a job.

In all strands, surveyed participants who were satisfied with their provision, who thought the strand was useful, or were receiving additional support from DWP or

elsewhere, were all more likely to have taken any employment-related action which they attributed to taking part in the programme.

**Figure 8: What happened as a result of taking part in the programme?**



*Base: Participants excluding 'prefer not to say', 'not applicable', 'not stated' Kickstart (874), SWAPs (790), JFS (697), JETS (817), Youth Offer (68) \*Please note that the data is self-reported, it is also not possible to reliably attribute the outcomes to Plan for Jobs based on the survey data alone)*

The case study research with Kickstart customers showed that skills development took place through a combination of on-the-job learning, short training courses and wider professional development opportunities facilitated by their employer. The skills and work experience participants could now include on their CV improved customers' confidence in their ability to find work as they neared the end of their placement. Confidence gains also resulted from the placement, providing greater clarity about the occupations they wanted to pursue.

For example, one Kickstart customer interviewed spoke of how their placement at a local community centre and conversations with their employer had helped them realise they would like to work as a teaching assistant. The customer was a lone parent, interested in working with children and needed to find work that could fit around her childcare responsibilities. Their employer subsequently supported them to complete several short courses relevant to working with children and child development while in the job. This customer felt the experience had been beneficial

in helping guide them towards the job they wanted to pursue and providing experience and qualifications for their CV, both of which had increased their chances of finding work in this area.

*“In the beginning when I started I was like, ‘I do not know what I want to do’. [...] I don’t know where I want to go. But my boss was so helpful and understanding. She’s helped me realise that I want to go into teaching assistant now so I’m doing courses and getting things about child development. [...] I’ve done about 30 courses which are all to do with kids and children, babies to toddlers up to older kids. Cleaning, hygiene level 2. I did quite a lot that can all go on my CV now. [...] As soon as I started here there was nothing on my CV to put on there except grades from school. Now there’s so much I can put on there just from being in this job for only 4 months. [...] Its about 2 pages long now. It’s been great to be honest. It’s given me so many chances.”*

Kickstart customer

#### **4.1.2 Soft outcomes including work-related confidence**

Around a third of Kickstart (33%), JETS (31%), SWAPs (28%) and JFS (28%) participants reported feeling more confident about themselves and their abilities to find work as a result of the programme (Figure 8).

Similar proportions from Kickstart (30%), JETS (33%) and JFS (30%) said they felt more confident about looking for work. Just under a quarter of SWAPs (23%) and Youth Offer (23%) participants reported increased confidence about looking for work which they attributed to taking part in their respective strands, slightly lower than other strands within the programme. One in five Youth Offer participants (20%) said they felt more confident about themselves and their ability to find work because of taking part, the lowest proportion of customers from any individual strand.

The staff and customer interviews completed for the case study research found that this may be a reflection on the starting points of Youth Offer customers, as opposed to the quality of the provision they could access. Low self-esteem was identified by staff as a prominent issue among this under 25 cohort and could be compounded where they faced additional barriers to employment such as learning differences or mental health issues.

The case studies found that, with JETS, the range and intensity of the support offer meant there were multiple ways in which the programme could help boost participant confidence. Short training courses or sector-specific workshops helped to support the development of work-related skills and develop their understanding of working in different sectors. This could result in a changed outlook for participants. For example, one customer spoke of how their JETS advisor identified a British Sign Language (BSL) course that they could complete, after the customer mentioned this as an area of interest. The customer felt the course would increase the range of job

opportunities they could access, which increased their confidence in their own future capabilities and their ability to find work.

*“Once I've got some form of qualification [in BSL], whatever it is I get at the end of this course I can then think right, I've now got this...What can I do? [...] I could become a support teacher in a deaf school because I can do the BSL. I could end up at the airport being a translator for the deaf at the airport... I'm sure there's plenty of jobs out there for people with BSL experience.”*

JETS customer

Other JETS customers spoke of how knowing their advisor was there to listen to them, learn about their needs and circumstances, offer support and advocate on their behalf had boosted their confidence in their ability to find work. Customers felt that the positive outlook of their advisor about their future work prospects instilled this confidence in them.

The higher proportion of SWAPs customers reporting gains in skill development and relevant work experience compared the other PfJ strands (apart from Kickstart) reflects the typical structure of this programme. However, the proportion of SWAPs customers who reported developing new contacts with potential future employers was low (9%), despite SWAPs offering a guaranteed interview to customers who completed all elements. The case study research suggested several reasons why this might be. First, not all customers who joined the provision completed it. One customer interviewed as part of the case study research that attended this provision stated that they were told they could leave the initial work-related skills training at any time if they felt, after gaining more information, that the sector was not for them. They observed other customers doing this as the training progressed:

*“...As the course went on, you weren't obliged to stay. If you felt the job wasn't for the person they could leave. But I stayed. People drifted off gradually and it came down to about 7 or 8 of us left that started initially. Those of us who were left were taken on by the company.”*

SWAPs customer

Second, customers commented that their subsequent employment, on completing a SWAP, was secured through a recruitment agency (i.e. for domiciliary care or warehousing roles). As a result, it may be that where their employment was managed through an intermediary organisation, customers did not feel they made new contacts with an employer. Finally, a few customers interviewed left their employment shortly after completing the SWAP as they realised the role was not for them. This was either due to the conditions or the hours they were offered, which did not fit with their personal commitments. In these cases, customers may have felt that they did not gain new contacts with an employer if they were not considering returning to this employment.

### 4.1.3 Work satisfaction amongst working participants

Most working participants were satisfied with their working hours, training and career development opportunities available to them and their pay including their benefits. Across all customer groups, reasons for satisfaction related to their experiences of the support received from DWP, employment type, income and their health.

**Participants who were satisfied with their strand (and/or the outcome of their strand) were usually also more likely to be satisfied with a range of different aspects related to their job.** In the wave 1 survey, in-work customers who were working for an employer were generally more satisfied than those who were self-employed. This was particularly true when considering the number of hours worked each week. Low-income customers (those with an annual income less than 60% of UK 2021 median-income, or under £20,000) generally felt less satisfied than higher income customers (above 60% median income level), who were also more satisfied with a wide range of aspects related to their position, not only pay.

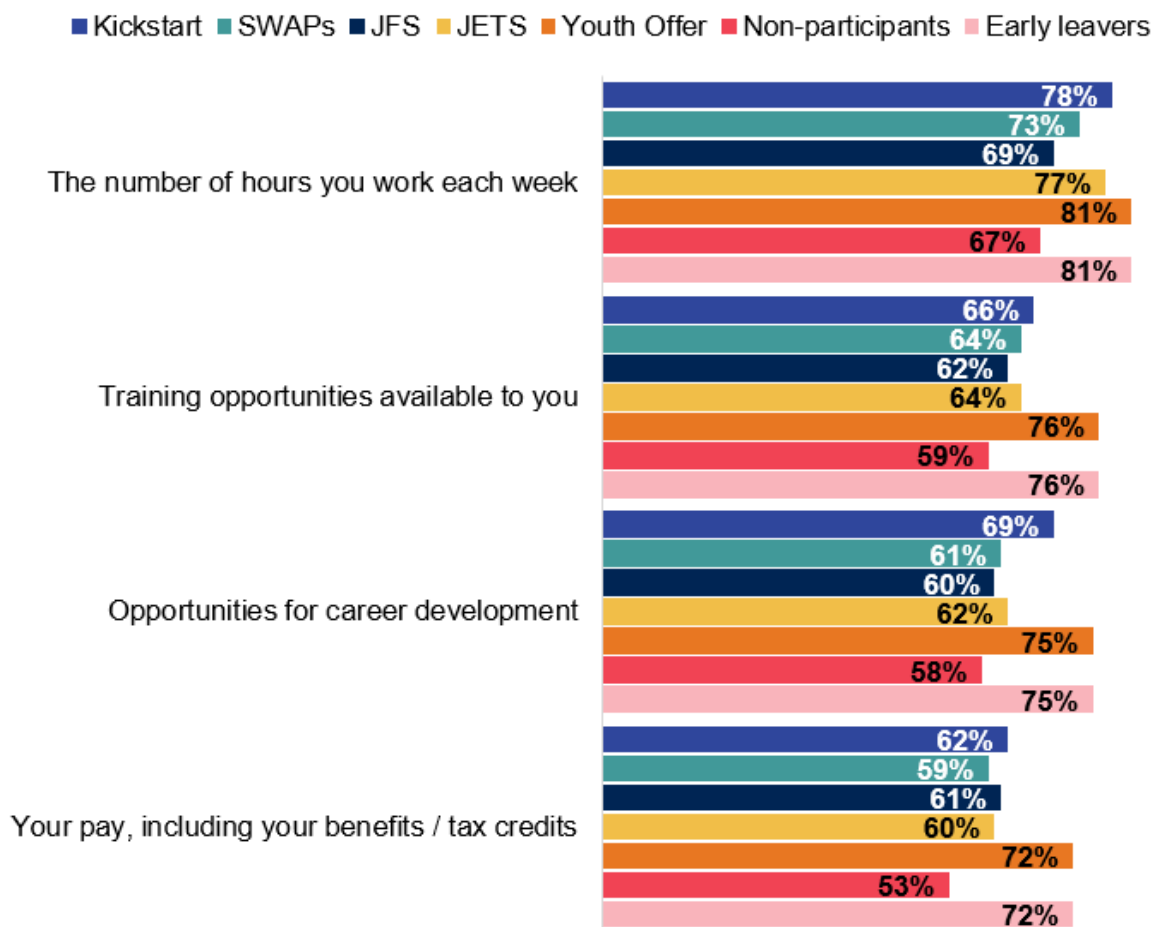
Customers without a physical and/or mental health condition were more likely to be satisfied with their job overall, their work-life balance and their commute.

Overall, **those who took part in the programme were more satisfied with their employment than those who did not.** Youth Offer participants reported feeling most satisfied across all aspects of their employment (figure 9). Over four in five (81%) were satisfied with the number of hours worked each week, over three in four (76%) satisfied with the training opportunities available, a quarter (75%) satisfied with the opportunities for career development provided by their employment and just under three in four (72%) satisfied with their pay. Apart from non-participants, JFS participants were the least satisfied with different aspects of their employment.

**Satisfaction was highest with the number of hours worked each week**, with more than seven in ten reporting satisfaction with this aspect from all strands except JFS (69%). The proportion of JFS participants who were satisfied with their working hours was similar to the proportion of non-participants (67%).

Youth Offer participants (76%) were most likely to be satisfied with the training opportunities. Over six in ten participants from all other strands reported satisfaction with this aspect of their jobs (Kickstart 66%, SWAPs 64%, JETS 64%). Slightly fewer JFS (62%) and non-participants (59%) expressed satisfaction with training.

**Figure 9: Thinking about your job, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with...? All satisfied**



Base: All customers who are employed, excluding 'prefer not to say', 'not applicable', 'not stated' (Kickstart = 628, SWAPs = 356, JFS = 315, JETS = 183, Youth Offer = 146, Non-participants = 1,026, Early leavers = 309)

Employed Kickstart participants (69%) as well as employed Youth Offer participants (75%) were significantly more likely to say they felt satisfied with career development opportunities than participants of other strands (JETS 62%, SWAPs 61%, JFS 60%) or non-participants (58%). As Kickstart and Youth Offer participants are all under 25, this could be related to their age and their perceptions and expectations from their career at this point.

**Satisfaction with pay was higher amongst participants than non-participants (53%).** Satisfaction with pay was highest amongst Youth Offer (72%) participant and relatively similar across the other strands (Kickstart 62%, JFS 61%, JETS 60%, SWAPs 59%).

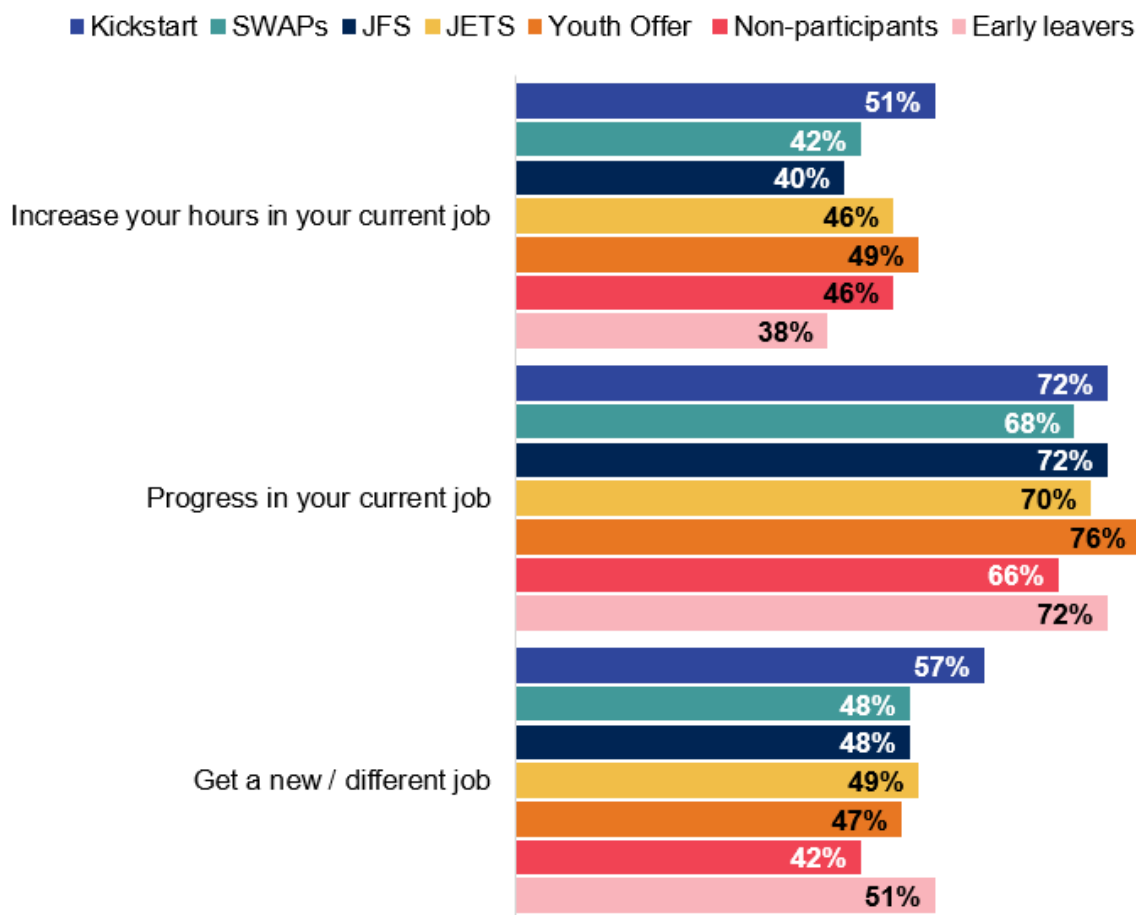
### 4.1.3 Work aspirations amongst working participants

Looking ahead to the next year, around 7 in 10, or more, employed customers from each strand agreed that progressing in their current job was important (Youth Offer 76%, Kickstart 72%, JFS 72%, JETS 70%, SWAPs 68%). Progression was also a



priority for two thirds of non-participants (66%) and over seven in ten early leavers (72%) (figure 10).

**Figure 10: Overall, over the next 12 months how important is it for you to...? % important**



*Base: All respondents who are employed, excluding 'prefer not to say', 'not applicable', 'not stated' (Kickstart = 637 SWAPs = 356, JFS = 317, JETS = 183, Youth Offer = 149, Non-participants = 1,026, Early leavers = 309)*

Between four in ten and five in ten participants from across provisions agreed it was important for them to increase their hours in the current job, highest amongst Kickstart (51%) and Youth Offer (49%) participants. Participants on these strands were also more likely to agree they had career development opportunities with their current employer, and this appetite to increase their hours could be a further reflection of the attitudes of these younger participants<sup>18</sup>. Of those who had taken part in a provision, JFS (40%) or SWAPs (42%) participants were least likely to say it was important to increase their hours.

At least half of participants across provisions said it was important for them to get a new job in the next 12 months. Kickstart participants were the most likely to say that it

<sup>18</sup> Over eight in ten (81%) of Kickstart participants had been in their role for less than six months, suggesting they were in the job they accessed through Kickstart. These roles were subsidised for up to 25 hours per week.

was important for them to find a new or different job over the next 12 months (57%). This is likely to reflect that over eight in ten (81%) were employed in the job they accessed through Kickstart, so would need to either find a new job or secure continued work with their employer to continue working.

#### **4.1.4 Barriers to employment or progression**

When asked about difficulty finding work or progressing in a current job in the survey, most participants from each strand reported at least one difficulty in finding work or progressing in work (Kickstart 60%, SWAPs 73%, JFS 76%, JETS 79%, Youth Offer 72%). Kickstart participants were less likely to identify barriers than their Youth Offer counterparts, despite being the same age, suggests that the Youth Offer cohort at this time may have been further from the labour market. A similar proportion of non-participants (78%) and early leavers (72%) reported at least one barrier. Across all strands, those with both physical and mental health issues, caring responsibilities, over 50, and in long-term unemployment were more likely to have faced at least one barrier.

## **4.2 Outcomes outside Plan for Jobs Strands**

### **4.2.2 Support received outside Plan for Jobs strands**

When asked in the wave 1 survey about the support received outside the PfJ strands, most participants felt satisfied with their Work Coach interactions across several measures. Between around 7 in 10 to 8 in 10 participants of each strand (Kickstart: 79%, Youth Offer: 76%, JETS: 74%, JFS: 74%, SWAPs: 72%) of participants overall agreed that their Work Coach had listened to their needs and provided the support they needed to help them get back to work. A similar proportion of participants to those satisfied with their interactions said that the discussions with the Work Coach were relevant to their career aspirations and that they feel comfortable asking the Work Coach for employment-related support.

Around two-thirds (64%) of customers had received job-seeking support from sources other than DWP or their employment programme over the past year. Support from friends and family (42%) was most common across all customer groups. Other sources of support outside DWP included recruitment agencies (15%), the National Careers Service (10%) or charities or other local community providers (9%). Non-participants were less likely to report receiving support from sources other than DWP (56%) in comparison to participants (64%).

### **4.2.3 Importance of Work Coach relationship in supporting customer engagement and outcomes**

As in the survey data, the case study research showed that the relationship between a customer and their Work Coach strongly influenced customer engagement, experience, appointment productivity, and ultimately the outcomes they achieved.

Interviews with Jobcentre staff and customers across the case studies highlighted the importance and benefits of a positive Work Coach relationship in a customer's progression toward work. Customers highlighted key features of an effective Work Coach relationship which includes being empathetic of their situation, encouragement to apply for roles and personalised discussion of their skills and career aspirations.

### **Positive Work Coach experiences**

Customers reported that where a Work Coach took an empathetic approach, they felt their needs were considered when exploring employment, education, and training opportunities. Empathy was a cornerstone of providing a customer-focused approach, building trust, and providing encouragement and motivation to move towards work. Such an approach allowed for open discussions about individuals' skills and career aspirations, as well as any concerns or work-related barriers. Where customers trusted staff and disclosed information about their circumstances, Jobcentre staff were able to better utilise support relevant to customers.

*“My wife’s pregnant and has health issues, so it’s a bit of a struggle... At one point it was really difficult for me to get to the Jobcentre myself... they did help us quite a bit during that time.”*

JFS participant, 25-49, Wales

In turn, customers' satisfaction increased through personalised support. For instance, some Kickstart customers discussed job-matching interaction with a Work Coach through the Journal, where Work Coaches would highlight Kickstart vacancies matched to their career aspirations. Customers appreciated this type of personalised support: they felt listened to and supported towards work opportunities they most valued, which improved their engagement in the support offer.

### **Negative Work Coach experiences**

Several customers who took part in the case study research felt that Work Coaches did not seek to understand their full circumstances and any additional challenges to work, which negatively affected their engagement in the support. From a customer perspective, these topics were either infrequently raised or missing from appointments, and difficult for them to bring up due to the short length of interactions. In some cases when customers had raised additional challenges, they felt their Work Coach brushed off their concerns and steered the conversation back to a work focus. This was highlighted by groups including parents of young children, who felt their need for work or training opportunities that could fit around care responsibilities was not a primary focus for their Work Coach. Similarly, some individuals taking part in the case study research who were experiencing poor mental health felt that this was overlooked by their Work Coaches and not appropriately addressed during their conversations.

Where customers reported difficult interactions with their Work Coach, they felt they had not been listened to and had a procedurally driven interaction during appointments. The primary reason for reporting dissatisfaction was a feeling that their

aspirations were not being fully respected when considering job and training opportunities. For instance, customers reported having jobs shared with them through the Journal which they felt were unrelated to statements in their original Claimant Commitment. This led to customers feeling they were sent generic messages from Work Coaches in batches, rather than receiving personalised support.

*“I said [to my Work Coach] you keep offering me jobs that I’m not happy in. Unless I’m happy in a job I’m not going to stay there and I’m not going to work.”*

JETS participant, 25-49, Wales

There were also examples of customers being directed toward roles which they felt were unsuitable given their personal circumstances. For example, one customer discussed being pointed towards opportunities in hospitality and retail, despite making their Work Coach aware of an ongoing health investigation into chronic back pain, which they felt made them unsuitable for these roles.

Changes to Work Coaches could also disrupt the customer experience of support. A considerable number of customers mentioned their Work Coach changed without reasons being provided. Sometimes a change could be a positive experience, where the customer could establish a more positive interaction. However, it was more likely for customers to feel that they had to start from scratch getting to know their Work Coach. It took time for them to feel confident and comfortable discussing personal circumstances where this happened.

### **Signposting to other support (outside of PfJ)**

In terms of additional support customers could access through their Work Coach outside of PfJ, some customers felt that the discretionary support Jobcentre staff can provide with housing, transport and childcare costs should be better advertised to raise awareness. Customers were not consistently signposted to, or able to make use of this support. For instance, a single parent discussed initially not being made aware of subsidised childcare available when attending job interviews and training courses. Although it is a discretionary fund, when they found out about the support, they held feelings that their Work Coach had kept this from them. This reduced the trust the customer placed in their Work Coach, as withholding this information had increased the customer’s financial hardship.

## **4.3 Customers with specific needs or barriers**

This section discusses the differences in the outcomes and experiences for customers with specific needs or barriers, including those with disabilities, physical and/or mental health conditions, different age groups, those with caring responsibilities and those whose first language is not English.

### 4.3.1 Customers with physical disabilities and health conditions

**Physical and/or mental health conditions were the most commonly cited barrier to work or progressing in work**, experienced by around a fifth of Kickstart and SWAPs participants (21%), a quarter of JFS participants (26%), 27% of JETS participants and 4 in 10 (40%) of Youth Offer participants. Non-participants (40%) were also most likely to report physical and/or mental health conditions, alongside almost a third of early leavers (32%).

Customers across all case study areas with health conditions and disabilities experienced specific challenges in finding work. Customers with health conditions and disabilities required more support when moving into and toward employment than some other groups. An initial step to overcome these challenges was developing and strengthening the customer's confidence in their skills and employability. However, these essential stages of building confidence in the type of work that could be possible, and was suitable, could extend the length of time needed to secure successful work outcomes.

Adding further to the extended time needed to support people with health conditions and disabilities into work was the need to discuss Access to Work and workplace adjustments with employers. Generally, EAs and DEAs in several areas reported there were few Disability Confident employers, largely due to a lack of awareness of the accreditation. Awareness of the Access to Work scheme was reported to be similarly limited. Additional time was needed to relay information on these schemes to employers who would require time to put accessibility measures in place. In some areas, EAs and DEAs held employer events specifically promoting the benefits of Disability Confident accreditation and Access to Work funding to better promote these schemes.

Staff and stakeholders felt that the early-intervention strands - SWAPs, Kickstart and JFS - did not always sufficiently support customers with disabilities and health conditions toward outcomes as their design did not account for the additional support these customers might need to break down barriers and negotiate with employers. There was evidence of Jobcentre staff taking actions to try and open up work and training opportunities to these customers through Access to Work and the negotiation of reasonable adjustments. However, in the case of Kickstart, staff in one area reflected that employer expectations that vacancies would be filled quickly, alongside a high number of customers ready to access these vacancies without any additional support, meant that customers with health conditions and disabilities were not always prioritised for inclusion in this programme.

*“With health conditions, disabilities, we didn't go down the Disability Confident route with employers [for Kickstart]. We were too busy getting any employer in the beginning because we were desperate for so many vacancies. All we wanted was fill, fill, fill. Now we're coming out of Kickstart and the pandemic, then we'll be concentrating more on disability confident as well. Only because every employer you*

*engage with you should be having that conversation about people with any sort of complex needs”*

Jobcentre staff

### **4.3.2 Customers experiencing poor mental health**

Staff and stakeholders across all case study areas reported an increase in the number of customers reporting poor mental health since the onset of the pandemic. Whilst staff across most areas felt there was a good range of mental health support, there were often long waiting lists. Staff felt that identifying and addressing poor mental health was an important step in getting customers to a place where they felt able to secure and sustain employment, or enter into an education or training opportunity.

**Jobcentre staff would welcome increased training around how to support customers with poor mental health to remain engaged with the Jobcentre and the referral options available to help customers work more successfully towards employment outcomes.** Jobcentre staff in one area felt that customers experiencing poor mental health were not suited for the IWS regime and in many cases required an individualised mental health support plan before beginning more formalised support to consider employment or training. Both staff and customers felt that discussing the future with individuals experiencing poor mental health was often daunting, and commonly led to decreased engagement and less productive conversations.

Interviews also highlighted that employers could feel unsure about how to manage mental health in the workplace. Staff and stakeholders felt that employers could benefit from a better understanding of mental health in the workplace and how to support employees experiencing poor mental health. This, staff felt, would increase willingness to provide employment opportunities to this customer group.

### **4.3.3 Groups facing age-related employment barriers**

Both 18–24-year-olds, and customers aged 50+ were commonly highlighted as more challenging groups to secure outcomes for within the case studies. Young people often had financial barriers, specifically affording public transport to or from a job. They highlighted that the upfront costs they incurred from travel often presented financial challenges to accessing these opportunities while they were claiming UC. This was particularly noted in the latter four of the case studies, conducted as the cost of living began to rapidly increase.

Young people in Intensive Work Search were also reported to have lower confidence in everyday skills, including social interaction, and their self-perceptions of how employable they are. Staff and stakeholders discussed that young people required additional support to feel ready to engage in education and employment opportunities. Staff felt that these lower confidence levels were the result of the reduced social contact and lack of access to employment and in-person training opportunities that young people experienced throughout the pandemic.

Several customers aged 50+ reported feeling that their experience was often disregarded by employers and that employers would prefer to hire younger candidates who could provide a longer length of service over someone with relevant experience who would leave in a shorter timeframe to retire. This was explained by one customer who had undertaken numerous SWAPs but was continually unsuccessful at interview. They explained whilst not explicit, they felt they suffered age discrimination.

Additionally, as employers increasingly move their application processes online, customers with lower levels of digital skill and accessibility, which tended to be customers within the 50+ age group, felt less confident applying for opportunities, reducing outcomes. This suggests that digital skills training is an essential foundation for job searching and that those aged 50+ are more likely to require, and benefit, from this.

#### **4.3.4 Parents and carers**

Caring responsibilities were most likely to be reported by JETS participants (20%) compared to 14% of SWAPs participants, 12% of JFS participants and 7% and 4% of Youth Offer and Kickstart participants respectively.

Across the case study research, childcare was commonly identified as a barrier for parents and carers, specifically the cost of childcare and lack of flexible employment opportunities.

The cost of childcare was discussed to be out of reach for customers moving into work, presenting a fundamental barrier for parents and carers of school-age children. Whilst the Flexible Support Fund (FSF) was able to be used, this and the UC childcare offer operated on a refund basis meaning customers had to make initial payments which was often not possible. This was increasingly noted amongst younger customers who cared for young children. In addition, the cost of transport to and from childcare incurred alongside the cost of travel to and from employment or training was often too high for customers.

Staff and stakeholders in several case study areas highlighted a lack of inclusive and flexible employment available, preventing individuals with caring responsibilities from securing work outcomes. Shift work was usually unaligned with school and nursery hours, which acted as a structural barrier to work for single parents. This led to an increased reliance on family networks for support with childcare. Where this informal family support was not available, customers faced persistent barriers to work until their child was old enough to qualify for free childcare.

#### **4.3.5 ESOL customers**

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) customers (SWAPs: 26%, JFS: 24%, JETS: 22%, Youth Offer: 17%; Kickstart: 11%) discussed experiencing additional challenges in securing work outcomes. Often, customers had to join a waiting list before they could start an ESOL course. Once they joined a course, it took time for them to become suitably proficient in English to be able to enter work.

For customers who had a language barrier, Jobcentre and provider staff felt that they were not able to provide adequate support to customers until they had increased English proficiency. In one area, staff discussed exploring retail and hospitality work with customers to increase social interaction and promote speaking English in a work setting. One customer, highly skilled in office administration and accountancy, discussed being asked to explore work in hospitality to aid their uptake of English. In this case, the customer was not appreciative of this suggestion and did not pursue it, as working in hospitality was not aligned with their career aspirations or existing experience.

Staff in earlier case studies mentioned the specific challenges customers faced with ESOL provision being delivered online during periods of social distancing due to COVID-19. Language barriers (and challenges in using translation services while working remotely) led to difficulty engaging customers in the provision and providing them with full information about what it would involve. It was also difficult to support customers to engage with the content of online ESOL courses when they enrolled due to the challenges in providing tailored 1-2-1 support through online learning.

Specific barriers were highlighted when discussing referrals to Restart in one area with high levels of ESOL customers. In this case, there appeared to be confusion surrounding the suitability of ESOL customers for Restart during the initial stages of its rollout. Jobcentre staff were initially informed that the local Restart provider was able to source ESOL provision for customers. However, after staff made referrals, customers were subsequently sent back to the Jobcentre by this provider who felt that these customers were unsuitable for the programme due to the extent of their language barriers. This further delayed these customers receiving formalised employment support.



# 5. Challenges to achieving customer outcomes

This chapter discusses the challenges in supporting customers towards and into work as drawn from the case studies and wave 1 survey evidence.

## 5.1 Complexity of customer needs

The case studies found that customers' support needs were in general greater than Jobcentre and contracted provider staff expected. All areas reported an increase in complex barriers and support needs whilst provision had reached capacity, which led to waiting lists.

Some staff felt that PfJ provision was not designed to support customers with complex barriers to employment. Specifically, Kickstart, JFS and JETS were designed for relatively work ready customers. However, due to the relatively low rate of unemployment, customers referred to PfJ strands had more complex needs than originally anticipated.

*“The kind of clientele that we see come through have more barriers and sometimes more complex needs than was outlined... we’ve had a lot of clientele who aren’t as ready to participate in the schemes who we originally expected.”*

Subcontracted provider manager

### 5.1.1 Mental health support

Most Work Coaches interviewed noted an increase in the prevalence of poor mental health within their customer caseload, in part due to the pandemic. This was also reported by Jobcentre managers who noted an increase in the number of referrals to mental health services. The increase in poor mental health was particularly noted amongst young people. In most case study areas, despite Jobcentre and provider staff reporting good working partnerships with mental health services, the availability of support did not meet demand, resulting in waiting lists. The extended waiting times for people seeking support with their mental health impacted the speed at which a customer could progress towards employment, as receiving health support was felt to be a precursor to being able to engage with employment support.

*“The waiting list is very long [for mental health support]... sometimes [customers] can wait 6, 8, 10 months for an actual appointment and that’s not good.”*

Jobcentre operational staff

Some staff suggested there was a need for additional guidance and training on how best to support customers experiencing poor mental health. Staff reported that they worked beyond their role requirements, at times providing unqualified counselling to customers while they waited for mental health service appointments.

### 5.1.2 ESOL requirements

Staff reported reduced confidence within their ESOL customer population, due to extended periods of social isolation during lockdowns. To support these customers, Work Coaches and provider staff discussed using translation services during appointments and referrals to ESOL support.

Jobcentre staff highlighted that relying on translation services to understand a customer's skills, competencies, experience, and desired outcomes presented challenges, as securing, and using translation services took time. In addition, staff at subcontracted providers in one area discussed the unreliability of translation services. On occasion, translation services missed appointments, or were not able to join a call between the advisor and the customer. Contracted advisors felt this negatively impacted the relationship between themselves and their customers.

*"We do have a translation service, but that's not always been the best. When we try and use that, the translator doesn't connect. So it's just me and the client on the phone. I don't know what to say because they don't understand me."*

Subcontracted provider staff

Referrals to ESOL courses tended to be run by local colleges. In most areas where there was a high demand for ESOL courses, customers experienced extended waiting times for support. In some earlier case studies, this was further affected by reduced class capacities implemented by colleges to reduce COVID-19 transmission. In one area, ESOL courses at a college were only available during term-time, preventing customers from furthering their skills outside of these times.

### 5.1.3 Other needs

JETS and JFS advisors who were providing support online experienced additional challenges when working with customers with low levels of digital access or literacy. Provider staff highlighted that groups of customers, particularly those aged 50+, did not have access to appropriate digital equipment to access provision. Whilst staff could overcome this barrier by supplying customers with laptops and smartphones, some customers required digital skills courses to increase their digital literacy. This, staff felt, took a large amount of the customers' time on the provision to address, affecting progress and outcomes.

In addition to these barriers, staff across case study areas felt that there was a shortage of support for customers with special educational needs and disabilities, customers experiencing both drug and alcohol abuse, those with criminal records, and more generally customers experiencing multiple barriers to employment.

*"For some the thought of work is so daunting for them. It's such a change in their lives. That's for anyone with complex issues: health conditions, carers, just come*

*out of prison, anybody with multiple barriers, drug, and alcohol addiction... they're our really hard to help people."*

Jobcentre manager

## 5.2 Time and resources to meet customer need

This section discusses staff and stakeholders perceived capacity to meet customer needs.

### 5.2.1 Lack of time during Work Coach appointments

Work Coaches felt that the customer appointment time of 10 – 15 minutes was not enough to understand some customers' personal circumstances and the complexity of the barriers they faced. This acted as a barrier to effective signposting or referrals. In one area with a prevalence of intergenerational unemployment, staff suggested that 10-minute appointments delayed customer access to support:

*"It's difficult [to know where to refer someone] because each work search review appointment is time bound... they're 10-minute interviews... It can take 3-4 appointments before you start accessing provision."*

Jobcentre manager

### 5.2.2 Presence of systemic barriers that cannot be readily solved by staff

Customer barriers to work included some that were not readily solved by Jobcentre staff, specifically transport, housing and the rising cost of living.

**In almost all areas, including cities, transport was noted as a prominent local challenge to securing customer work outcomes.** In rural areas, poor and unreliable transport connections between neighbouring towns and areas with higher employment opportunities were regularly reported to be lacking. This was felt to prevent customers from moving into employment.

*"The biggest problem we've had in Cornwall, and have had forever... is actually transport issues... You can do all these other bits of provision, you can get people right to where you want them but ultimately it's something as simple as where they live and not being able to get to that employer."*

Jobcentre operational staff

In urban cases, public transport was felt to be concentrated in city centres, with fewer links to surrounding areas. Staff and customers felt that the lack of transport links to neighbouring areas prevented customers from securing employment in industrial areas.

Across all cases it was highlighted that public transport timetables often did not align with shift start and end times. This had the result of excluding people who relied on public transport from these employment opportunities.

**The availability and cost of secure and accessible housing was a common barrier to employment reported by customers.** In Cornwall, for example, housing in tourist hotspot areas, where a large quantity of employment opportunities were located, was highlighted as unaffordable for customers. Customers were therefore required to consider expensive and long travel times to work, using public transport networks commonly perceived as unreliable.

In some cases, respondents reported the experience of young people in insecure housing. These young people were experiencing long waiting lists for social housing, and whilst sofa-surfing, living in hostels or homeless, had little access to internet connection and were increasingly likely to experience poor mental health. Partner staff<sup>19</sup> working with customers expressed the challenges this presented customers in their journey towards employment.

*“Housing is one of the key determining factors around people’s employability and confidence around moving into work, and can often be a barrier which prevents that.”*

Local authority staff and DWP partner

**The challenges highlighted above were discussed to have been supported in some cases through the FSF.** There is no exhaustive list of what the FSF can and cannot be awarded for, however customers were able to get help through the fund for help with travel expenses, training courses and clothing for interviews. Some customers and Work Coaches felt that the implementation of the FSF on a refund basis meant opportunities remained out of reach for customers who were not able to pay for childcare, transport, clothing, and other purchases and wait for a refund to be processed. This limited their employment chances.

*“The customer has to pay and get the money refunded... we don’t work on an invoice system which is unfair... that is a barrier for people.”*

Jobcentre operational staff

In addition to this presenting a barrier at the time of payment, customers reported that FSF reimbursements took a long time to be paid, presenting additional barriers.

Once a customer was supported by contracted provision, there could be confusion about claiming expenses back. There were examples during the initial rollout of PfJ strands of customers who were passed back and forth between the Jobcentre and contracted provider, who both said the other party was responsible for customer expenses. Some staff felt this was part of a larger issue around Jobcentre and contracted provider staff not fully understanding the remit of one another’s support.

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<sup>19</sup> This includes provider staff delivering contracted and non-contracted provision with local jobcentres, local authorities, careers services, training providers, and health services

*“[Restart] would be sending them back to us saying ‘get your travel expenses from the Jobcentre’ and we’d say ‘no, you get your travel expenses from Restart’.”*

Jobcentre operational staff

## 5.3 Partnerships: employment, skills, careers and beyond

The introduction of PfJ presented new opportunities for staff and stakeholders to interact and altered some existing interactions. In some areas, training providers noted a downturn in uptake of skills-based routes to work among young people (such as traineeships and apprenticeships) throughout the duration of Kickstart. Staff across organisations felt that communication about customer progress and outcomes could be shared more strategically, to provide one another with a better insight into the services that each organisation offers and customer journeys. Staff felt this would allow them to make more informed referrals and secure better outcomes for customers.

### **Changing strategic partnerships**

Across case study areas Jobcentre and provider staff hailed the success of Kickstart in providing customers with work experience. However, training providers noted a fall in the number of customers starting apprenticeships and traineeships. This was largely believed to be because employers were swayed towards Kickstart by its financial incentive. Additionally, Jobcentre staff in later case studies noted that young people generally did not want to return to the Jobcentre after their Kickstart job. In cases where an employer was not able to provide a permanent position customers felt they were taking a step backwards, which knocked their confidence. Some staff at training providers expressed worry that young people had not been offered the long-term benefits of apprenticeship and traineeship routes through their combined on-the-job training and qualifications.

### **Sharing customer progress and outcomes**

Work Coaches across most case study areas reported that the strength of a partnership and the number of successful outcomes were determinants of their willingness to refer customers to a provision or service. Some Work Coaches felt there were insufficient updates provided by contracted providers about customer outcomes, causing Work Coaches to not fully understand the success of contracted provision. Work Coaches felt that a more structured process of sharing this information would mean they were better informed about the success of provisions and more able to sell it to customers. This would have helped increase customer engagement and give Work Coaches better insight into the routes into work that customers take.

### **Supporting customers to consider in-demand vacancies and job roles**

Staff and stakeholders across case study areas described changing local employment landscapes, with opportunities available to customers being affected

and changing because of the pandemic. To address this with customers, staff discussed providing support to identify transferrable skills from sectors affected by COVID-19, such as travel and tourism and hospitality, to in-demand sectors. As mentioned earlier, many Work Coaches felt they did not have enough time to discuss transferrable skills with their customers and explain in detail the reasons some opportunities are no longer available.

### **5.3.1 Engaging employers to fill vacancies inclusively**

DWP staff, particularly those in the EA role, discussed working with employers to help more inclusive recruitment practices. To this end, EA teams would discuss recruitment practices, such as flexible working arrangements for parents, however employers reported that they were not always able to offer these.

#### **Managing employer expectations of customers**

EAs and DEAs liaised with employers to promote Access to Work and Disability Confident accreditation to increase their awareness and understanding of additional barriers that are common within the case loads of Work Coaches and DEAs. DEAs noted that employers, particularly those based in smaller, local organisations, had a low awareness of Access to Work and Disability Confident accreditation. Upon learning about these schemes, it was reported that employers were more reactive to customer needs and able to recruit customers with additional barriers more readily.

*“Off the back of [our communication, employers have] learnt about Access to Work... that’s something that needs to be more out there... I have found [employers] quite acceptive, I just don’t think there was enough [support] at the beginning.”*

Jobcentre operational staff

#### **Employer recruitment practices**

In earlier case studies, staff and stakeholders indicated that there were fewer opportunities available for customers who required flexible working and that employers were less open to recruiting this type of customer. Across most areas, customers with childcare responsibilities were noted as a challenging group to move into work due to challenges securing childcare. Some employers spoke of their attempts to increase the number of flexible positions they offered in response to the needs of customers. However, they also had to balance this with the business need and were unable to offer all staff flexible opportunities.

*“If they have families [and] are looking for the 9-5 or 9-3 role Monday to Friday. They can’t do weekends. They can’t do school holidays so that does prove difficult. Where possible, we’ll always facilitate that, but there’s only so many people of that level you’re able to take on.”*

Employer

Staff across case study areas also highlighted perceived employer discrimination within recruitment practices. It was continually noted that older people faced

additional challenges when moving into work. Staff, stakeholders, and customers felt that employers preferred hiring younger workers who would be able to dedicate a longer portion of time to their organisation and were less likely to present difficulties with their physical health.

*“Older customers... even if they’ve been qualified and worked in the same industry all their lives, will struggle to find work because employer discrimination... employers would rather hire someone who they can train and hopefully keep for the next 10 years as opposed to somebody who they’ll train up and will retire in 2 years.”*

Jobcentre operational staff

### 5.3.2 Future support

The survey asked respondents about the types of support they needed in the future. Help with the cost of travel to work was the most consistently requested form of support (24% for JETS, 21% for Kickstart, SWAP, Youth Offer, non-participants and early leavers, and 20% for JFS).

SWAPs, JFS and JETS participants were most likely to request support and training. Work-related skills (for example, further education, spoken or written English, IT-skills and job-specific skills) was the most consistently requested (27%, 24% and 25% respectively compared to 21% overall). This was significantly less important to Kickstart participants (15%). Nearly 1 in 3 Youth Offer participants and non-participants requested support to manage a health condition (27% and 28% respectively). This was less important to Kickstart, SWAPs and JETS participants (16%), JFS participants (18%) and non-participants (19%).

## 5.4 Enablers to customer outcomes

This section discusses different enablers to successful customer outcomes.

### 5.4.1 Customer attitudes and skills

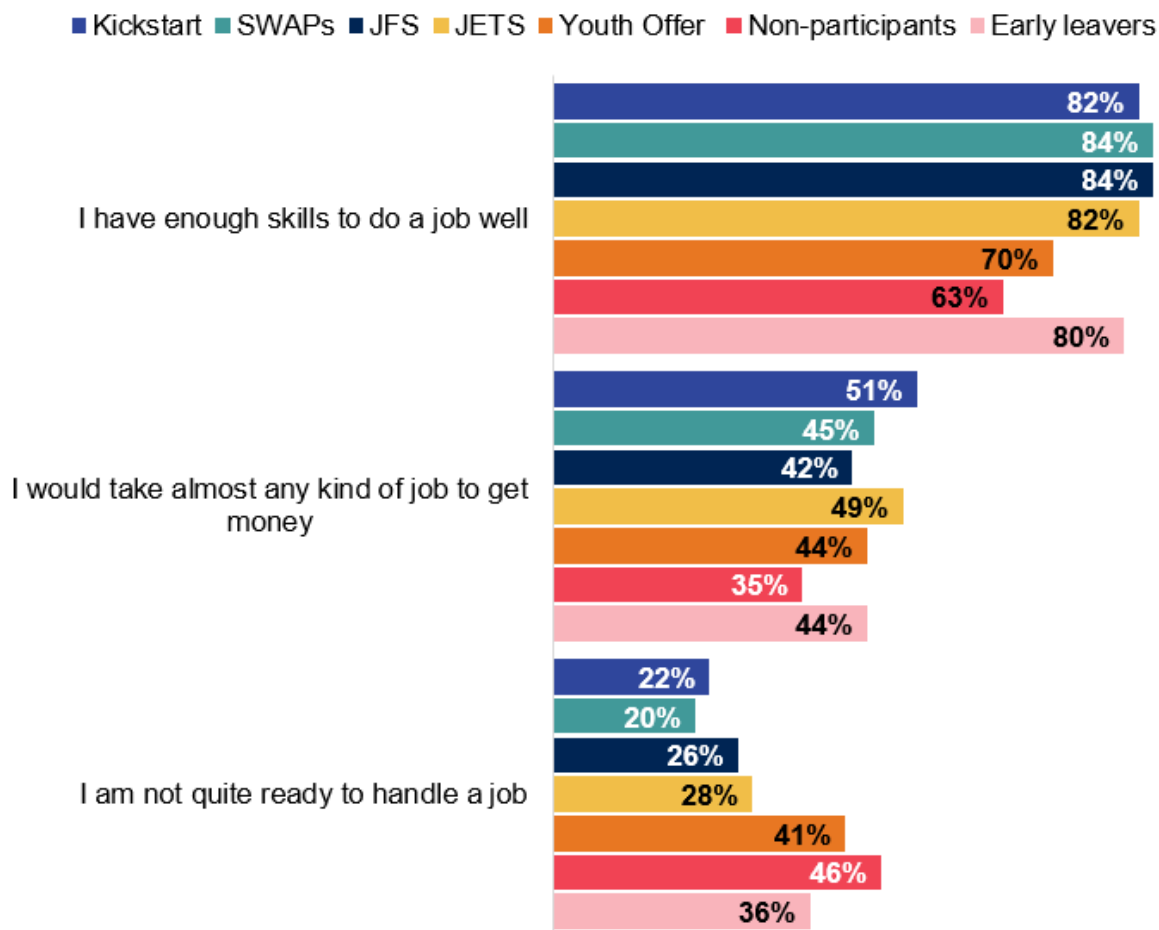
#### Attitudes to work

Most respondents surveyed did not see themselves as having skills barriers. When asked about taking a job, at least seven in ten unemployed participants across all strands agreed that they have enough skills to do a job well (Figure 11). Similar proportions of participants on Kickstart (82%), SWAPs (84%), JFS (84%) and JETS (82%) agreed. Of the participants, Youth Offer participants (70%) were least likely to agree. Eight in ten (80%) of early leavers also agreed. Non-participants were least likely to agree (63%).

Participants were more likely to demonstrate motivation to work than non-participants. Across the strands, at least four in ten participants said they would take almost any type of job to get money. This was highest amongst Kickstart (51%) and lowest amongst JFS (42%). A similar proportion of early leavers (44%) agreed with this statement. Non-participants were least likely to agree (35%).

Respondents perceiving themselves as not work ready was most common amongst non-participants and Youth Offer participants (46% of non-participants and 41% of Youth Offer participants compared to Kickstart 22%, SWAPs 20%, JFS 26%, JETS 28% and early leavers 36%). This was particularly true for those not looking for work due to mental and physical health condition.

**Figure 11: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Percentage agree**



Base: Unemployed excluding 'prefer not to say', 'not applicable' and 'not stated' (Early leavers = 350; Non-participants = 1,761; Kickstart = 204, SWAPs = 399, JFS = 470, JETS = 585, Youth Offer = 285)

**Job-seeking skills**

Respondents felt most confident about searching for jobs online compared to other job searching activities. Participants from SWAPs, JFS, Kickstart and JETS expressed similar levels of confidence (SWAPs 79%, JFS 78%, Kickstart 77% and JETS 77%) as did early leavers (74%). Youth Offer participants (63%) and non-participants were least likely to feel confident about this.

Aside from searching and applying for jobs online, survey respondents also expressed relatively high levels of confidence in making a list of their skills and completing a good application. Confidence was significantly lower for contacting and persuading potential employers to consider them for a job (SWAPs 48%, JFS 52%, Kickstart 48%, JETS 55%, Youth Offer 38%, non-participants 38% and early leavers 45%).



Overall, early leavers were more likely to feel confident across all job search related activities than non-participants. This reflects that most participants left their programme early because they found a job themselves and were therefore closer to the labour market than non-participants.

### **5.4.2 Accessing support and positive working relationships between customers, work coaches and employers**

Evidence from the case studies highlighted some aspects of the employment support system that enabled or acted as a challenge to the successful achievement of customer outcomes. The degree to which these aspects were present varied between areas.

Customers felt enabled to access support when:

- they could access a range of support
- there was evidence of effective partnership working between Jobcentre staff, contracted providers and local support organisations.

Positive working relationships with customers were developed when there was time to understand a customer's:

- barriers
- needs
- aspirations

Strong employer relations were developed when:

- bespoke support was provided and the customer could engage directly and effectively with employers
- when this support was tailored towards the employer's needs as an organisation
- informal introductions between employers and customers existed, helping to break down barriers to recruitment.

### **5.4.3 Partnership working**

DWP staff and partners emphasised that employment support needed thoughtful and careful local partnership working to ensure it added value, duplication was minimised, and gaps filled. Through the development of partnerships, DWP staff and partners across case study areas felt they were able to access support and provision to meet a range of customer needs. The Employer and Partnership Manager primarily developed and maintained these relationships. Additionally, co-location of services allowed stakeholders insights into one another's support offers, permitting more informed and informal referrals.

### **Multi-agency working**

Multi-agency working was organised in different ways across the case study areas. These included the co-location of services in a physical location, such as Jobcentre offices, or Youth Hubs. In case study areas where a DWP Youth Hub was present, Jobcentre staff and wider partners highlighted the benefits of the range of services being available within one location. This was the case particularly for customers with additional barriers to employment. This allowed customers to access a range of services in one visit, reduced the time needed to register with different services and decreased travel times and costs. Often in the case of Youth Hubs, the setting was already known to young people. For example, in Blackburn the Youth Hub was in the Youth Zone, a popular setting for young people. This was seen as a comfortable, accessible environment to customers. The Blackburn Youth Hub was highly regarded by all staff and stakeholders interviewed in the case study and hailed as a national flagship for Youth Hub support.

*“Most young people have been to the Youth Zone at some stage in their young life whether it be with school or just with their friends. So it’s a place when they’re asked to come and meet a job coach here it’s a place that’s familiar. It’s non-threatening. It’s supportive and we find our attendance rates are reflected there”.*

Wider Partner

Co-locating employment support providers was well received by both Jobcentre staff and wider partners. Both felt that co-locating provided a better understanding of the support offer available through each provider.

Partnership working enabled PfJ strands to complement existing provision locally and enhance the national offer. For example, in the Welsh case study areas customers on devolved provision, such as Communities for Work and Inspire to Work, could transfer directly into Kickstart jobs. Continuing communication between Local Authorities and local Jobcentres allowed for seamless transitions from existing locally or ESF funded employability support programmes to Kickstart jobs for young people. In another area, a partnership between the Jobcentre and the Local Authority enabled Work Coaches to access short training courses for Kickstart customers to allow them to prepare for the job in advance. During these courses, mentors also provided employability and job searching skills. Staff felt that this enhanced provision, enabled through joint working was greatly beneficial in positioning young people effectively for Kickstart jobs.

Partnerships could facilitate the sharing of job vacancies as well. In one area, partnerships between neighbouring Jobcentre offices and Local Authorities enabled event steward positions to be shared across boroughs, resulting in successful work outcomes for customers.

### **Co-ordination through a Partnership Manager**

Networking between employment support providers tended to be led by and organised through a Partnership Manager. This was a crucial role in joint-working locally and successful implementation depended on the individual in post. In one case for example, the Partnership Manager was described as approachable,

engaging, and a vital resource within the area. This contrasted with experiences presented by partners working in another area. In this area, joint working was not as strong suggesting that the Partnership Manager is important in the process of multi-agency working to meet customer needs.

*“We always work well with our Partnership Manager. She’s great and she’ll come to us, and we’ll tap her up for advice if we want... We work together really closely. We’d be lost without her.”*

Wider partner

### **Working together to overcome systemic barriers**

Transport was a common barrier to employment across all case study areas, and particularly those in more rural locations. Whilst the FSF was important in offsetting the cost of transport, links to out-of-town employment opportunities were not always available. In an area in Wales, the Welsh Government, DWP and a local transport provider identified the lack of transport availability and began a three-year transport pilot connecting several locations to a manufacturing site which offered warehousing, factory and plant and processing roles. At the time of interview this pilot was coming to an end but was deemed a success by stakeholders involved.

*“It’s been very successful. We’re at a point now where we’re reviewing the pilot to see where we go next... It’s enabled at least 40 of our customers to get into work which otherwise wouldn’t have been an option for them.”<sup>20</sup>*

Jobcentre manager

A similar partnership approach to the systemic barrier of transport was taken in Middlesbrough. The expansion of the Teesport green industrial area provided new work opportunities, however public transport to the area was limited. To address this, the TVCA, DWP and Stagecoach collaborated to organise an additional bus route to the Teesport area, connecting customers to a range of job opportunities.

## **5.4.4 A customer-centred approach**

Tailoring support to individual customers was another factor in ensuring successful outcomes. Staff and stakeholders emphasised the importance of customers receiving support for the barriers they were experiencing to work.

### **Tailoring support to meet customer needs and goals**

Work Coaches and provider staff commonly highlighted the importance of getting to know a customer’s background, situation, and long-term goals. By understanding this information in the earliest instance, staff and stakeholders were able to tailor employment support to the customer. The additional time that provider staff had to spend with customers compared to Work Coaches was seen to further support this tailoring, as provider staff believed they were able to develop a deeper understanding of a customer’s personal circumstances.

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<sup>20</sup> The transport pilot referenced was not part of this evaluation and only a limited number of stakeholders provided their views on the topic.

In cases where a Work Coach felt a customer was not ready or eligible for contracted provision, they reported looking to other support, as appropriate to the customer's barriers. For example, in one area, Work Coaches decided early in their engagement with a customer whether they needed mental health support. Staff felt providing rapid support where required was crucial to ensuring positive long-term outcomes. Staff in the area felt they were excelling in this, and it was highlighted from a customer perspective:

*"[my Work Coach] has currently set me up with an organisation... they have sent this counsellor type thing for me and he phones me every Friday for an hour session about my mental health... I am not currently ready to look for work but [my Work Coach] made it clear that they will help me look for a job if need be."*

Customer

Across case study areas, staff highlighted the importance of understanding customers' long-term goals to be able to make informed referrals to training or employment opportunities. For example, staff in Cardiff's Jobcentre offices felt they were successfully able to identify customer goals and had a range of local, sector specific training academies they could refer customers to, to improve industry skills. Similarly, in Manchester, Jobcentre staff discussed securing Kickstart jobs related to customers' long-term plans.

In instances where a customer presented as more work-ready, Work Coaches could provide individualised support by narrowing the list of appropriate job opportunities for their customer and highlighting training opportunities aligned with their long-term goals.

*"We do tailored journal messages. So when a new vacancy comes up, we'll send a journal message out to all claimants to say this is what's available, and then it's also brought up in work search reviews to highlight all the vacancies and match them [to the customer]"*

Jobcentre operational staff

### **Provider abilities to understand and address customer needs and goals**

Provider staff were aware they were able to spend more time with customers than Work Coaches and understood the advantage this gave when providing tailored employment support.

*"I've had the luxury of being allowed time to get to know them, I can see their enormous potential."*

Subcontracted staff

With this additional time, staff felt they were able to better focus their support for each customer, identifying relevant support, training, and employment opportunities. JETS staff across case study areas conducted skills and work history assessments during the first appointment with their customers to gauge transferrable skills, work experience and long-term goals. Following on from this, they were able to target

employability support, through the National Careers Service (NCS) if needed, on job application, interview, and CV skills. Similarly, Restart providers spoke about carrying out skills assessments and providing employability support where needed. Restart providers also discussed actively seeking specific training courses for people who had a desired career path.

As with the Flexible Support Fund available to Jobcentre staff, JETS and Restart, staff reported being able to provide funds to reduce barriers to work, such as clothing for work and interviews, required licensing and certification for roles (e.g. CSCS, SIA, HGV) and any travel and childcare costs associated with attending training, interviews and employment.

*“I haven’t seen a cap on [the amount we can spend] yet. I’ve sent people off with £800 of hand tools... I signed a guy off this morning who was doing an HGV1 driver course which is just over £2000.”*

Contracted provider staff

### **5.4.5 Engaging employers to fill vacancies**

Connecting with employers and advocating for customers suitable for employer vacancies enabled customer outcomes. Staff and stakeholders felt that providing a tailored support package to employers strengthened working relationships and allowed staff to advocate for their customers who were suitable for roles. This also helped customers to have a more informal, relaxed introduction to employers.

#### **Staff ability to mediate, support and adapt recruitment processes**

Jobcentre EAs and contracted provision Employer Account Managers were highly regarded amongst other staff, for their ability to source employment opportunities and build strong working relationships with employers. EAs mediated recruitment processes, managed employer expectations of customers and promoted individual or groups of customers for employers to consider for recruitment. In addition, they were able to provide support to organisations making use of Access to Work for SWAPs, Kickstart and open vacancies and promote Disability Confidence certification. This was similar for Employer Account Managers at both JETS and Restart.

The importance of providing a personalised support offer to customers was mirrored in EAs’ commitment to provide each employer with a personalised offer. Through spending time speaking with employers, EAs could fully understand their requirements. EAs used staff meetings to present job vacancies with specific requirements to Work Coaches, who could then put forward suitable customers on their caseloads. From this, customers in many cases were also able to experience fast-tracked application processes, bypassing online application forms and progressing directly to interview stage.

*“We’ve had many employers say to us, ‘if I hadn’t spoken to your employment advisor or Work Coach, I wouldn’t have taken the person on’”.*

Jobcentre operational staff

Several employers who worked with Jobcentre for the first time during the Kickstart programme were subsequently engaged in SWAPs and maintained relationships with the Jobcentre.

In one area, there was concern about the continued resourcing of the EA team. Staff expressed that the EA role was important in maintaining employer relations and providing employment opportunities to customers.

### **Attractive provision to support employer recruitment**

Staff and stakeholders unanimously agreed that Kickstart was beneficial in increasing confidence and in some cases led to long-term employment outcomes. The increasing number of employers working with the Jobcentre on Kickstart provided customers with a range of opportunities that may have not been otherwise available. Staff in some areas proactively sought ways to maintain customer employment outcomes beyond the Kickstart job. For example, EAs in Blackburn would invite employers to a meeting where they would be presented with information on Apprenticeships, as a way of securing longer term outcomes for customers on Kickstart.

SWAPs were another provision that EAs promoted to employers across all case study areas in England and Scotland (SWAPs do not operate in Wales). Employers were able to build relationships with customers, get an insight into their level of interest in the sector and work capabilities throughout the duration of the SWAP. In some cases, employers were also able to liaise with training providers for feedback on how customers engaged in any external training delivered as part of a SWAP, prior to their interview. Generally, SWAPs were highly praised by Jobcentre staff for the quick, targeted support they provided.

### **Connecting customers directly with local employers**

Staff in case study areas discussed jobs fairs held at the Jobcentre, Youth Hubs, and local shopping centres. Jobcentre staff and employers hailed the success of these events, and those interviewed reported good attendance from customers. Many felt that introducing customers to employers informally, in familiar settings increased customer comfort levels and allowed for more successful employer introductions. For example, one provider of both JETS and Restart held a joint jobs fair in their offices, which 32 employers and over 400 customers attended.

*“On Friday we had a jobs fair ... we dedicated the whole top floor of our building. We had something like 32 local employers come, over 400 people through the door and we are seeing good results.”*

Subcontracted manager

In one area a JETS team organised a speed networking event, through which customers would attend a Teams call with several employers present for a few minutes at a time. During this time, they introduced themselves and their background to several local employers, who asked them questions about their capabilities and experience. JETS and Jobcentre staff both reported that this was a successful way of

introducing customers and employers and reported positive feedback from customers.

# 6. Experiences post Plan for Jobs provision

This chapter draws on wave 1 of follow up qualitative interviews with survey respondents to examine the experiences of participants and non-participants in the period after PfJ provision ended, the specific time-periods will vary between participants and the strand they participated in. It considers the influence of PfJ participation or non-participation on individuals' readiness for employment and their experiences of entering or not entering employment. This evidence is used to consider the future support needs of all groups and the implications for future support from DWP.

## 6.1 Influence of PfJ provision on participants' readiness for employment

Participant's readiness for employment following PfJ provision was closely aligned to their experience of the provision.

### **Positive experiences of PfJ provision**

Participants who felt well supported by PfJ provision cited three elements which contributed to their positive perception of the support. These were the long term and flexible nature of the support, strong relationships with Work Coaches/provider staff and good support with job applications and CVs. Participants valued the long term and flexible nature of provision and noted the increased intensity of the support compared to the business-as-usual Jobcentre offer. For participants who had been unemployed for some time, or had not been in employment prior to the pandemic, the consistent and regular encouragement they received through PfJ had a positive influence on their motivation to continue searching for work. Participants on the Youth Employment Programme and Restart recognised that the sustained support and single contact relationship that the strands offered helped raise their confidence and bring them closer to a positive employment outcome.

*"It's a useful programme as I had an advisor who helped with my CV and coached with interview skills. She also provided encouragement and increased my confidence."*

*Participant, Youth Employment Programme, 18 to 24, Unemployed and seeking work*

Participants for whom PfJ provision had made the most difference reported strong relationships with their Work Coaches or provider staff (see survey findings in Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). This was particularly true of participants from groups who may lack confidence when connecting with DWP services such as young people with



poor mental health. In these instances, a sustained relationship with a single point of contact was seen to provide the opportunity to build trust. The importance of this was a recurrent theme across all participant groups and echoes findings from the case studies.

Participants who gained confidence in their CV and ability to apply for jobs recognised that this was a result of the support through PfJ. Participants on JETS and the YEC programme valued the advice they received on how best to approach job applications and interviews. For older workers on the JETS programme in particular, this type of support was useful in helping them to ensure their CV reflected the skills needs of the modern workplace. For those who had not applied for work for a considerable amount of time, this included updates such as removing references to typing speeds and fax machines.

### **Negative experiences of PfJ provision**

Poor relationships with advisors were reported to have contributed negatively to experiences of the PfJ provision. These participants felt that PfJ support was inappropriate or they felt unable to work at the time.

Lack of opportunity to build a meaningful and productive relationship with the advisor resulted in poorer experiences.

Participants who felt that PfJ provision did not adequately meet their needs or was not appropriate to them felt that they did not 'need' the support as they perceived their unemployment to be temporary and solely a consequence of the pandemic. These participants had experienced relatively short engagement with PfJ provision prior to re-entering employment, whilst others had declined to take part in provision on the assumption that they did not need any support to re-enter work.

## **6.1.1 Experiences of looking for work amongst those who entered employment**

For participants who had entered employment, perceptions of PfJ provision depended on the extent to which they felt the provision had helped them to achieve this outcome.

Participants with few qualifications, limited work experience or an unstable employment history described feeling grateful for the support they received. Many took the first jobs available to them, having become unemployed during the pandemic. These participants felt PfJ provision was useful in guiding them towards opportunities and maximising their chances of being successful. They described feeling 'lucky' to have a job and were not chiefly concerned with progression.

However, others with high levels of motivation and a strong employment history felt that they were capable of securing employment without the PfJ provision. Participants who felt this way were grateful that provision existed, should they have needed it, but did not feel it was relevant to the fact that they had entered employment. This group often faced few barriers to work.

Across both of these groups, it was common for participants to have found jobs not aligned with or relevant to their experience. This meant that sometimes the jobs they had entered did not align with their long-term career goals, but they were nonetheless grateful to have an income during a time of economic uncertainty.

Highly-skilled workers with long employment histories described feeling that PfJ provision was not suited to their needs. Those in this group had a strong desire for support, however, felt that what was offered through PfJ was not suited to or appropriate for their needs. They suggested that DWP and provider staff did not recognise their existing skills and experience and were therefore likely to make inappropriate recommendations. This group felt that sector specific support was lacking from PfJ provision. These workers wanted, and expected, the opportunity to find a job in their preferred sector, reflecting and building on their previous experience rather than being pressured into the first job available to them which may not match their experience or pay expectations.

*“DWP assume that if you are a white-collar worker you can find work yourself”*

Non-participant, 65+, West Midlands, Employed

Non-participants who had positive experiences of Jobcentre support said that their Work Coaches were supportive, encouraging, and helpful with some of the practical barriers they faced to work, such as travel costs. Accounts of support received included CV help, cover letter writing and preparation for interviews. Though this support was appreciated, non-participants were at times frustrated by the short appointment times to discuss their needs with Work Coaches.

The sense of there being a lack of depth to the support available was furthered by remote telephone delivery, which non-participants felt to be less effective and encouraging than face-to-face appointments. For non-participants the low levels of interaction with their Work Coaches meant it was difficult to form a meaningful and constructive relationship.

Despite having ultimately entered employment, non-participants with experience of unsuccessfully interviewing for a role were frustrated by a lack of feedback from employers. Having constructive criticism to build upon when discussing failed applications with Work Coaches was sought after by this group.

## **6.1.2 Experiences of looking for work amongst those who did not enter employment**

### **Experiences of participants**

Despite being unemployed, participants felt that the PfJ provision had prepared them to get a job. Customers who were actively looking for work felt the provision had prepared them to search and apply for jobs (see Section 5.4.1). Those who were out of work reported feeling that their interactions with the Jobcentre had given them as much support as possible and reflected positively on their experience. They felt satisfied about being equipped to search and apply for jobs and reported being prepared for employment.

Participants in this position appreciated frequent and consistently timed meetings with Work Coaches but did not feel they needed further support from DWP, despite not being successful with entering employment. In these instances, individuals did not perceive themselves to be facing any residual barriers, though some did have a lack of employment experience.

Regular meetings with Work Coaches following PfJ provision were particularly beneficial for participants' mental health. This applied to customers who were at risk of feeling isolated, where multiple participants referred to the loneliness experienced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Young people and people with mental health conditions also reported the positive influence of regular post-provision meetings with their Work Coach. The meetings helped these participants to alleviate feelings of loneliness, which overall led to their wellbeing being benefitted.

Again, participants who spoke with a different Work Coach/es each time they visited a Jobcentre reported feeling dissatisfied due to a lack of consistency. Speaking to different advisors meant participants had to build the rapport repeatedly. For some participants, changing Work Coaches altered the relationship, and in some cases, led to participant disengagement. This resulted in struggles with identifying a regular point of contact and developing a trusting relationship. The negative influence of this was particularly felt by customers with high support needs and significant barriers to entering employment such as poor mental health or learning difficulties.

*"I have autism, have been diagnosed with severe depression, anxiety, and PTSD... There is a lack of consistency with Work Coaches at Jobcentre. I always have different people ringing me up. It gets confusing."*

Participant, SWAPs, 35 to 49, Unemployed and not looking for work

### **Experiences of non-participants**

Non-participants who remained unemployed wanted additional support and faced more substantial barriers to employment compared to participants. Commonly, customers faced challenges with their mental or physical health and other barriers including the cost of travel, their age and childcare commitments. As a result of these barriers, unemployed non-participants suggested that it was unlikely that they would find work that would suit their needs. This reflects the differences between the participant and non-participant groups and highlights how the support provided through PfJ offered greater depth of support to address barriers to work than the business-as-usual Jobcentre offer.

*"I am busy looking after my child at home. I can't go to work because there is no one to look after my child so I have to stay at home... They should look at my CV and then look at ways of finding me suitable roles or even offer advice on training and further education to make me more employable."*

Non-participant, 18 to 25, Unemployed and not looking for work

Lack of confidence and a desire to improve their self-esteem was a central need for this group. Non-participants reported feeling that Jobcentre staff were not well

positioned to support them with these barriers. Some non-participants felt that their Work Coaches adopted a punitive approach, for instance suggesting that they were lazy which negatively affected their relationship. This was a particular source of anxiety for customers that were already dissatisfied with the inconsistency of Work Coach contact or had previously experienced sanctions. In these instances, non-participant's low confidence and weak relationships with their Work Coaches contributed to negative perceptions of engaging with Jobcentre staff.

*"I was treated very badly by staff and security at the Jobcentre. All my self-confidence has gone, I've got no enthusiasm, no energy or motivation."*

Non-participant, 50 to 64, Unemployed and seeking work

Participants who experienced support being cancelled during the pandemic reported feeling left-behind. Some of the support being provided to customers, such as Maths and English, was cancelled and not rearranged. There was a lack of clarity and communication about when, or if, this support was to be resumed. For these interviewees, cancelled provision and an absence of communication from the Jobcentre, left them feeling forgotten.

*"[I] previously received support via Universal Credit which offered a 6-week course at a uni to start up [my] own business and would help with buying necessary items to get business going. But the course didn't happen due to COVID."*

Non-participant, 18 to 24, Unemployed and not looking for work

Participants and non-participants with specific personal barriers sometimes felt that the Jobcentre was not able to support them in addressing these. People with caring or childcare responsibilities were not finding job opportunities suitable for their needs, such as flexible working hours or remote working. Within this group, some had ruled out the possibility of finding suitable employment that recognised their requirements.

Unemployed people in their 60s perceived their age to be a substantial barrier to employment. Customers in this group reported feeling that employers lost interest in hiring them once they had learnt their age. A perceived lack of awareness amongst Work Coaches of how mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression can affect older people meant appropriate support or employment suggestions were not made. Customers wanted Work Coaches to be understanding of their needs and able to accommodate them accordingly.

*"I'm worried about my age and if this would count against me ... I also faced prejudice from people I've worked with in the past, I fear coming across this in the future."*

Participant, JETS, 50 to 64, Unemployed and seeking work

Interviewees who felt discouraged about the Jobcentre being able to support them were often unaware of the support available. There was also a group, particularly people aged over 50, who were generally pessimistic about their chances of finding work.

## 6.2 Future support needs

This section covers the future support needs of participants and non-participants who were looking for work. It considers the needs of those looking for work, their awareness of current support and the implications of this for future support.

### 6.2.1 Ongoing support needs for those not yet in employment

Participants and non-participants who were looking for work had often faced ongoing barriers which needed addressing before they could look for employment. These needs included support to manage their health conditions, help with childcare, access to qualifications and training, transport, and housing. Furthermore, this group needed employers to be more supportive of those with health conditions and / or childcare responsibilities.

Interviewees with **health conditions** wanted to find employment that worked alongside their condition, such as being close to their home or a flexible working schedule. They also reported wanting supportive employers who understood their needs and are able to talk openly about personal circumstances. However, customers felt pessimistic about finding this, particularly those with previous negative experiences. Interviewees often saw a relationship between accessing support for their health condition and their ability to work.

*“I need someone who will speak to me, find out what job suits me...as I say, I am not good with pressured environments or meeting new people, I don't have the people skills...then helping me with the interviews and checking on me after I have started work.”*

Non-participant, 18 to 24, Unemployed and not looking for work

As found within the case study arm of the evaluation, a lack of both available and affordable childcare and flexible work which accommodated parental responsibilities, continued to act as a barrier to work for parents. Parents, particularly single parents, were unable to work shifts at short-notice or outside of the hours childcare is available. This posed a barrier to working in sectors which commonly used this approach as default, such as retail, hospitality or care. Amongst this group, there was a lack of awareness about the available support, such as Universal Credit childcare costs support. In other cases, some were unable to afford upfront payments all together<sup>21</sup>.

*“I know I could easily get a job. There is loads out there. I see them all the time, but what do I do during the holidays?”*

Participant, JFS, 35 to 49, Unemployed and looking for work

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<sup>21</sup> At the time the research was conducted, Universal Credit Childcare Costs support operated using a reimbursement model.

Both participants and non-participants often had little knowledge of how to seek **further training** and where to begin looking. Additionally, they had low expectations of employers to provide training once they had entered work. Those looking to gain further **qualifications** or education often did not know where to begin, and awareness of the Jobcentre links to Further Education Colleges and training providers was low. Customers who were in employment in sectors such as retail suggested that their employers were unwilling to provide in-work training.

Individuals who wanted to retrain in a sector different to the one they were in sought support on how to manage training alongside work, such as how to manage and balance workload. However, there was a perception that Work Coaches were not able to provide support for situations such as these.

**Transport and housing challenges** were experienced as an unwavering barrier to work by some participants. Interviewees with mobility issues or social anxiety were unable to use public transport and/or afford a car. This led to them wanting to work very close to home, within a walking distance, which limited the opportunities available. This was heightened if the participant lived in a rural area. Though the cost of living was raised as a concern amongst interviewees, high transport costs were pre-existing. Participants reported feeling that they needed significant financial help to overcome this barrier. In some instances, a total lack of public transport made accessing non-remote work incredibly challenging for interviewees, regardless of the financial support available.

For customers not currently looking for work, housing was an area in which services were felt to be inadequate. Some interviewees, particularly those living in temporary accommodation or hostels, described there being a poor connection between their housing services and Jobcentre. The perceived lack of relationship between housing and employment services led to increased feelings of insecurity. These interviewees wanted Work Coaches to understand that insecure housing/hostel provision meant that they were not able to look for work. Individuals who felt their Work Coach understood the challenges and barriers that their housing situation posed to entering employment reported having a positive experience in which they felt supported and understood by their Work Coach.

### **Awareness of available support**

Awareness of how and where to ask for support was mixed, but, generally, customers had low expectations of public services. Their willingness or desire to access further support via the Jobcentre was largely determined by how successful their existing/previous relationships with Work Coaches had been. In instances where the relationship had been supportive and consistent, interviewees were most likely to return for additional support.

Low expectations continued with interviewees with mental and physical health conditions feeling that the NHS services were unable to provide the support that they needed. Some individuals with long histories of poor health considered asking for mental health services via Jobcentre but felt there was ultimately nowhere to go. In

some instances, customers were uncertain about where to look for this support to begin with.

*“I don’t know who could help me [with my physical health condition]. I thought the Jobcentre might be able to help but they have said they can’t.”*

Participant, SWAPs, 50 to 64, Unemployed and not seeking work

Additionally, people in work did not know where to go for advice on how to progress professionally, with low awareness that the Jobcentre could provide support with in-work progression. This was particularly the case for those working in professional roles.

## **6.2.2 Implications for future support**

Regardless of employment outcomes, when successful, PfJ and Jobcentre provision left participants with increased confidence and willingness to enter the labour market. However, many customers, particularly those facing complex barriers to work, wanted additional support.

Our research suggests that awareness of how Jobcentre can provide support was low, with some customers, particularly non-participants, having little trust in DWP’s capacity to support them. PfJ participants felt more work ready than their non-participant counterparts, even if they had not yet achieved an employment outcome. However, non-participants had a different demographic profile compared to participants, where they typically faced more significant and complex barriers to work.

For unemployed customers, who considered themselves to be facing barriers the Jobcentre cannot help with, such as poor health, better integration of services would likely be beneficial. Mental and physical health conditions were evident across all groups and particularly amongst the unemployed. The barriers poor health creates to employment were significant, where many felt that employers are not understanding and unwilling to make required adjustments.

Participants who remained out of work often viewed the support they received whilst on PfJ provision as distinct from usual Jobcentre services, largely due to the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic. For many, the distinction was connected to the fact that services were delivered in a different space and by an organisation other than DWP. This meant that despite positive experiences of provision, they did not automatically consider going to Jobcentre for support during ‘normal’ times.

For some, previous poor experiences with Jobcentre made it difficult to trust Work Coaches. This, combined with a lack of belief the Jobcentre could help them access the support they need, meant some customers, particularly non-participants who remained out of work, perceived their Work Coach relationship as transactional and focused on meeting welfare obligations.

For participants and non-participants who were working full time, many suggested that they had little desire to progress in their current role despite wanting to earn more money. However, Jobcentre was perceived as providing services for unemployed people and therefore did not consider seeking support to progress in

work or find another higher paid role from it. Interviewees who wanted to progress but felt they could not because their hours were limited by caring responsibilities didn't consider Jobcentre as capable of helping them with this problem. This was due to lack of awareness that Jobcentre can provide support for people in work, and the perception that support with childcare sat outside of the remit of Jobcentre.



# 7. The lasting employment outcomes of Plan for Jobs

This chapter draws on the second wave of survey research, which was conducted eight months after the first wave, to understand longer-term outcomes of PfJ participation amongst former participants and non-participants. Around this time, most of the PfJ provisions had come to a close; all participants in this wave of the survey had completed their programme. There were 6,950 respondents to the wave 2 survey, made up of 2,991 programme participants, 3,568 non-participants and 391 early leavers. Amongst employed participants this chapter covers how long they had been in work; how satisfied they were with the jobs they had secured and what was important to them as they continued to progress in their roles. Amongst those who were unemployed it covers what actions they had taken to try and find employment, the reasons for turning jobs down, how ready for work PfJ participants and non-participants felt and what further support was needed.

## 7.1 Transitioning into employment for participants

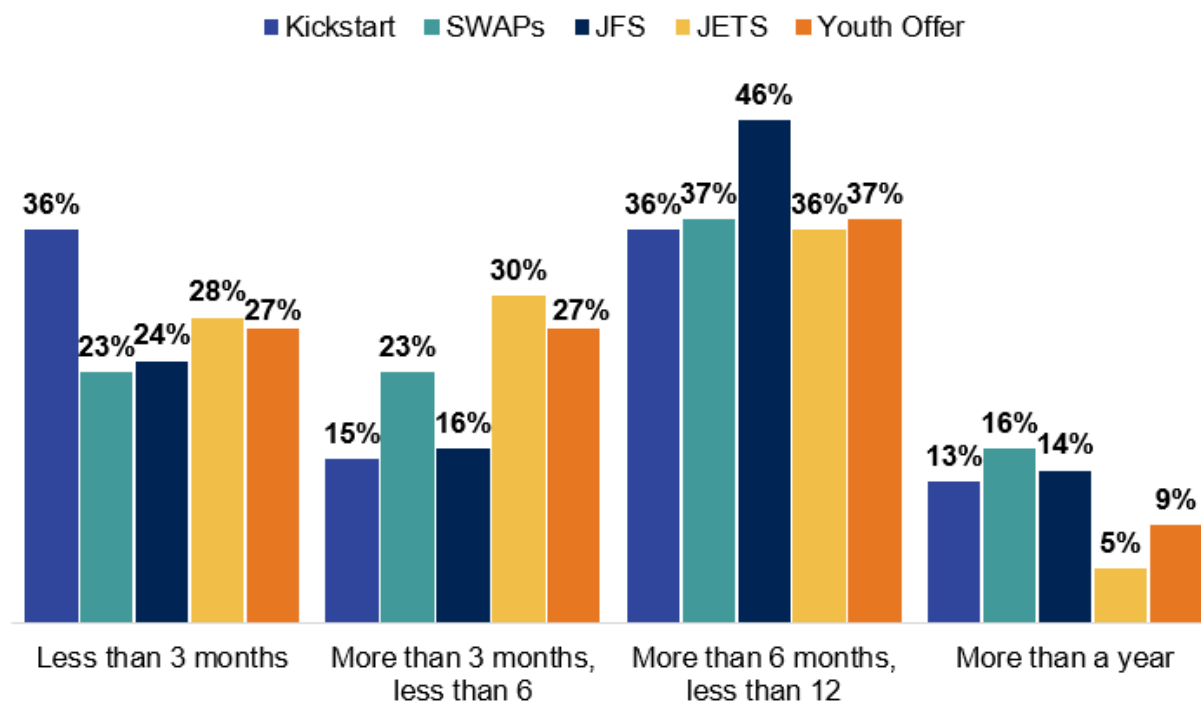
At the second wave of the quantitative survey, more than 2 in 5 (41%) of those who had participated in a PfJ strand were employed compared to 31% of non-participants. Whilst employment cannot be directly linked to participation in a strand, as there are other factors at play, those who took part in a SWAP (53%), Kickstart (48%) or JFS (48%) were significantly more likely to be employed than respondents to the survey overall (participants and non-participants combined).

### 7.1.1 Number of roles and changes in employment

The majority of employed participants (91%) were working in one job at the time of the survey. More than 9 in 10 employed participants of each strand, except JFS (88%), reported that they had one current job.

Most employed participants had been working in their roles for less than a year (Figure 12). This was particularly the case for JETS participants. Over a third of employed Kickstart (36%) participants had been in their job for less than 3 months.

**Figure 12: How long have you been doing this job?**



Base: Employed participants (Kickstart = 249, SWAPs = 274, JFS = 187, JETS = 321, Youth Offer = 154)

Employed participants were asked whether they had held a different job other than their current role either in the last 12 months (wave 2 only respondents) or since the last time they were interviewed (longitudinal respondents). Kickstart participants were most likely to have changed roles during this period (59%)<sup>22</sup>. More than half of Youth Offer participants (54%) had changed jobs, as had around 2 in 5 SWAP (41%) and JFS participants (40%). JETS participants (31%) were least likely to have changed jobs.

Of employed participants who had changed roles, more than half (53%) had held one other job between waves or over the last 12 months. Just under a third (32%) had had two other jobs and the remaining proportion (15%) had held 3 or more.

### 7.1.2 Contracts and job satisfaction

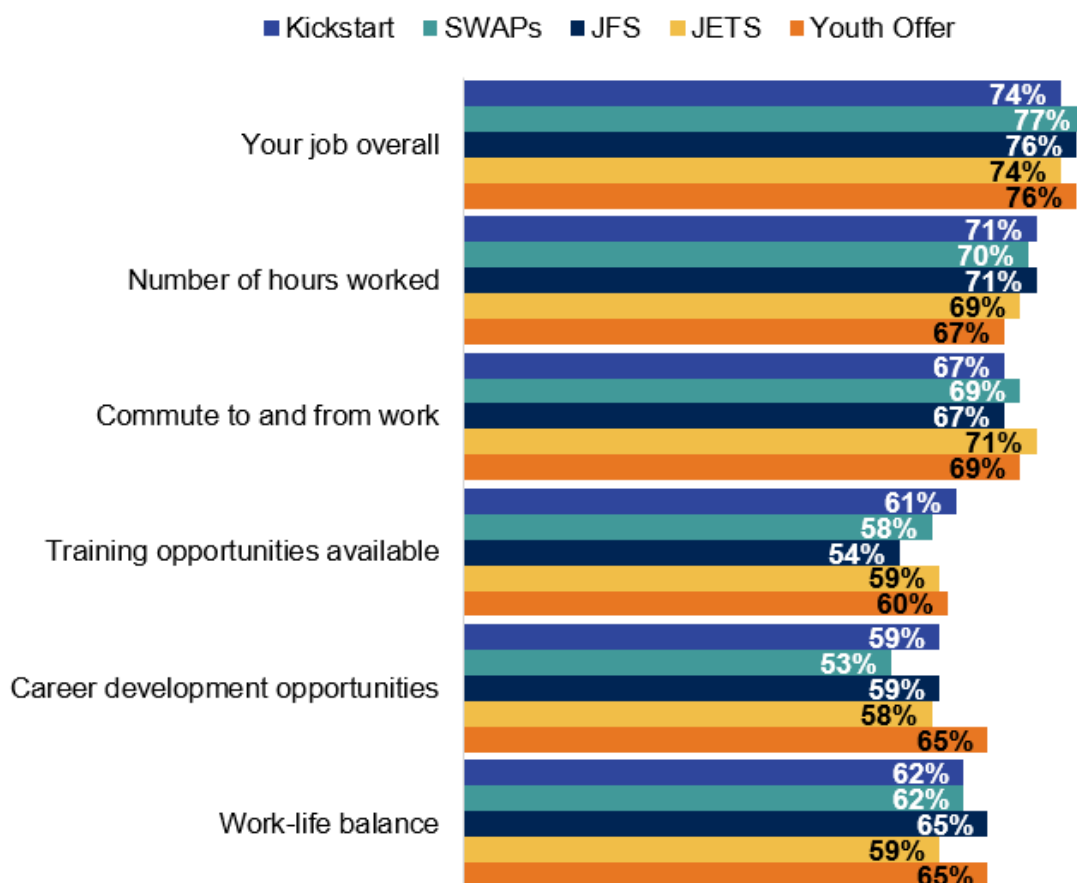
Employed participants were most likely to be on permanent or open-ended job contracts (45%). Smaller proportions were on zero-hours contracts (15%), casual / flexible contracts (11%) or temporary / seasonal contracts (8%).

Overall, 75% were satisfied with their job compared to 11% who were dissatisfied. Seven in 10 (70%) were satisfied with the number of hours they worked per week, and a similar proportion (69%) with their commute. Around 6 in 10 (58%) were satisfied with the training opportunities available to them and the same percentage

<sup>22</sup> The initial Kickstart job was for 6 months, so this transition is likely to be from the job accessed through Kickstart to a new job.

(58%) were satisfied with the opportunity for career development in their current roles. Levels of satisfaction with jobs were similar regardless of the strand employed participants had taken part in (Figure 13). Although, those who had participated in the Youth Offer were more satisfied with career opportunities at their current roles (65%) compared to other strand participants. This was also the case at wave 1.

**Figure 13: Thinking about your job, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with: % ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ satisfied**



Base: Employed participants (Kickstart = 249, SWAPs = 274, JFS = 187, JETs = 321, Youth Offer = 154)

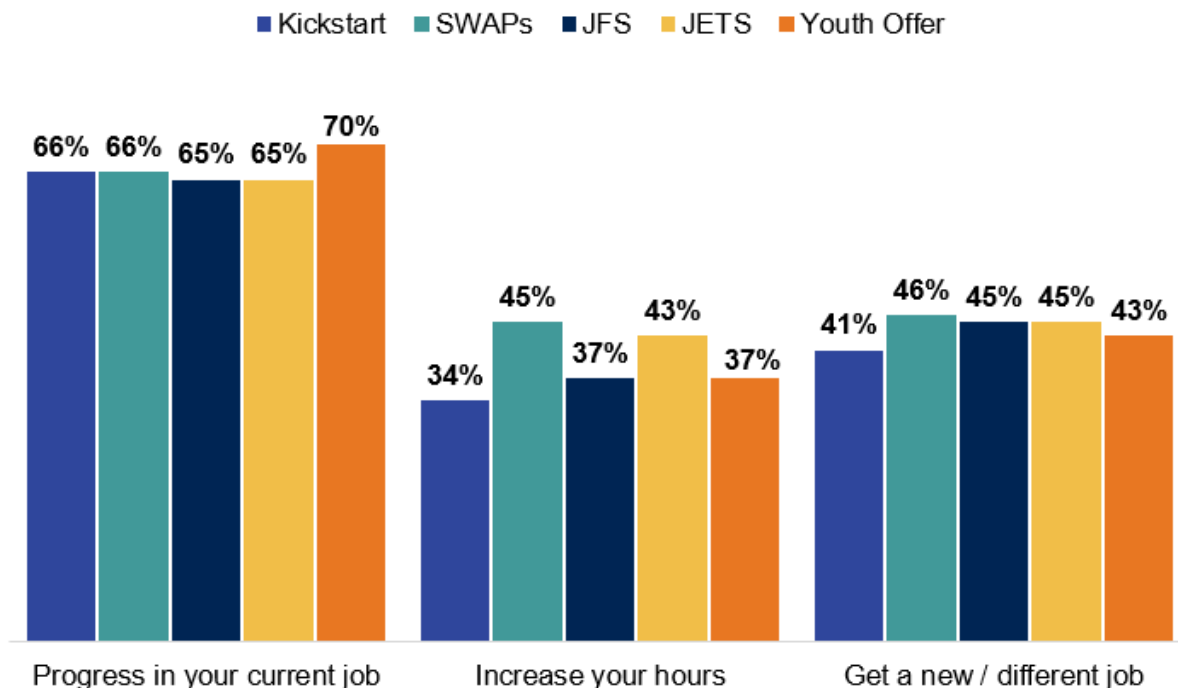
### 7.1.3 In-work aspirations

Two thirds (66%) of employed participants agreed that progressing within their current job over the next 12 months was important. The most commonly identified mechanism for progression was to gain promotion with their current employer (69%) compared to 40% who wanted to increase their hours in their current job (Figure 14). Those who found their provision useful were more likely to suggest they wanted to progress in their current jobs, suggesting that PfJ provision enabled them to aspire towards furthering their careers. Participants who wanted to progress were more likely be aged between 25 and 34 (75% said progression was important), speak English as a second language (75%) or have children (72%).

Around 2 in 5 participants from every strand felt it was ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ important to get a new or different job than the one they currently had over the next 12 months,

suggesting that they would transition between different job roles until finding one that suited them best.

**Figure 14: Overall, over the next 12 months how important is it for you to: % saying ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ important**



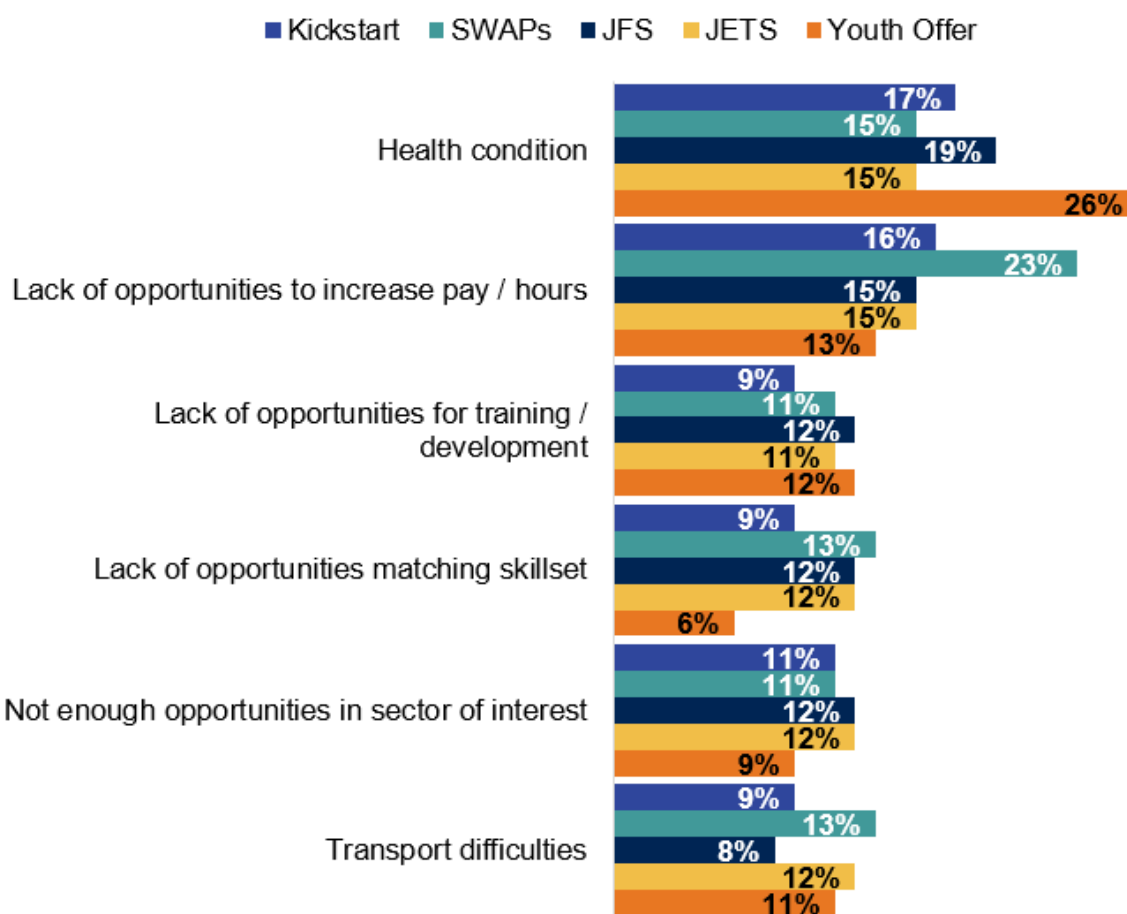
Base: Employed participants (Kickstart = 249, SWAPs = 274, JFS = 187, JETS = 321, Youth Offer = 154)

Overall, just over half of employed participants (53%) reported they faced at least one barrier to progressing in their current role. Employed SWAP participants were the most likely to identify at least one barrier to progression (61%) whilst employed Kickstart participants were the least likely to mention any barriers (43% faced at least one barrier).

The most common barriers to progressing in their current role for all employed participants were a lack of opportunities to increase their pay, hours or gain a promotion (17%) or their physical or mental health condition(s) (17%) (Figure 15). SWAP participants (23%) were significantly more likely than other strand participants to say lack of opportunities were a barrier to progression, whereas Youth Offer participants (26%) were the most likely to identify their physical or mental health condition.

Other barriers to employed participants progressing in their roles included a lack of opportunities for training and development, a lack of opportunities matching their skills and qualifications, not enough opportunities in the sectors they were interested in and transport difficulties.

**Figure 15: Is there anything that makes it difficult to progress in your current job?**



Base: Employed participants (Kickstart = 249, SWAPs = 274, JFS = 187, JETS = 321, Youth Offer = 154)

In terms of support to help employed participants to progress in their current roles, they most often cited help with the cost of travel to and from work (20%), work-related skills (19%) or support to manage their physical or mental health condition (16%). Employed participants were more likely to want affordable housing support if they were currently living in temporary accommodation (22%).

### 7.1.4 Declining offers of employment

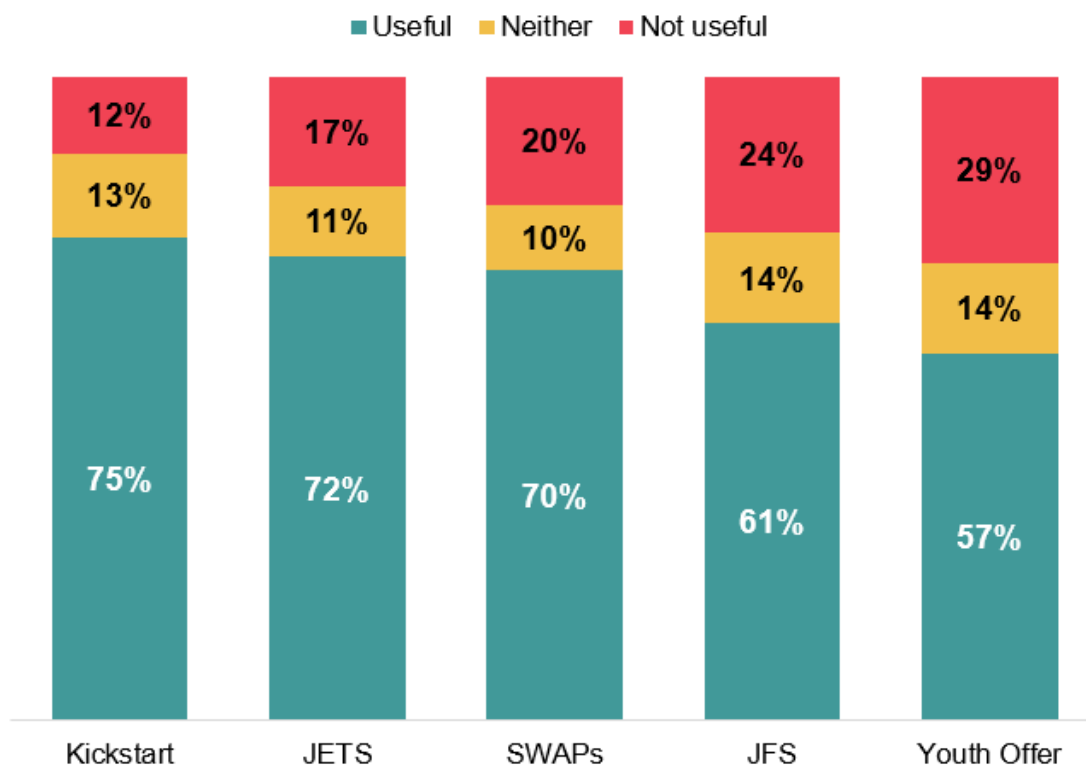
Almost 1 in 5 (17%) employed participants had received a different job offer to their current role in the last 6 months and not accepted it. The pay being too low was the main reason reported across all employed participants, and reasons for declining an offer were consistent amongst strands. Employed Youth Offer participants were most likely to have turned down a job offer (25%). Their most common reasons were that they did not want to do that type of work (21%), they would have difficulties travelling there (16%), the pay was too low (13%) or the hours did not fit around their other commitments (13%).

### 7.1.5 Usefulness of provision

Kickstart participants (75%) were most likely to agree that participation in their strand was useful in helping them to find employment or progress in their career. JFS (61%)

and Youth Offer (57%) participants were least likely to agree with this (shown in Figure 16).

**Figure 16: How useful was [strand] in helping you to find employment or progress in your career?**



*Base: Employed participants excluding 'don't know' (Kickstart = 247, JETS = 318, SWAPs = 251, JFS = 184, Youth Offer = 119)*

## 7.2 Unemployed participants and transitioning out of work

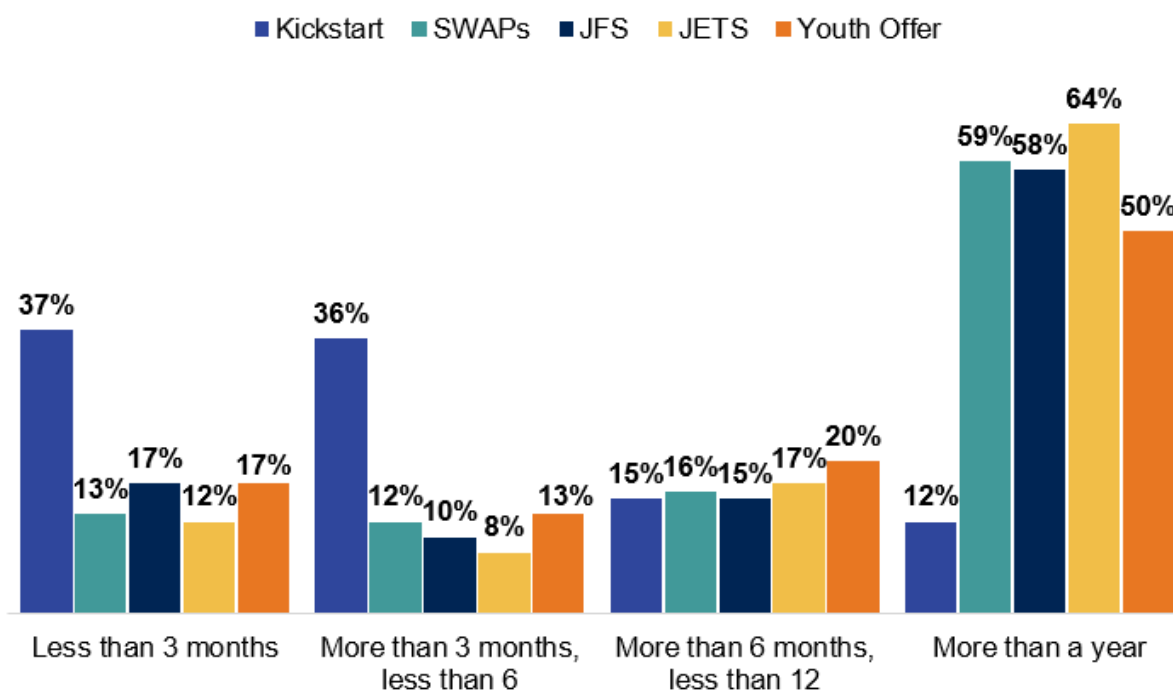
Unemployed participants were asked whether they had any job in the past 12 months or since they were last interviewed. Kickstart participants were the most likely to report that they had a job during this time (78%) in part reflecting the nature of Kickstart providing a six-month paid job. The figures for other strands were SWAPs: 38%; Youth Offer: 38%; JFS: 32%; JETS: 31%.

### 7.2.1 Time spent unemployed

Overall, two thirds of unemployed participants reported not having a job in the time between their two interviews or the last 12 months.

Unemployed participants across almost all strands, except those who took part in Kickstart, had mostly been without a job for over a year and had not secured a job during or since their time on the programme (Figure 15). The experiences of those who left work in the previous 12 months will be explored further in section 9.1.2.

**Figure 17: How long have you been unemployed?**



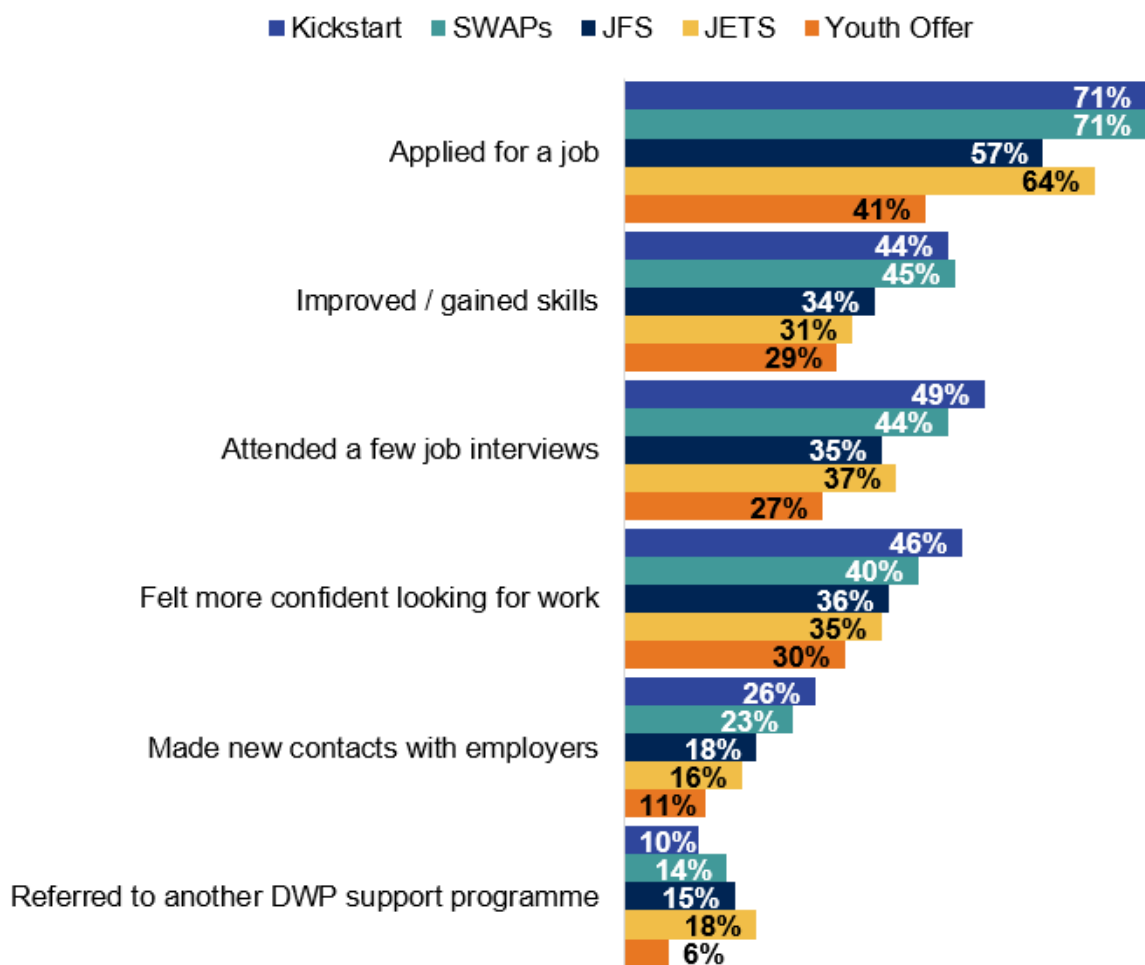
Base: Unemployed participants excluding 'Don't know' and 'Prefer not to say' (Kickstart = 253, SWAPs = 229, JFS = 187, JETS = 410, Youth Offer = 276)

Those who were unemployed and had held a job within the previous 12 months or since they were last surveyed were significantly more likely to have had a temporary or seasonal contract (17%) than those who were employed at the time of the wave 2 survey (8%). Those who were unemployed (21%) were also significantly less likely than employed participants (45%) to have secured permanent contracts, which is likely to have at least in part contributed to them leaving their roles.

## 7.2.2 Actions taken

In the last 3 months, more than half of all unemployed strand participants, except those on the Youth Offer, had applied for a job (Figure 18). Kickstart (71%) and SWAPs participants (71%) had the highest proportion of unemployed participants who had taken this action. Participants of these two strands were also amongst the most likely to have taken other actions to prepare for work, to have improved their skills or gained new ones, attended a few job interviews, felt more confident in looking for work or made new contacts with employers. Referrals to other support programmes offered by DWP was not common for participants who remained unemployed, especially not for those who had taken part in Youth Offer.

**Figure 18: Which, if any, of the following actions have you taken in the last 3 months?**



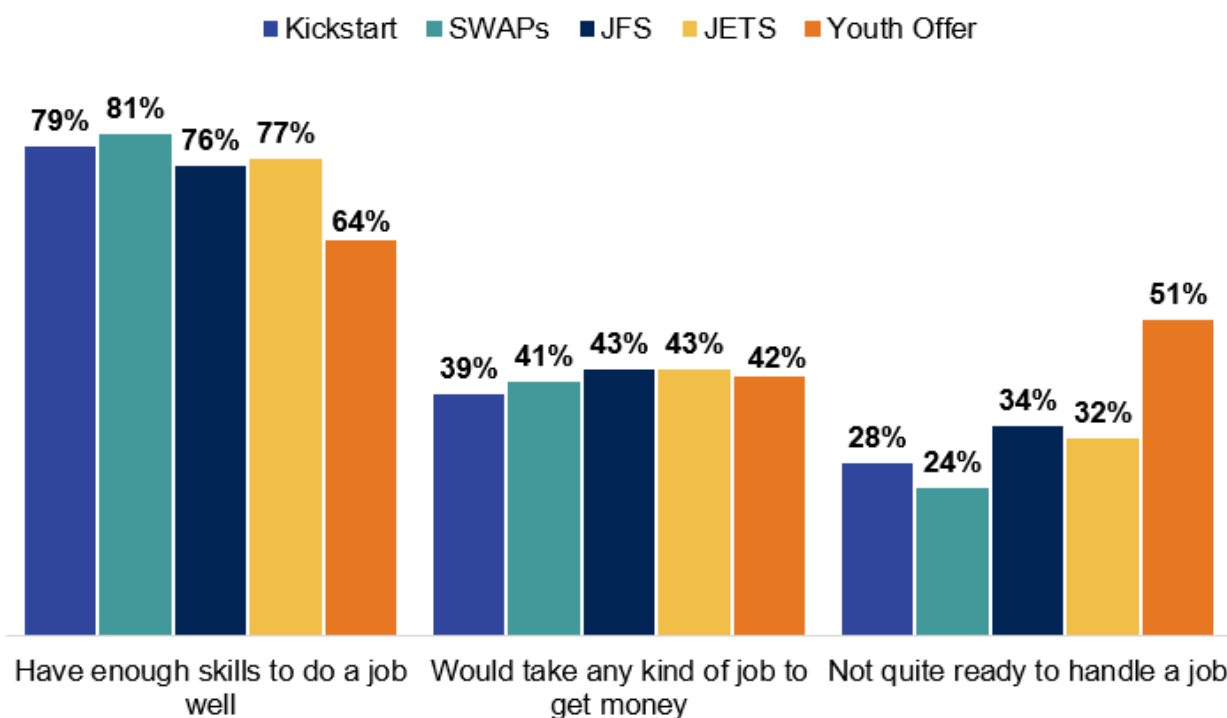
Base: Unemployed participants (Kickstart = 270, SWAPs = 240, JFS = 197, JETS = 454, Youth Offer = 333)

### 7.2.3 Work readiness

Amongst unemployed Kickstart, SWAPs JFS and JETS participants, over three quarters from each strand felt that they had enough skills to be able to do a job well. More than 4 in 5 SWAPs participants (81%) said this, the highest proportion of any strand (Figure 19). Youth Offer participants were the least likely to believe they had enough skills (64%) and the most likely to report that they could not yet handle a job (51%). For other strand participants, the proportion of unemployed participants who felt not quite ready to start a job ranged between a quarter (24% of SWAPs participants) and a third (34% of JFS participants). Around 2 in 5 suggested that they would take any kind of job to get money, with no significant differences between different strand participants.



Figure 19: How much do you agree with the following statements? % ‘Strongly’ or ‘Somewhat’ agree



Base: Unemployed participants (Kickstart = 270, SWAPs = 240, JFS = 197, JETS = 454, Youth Offer = 333)

### 7.2.4 Barriers to employment

The proportion of unemployed participants who reported at least one barrier to getting a job was 84%. Unemployed JETS (86%) participants were most likely to identify at least one barrier. Kickstart had the lowest proportion, though more than three quarters of this group (77%) still identified at least one barrier to securing a job.

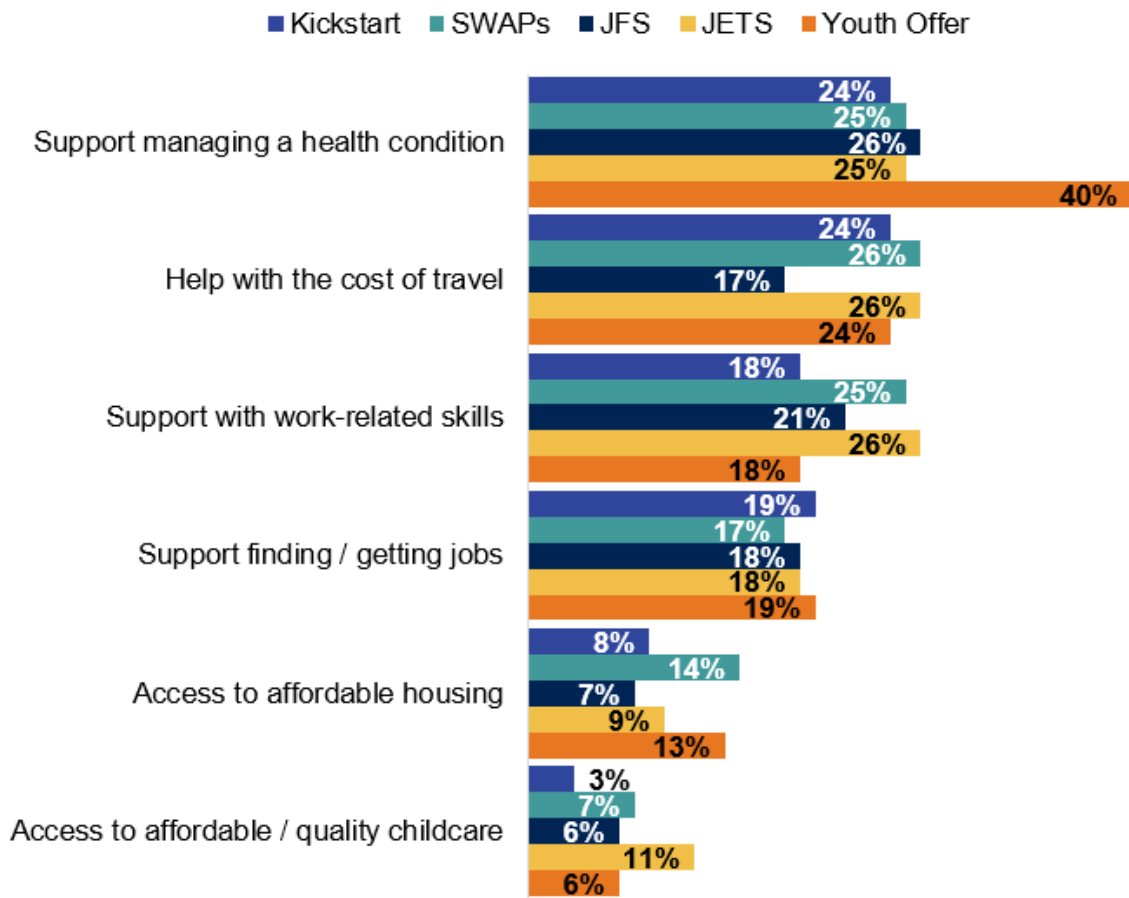
The main barrier to unemployed participants getting a job was their physical or mental health condition (47%). This was the most common barrier regardless of strand participated in. Of unemployed participants not looking for work, 9 in 10 (90%) cited their health condition as a reason it was difficult to secure employment.

Unemployed participants also cited barriers related to transport difficulties (24%), their age (21%), a lack of opportunities matching their skills or qualifications (19%), not enough opportunities in the sector they are interested in (17%), a poor employment record or lack of experience (17%) and caring responsibilities that limited the number of hours they could work (13%). Around 1 in 10 of unemployed participants felt they did not have the relevant certificates or licenses required for available jobs (12%).

### 7.2.5 Support needed

Looking towards what kinds of support would be most helpful to help unemployed participants find employment, Figure 20 shows that support to help manage their physical or mental health condition (29%) was most commonly identified.

**Figure 20: What would help to make it easier for you to find employment?**



Base: Unemployed participants (Kickstart = 270, SWAPs = 240, JFS = 197, JETS = 454, Youth Offer = 333)

Youth Offer participants in particular, were looking for support to help manage a health condition (40%). Unemployed participants were significantly more likely than employed participants to want help and support with the costs of travel to and from work and receiving support and training around finding and getting a job, like interview skills, CV writing skills and communication skills. Around a quarter of unemployed JETS (26%) and SWAPs participants (25%) were looking for support and training with specific work-related skills like further education, spoken or written English and job-specific IT skills.

Across all strands, unemployed participants were less likely than employed participants to say their provision was useful in helping them find employment or progress in their career.

### 7.2.6 Declining offers of employment

Across all strands, fewer than 1 in 10 of those who were unemployed had received a job offer in the past 6 months and decided to not accept (9%). The most common reason for declining a job offer amongst unemployed claimants was travel difficulties (23%). Some participants also reported turning down a job due to their health condition or disability (18%) or because they did not want to do that kind of work (15%).

## 7.3 Non-participants

At the time of interview, just over a third of non-participants were in employment (36%), a significantly lower proportion than those who had taken part in any PfJ strand (41%). Similarly to participants, nine in ten (89%) who had found employment were working in one role.

Two in five (40%) employed non-participants had held a different job to the one they were currently employed in in the past 12 months. As with participants, non-participants who were employed were likely to have started their role in the past 12 months (77%).

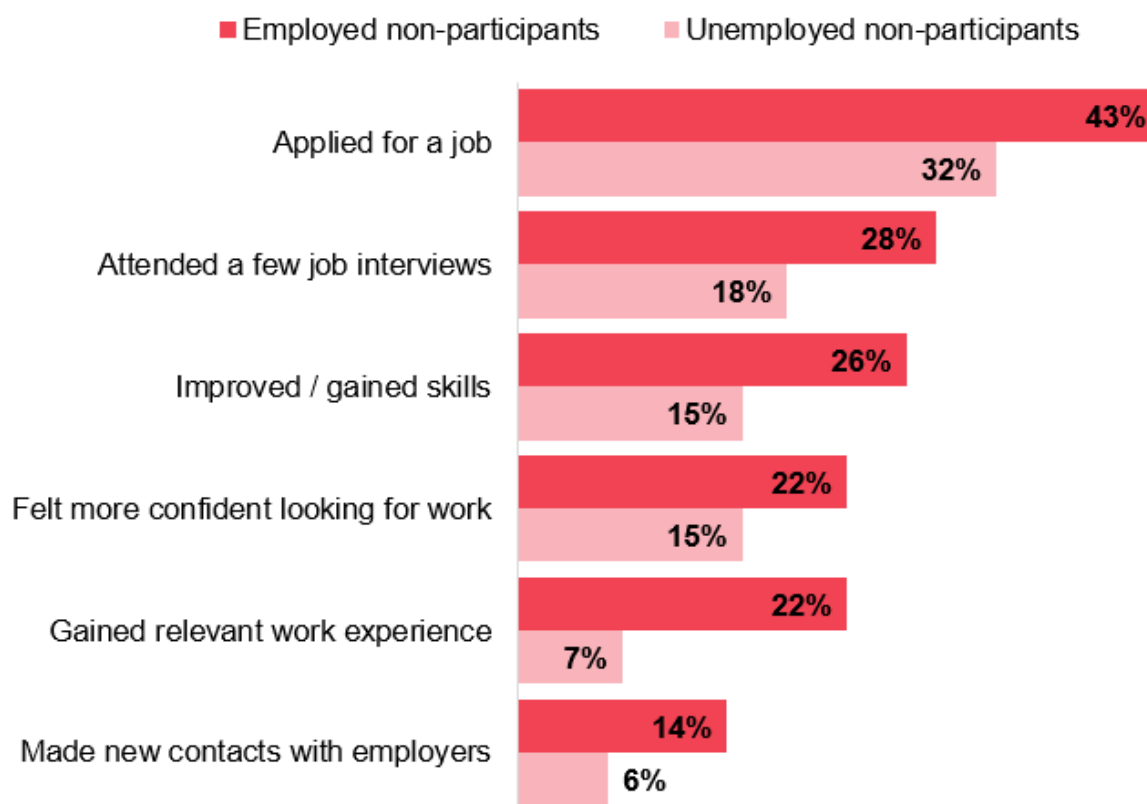
Longer term unemployment was a more common occurrence for non-participants than those who took part in PfJ provision. More than half of unemployed non-participants (56%) had been without work for more than a year, with 2 in 5 (40%) out of work for more than 18 months.

### 7.3.1 Actions taken

Just under a third (32%) of unemployed non-participants had applied for a job in the last 3 months (Figure 21), compared to more than 3 in 5 (61%) unemployed participants. Non-participants were less likely to have done a wide range of actions in recent months in comparison to PfJ participants, including attending job interviews, gaining relevant work experience, improving existing skills or gaining new ones, feeling confident in looking for work or making contact with potential employers. Non-participants who were unemployed were again less likely than employed non-participants to have taken actions that might lead to future employment.

More than 2 in 5 (43%) employed non-participants had applied for a job in the last 3 months. Three fifths (59%) of this group of non-participants had applied for a job and then started it. The other two fifths (41%) were already in employment and searching for a new job.

**Figure 21: Which, if any, of the following actions have you taken in the last 3 months?**



Base: Employed non-participants (1,271) and unemployed non-participants (2,172)

### 7.3.2 Job satisfaction

For non-participants in employment, satisfaction levels with their current roles were similar to employed participants. More than 7 in 10 (72%) were satisfied with their job overall (in comparison to 75% of participants), 69% were satisfied with their commute to and from work, two thirds (66%) with the number of hours they worked each week and just over 3 in 5 (62%) with their work-life balance. Satisfaction with training opportunities available to them, opportunities for career development or their pay, including benefits and tax credits were also in line with levels seen amongst participants.

### 7.3.3 Preparing for work and barriers to securing employment

Significantly more unemployed non-participants (48%) did not feel quite ready to handle a job compared to unemployed PfJ participants (34%). Fewer also reported that they felt they had enough skills to do a job well (58%). A similar proportion, however, said that they would take any kind of job to get money (40%).

Overall, the proportion of unemployed non-participants who faced any barrier was the same as for unemployed participants, with 84% facing at least one barrier. However, non-participants were more likely than participants to cite their physical or mental health condition as a reason why it was difficult for them to find employment. Almost 3 in 5 (59%) unemployed non-participants referenced their health condition as a barrier.

The types of support that non-participants would like to help them find employment were similar to those desired by participants, including support to help manage their health condition (26%), help with the costs of travelling to and from work (19%) or support and training with work-related skills (15%).

Just over 1 in 10 (12%) non-participants had declined a job offer in the last 6 months. The reasons for declining jobs were similar across both participants and non-participants. The main reasons for non-participants not accepting a role included travel issues and difficulties getting there (22%), their health condition or disability (20%), not wanting to do that kind of work (17%), the pay being too low (17%) or the hours not fitting around their other commitments (14%). 1 in 10 (10%) chose not to accept because they were offered a zero hours or temporary contract and 7% felt they were over-qualified.

### **7.3.4 Confidence levels in job searching skills**

Confidence levels in job searching skills were lower amongst non-participants than participants of all strands. Confidence about searching for (63%) and applying for jobs (62%) online was lower amongst non-participants than participants (78% and 77% respectively). Participants were more confident in their abilities to complete a good application and CV (63% of participants overall compared to 52% of non-participants); make a list of the skills they have which could be used to find a job (61% compared to 47%) or make the best impression at an interview (53% compared to 42%).

# 8. Qualitative findings on transitions in and out of work post Plan for Jobs

This chapter draws on qualitative interviews with participants and non-participants who completed the wave 2 survey and transitioned into or out of work between survey waves. It discusses how, and to what extent, participation in PfJ support, and perceptions of the quality of support received affected the long-term outcomes of individuals who entered or left work in the past 12 months. Additionally, it presents findings on how and why people transitioned into and out of employment and how this was affected by their participation or /non-participation in PfJ provision. This evidence is used to consider the future support needs of both groups and the implications for DWP’s support offer.

Participants and non-participants were categorised into four groups. Firstly, they were categorised by whether they had entered or left work in the previous 12 months. Secondly, they were categorised according to the extent to which they felt they had received high quality support. This is shown below in figure 22.

**Figure 22: Categorisation of experiences of participants and non-participants in the wave 2 qualitative research**



## 8.1. Experiences of those who entered work in the previous 12 months of the evaluation period

The experiences of, and long-term effects of PfJ participation or non-participation on, customers who had entered work following the provision were connected to how they viewed the support they had received.

### 8.1.1 Support that customers perceived to be of high quality

Customers who had entered work in the previous 12 months (at wave 2) described having received high quality support in the form of a single consistent advisor, tailored provision, frequent engagement, receiving clear information and financial support. Those who felt that they had received high quality support described it as having a greater positive influence on their employment journey than those who did not.

A regular, single point of contact was the most important factor for participants and non-participants when considering the value of the support they received. Customers described how developing an ongoing relationship with the same advisor helped customers to build trust and rapport. PfJ participants felt that this helped them to progress towards employment. For example, participants recognised their own progress when appointments built upon previous meetings.

Customers who reported receiving tailored provision felt that a single point of contact had been key to removing the barriers they faced to work. Participants felt more prepared to apply for jobs when they had conversations with advisors about their skills. This included discussing the suitability of skills for certain job roles and sectors. After talking about their expertise and experience, these participants felt more confident about looking and applying for jobs that would meet their needs and suit their skills.

*“DWP helped me find opportunities that I wouldn't have thought of. They found me a temporary full-time job that allowed me to sort myself out and find full time employment in my chosen profession.”*

Participant, SWAPs, Female, 50 to 64

PfJ participants who perceived the support they received to have been high-quality and had entered work in the previous 12 months recalled receiving clear information on the types of support available through their PfJ strand. Work Coaches had explicitly explained how the support they were receiving, or could receive, would help them get into work, leading to higher engagement. For example, a Kickstart participant with mental health conditions was encouraged by his Work Coach to participate in Kickstart to gain work experience and felt that his responsibilities to his employer had been well explained. The Work Coach had enquired about the sectors

the participant was interested in and provided a list of vacancies in the desired industry.

*"I would say the most useful was the job through Kickstart...It removed certain barriers for me...I got to expand my hobby of writing into a real job. I lacked professional industry experience before...this was an opportunity to work and write in a professional basis as a copy writer."*

Participant, Kickstart, Male, 26 to 34 [24 when began Kickstart placement]

These PfJ participants also appreciated frequent engagement from Work Coaches. This included regular check-ins between appointments with continued positive encouragement and motivation. Ongoing communication from advisors, depending on the customer's preference and needs, was, in some instances, essential for engagement.

Financial support benefitted some PfJ participants who lacked digital skills or access, work appropriate clothing or money for travel costs. Signposting by Work Coaches helped both participants and non-participants to seek financial advice that they were eligible for, enabling them to afford to attend job interviews and work.

*"They [Work Coach] were friendly and gave me all the information. They also made me aware of other services, like advice with money which was useful...yeah, it was clear what was expected of me".*

Non-participant, Female, 35 to 49

Support from Work Coaches to help increase confidence was especially appreciated by participants who wanted, but were unable to access, mental health support. This included conversations about employability, finances and aspects of their personal lives which may impact the type of work they look for. Customers suggested that they had benefitted from improved confidence with applying for jobs and increased confidence in themselves as capable and worthy of getting a job.

Participants who felt their confidence had improved also expressed a desire to progress, either within their organisation or elsewhere. Alongside this, they reflected on their ability, and need, to continue to develop their skills through internal or external training. These participants wanted additional training but were unsure of the training available or how to enrol onto it and would have appreciated signposting from their Work Coach. Employed participants aged over 50 were less likely to express a desire to progress. Their focus was on maintaining the improved lifestyle that their new job had offered, such as having a sustained income or improved social networks.

*"I like to work to have the income but also to be able to work with other people every day, because otherwise I'm alone ... I like to keep busy."*

Participant, Job Finding Support, Female, 50 to 64



## 8.1.2 Support that customers perceived to be of low quality

Customers who received support which they perceived to be poor quality described previous poor experiences with DWP support, feeling that the provision was not tailored to their needs and/or describing a poor relationship with their Work Coach. Perceptions of poor quality meant that customers did not identify that DWP support had helped them progress towards employment and risked them disengaging from future support.

Customers who felt that the provision was poor quality were likely to think that they were given unsuitable advice and support that was not tailored to their needs. They therefore felt that the support wasn't appropriate for them and left the programme. Customers in this group included those who were highly skilled and those with additional support needs. Both groups felt that Work Coaches or advisors were unable to provide them with relevant advice to support their job-search.

Some customers with specific needs, such as being neurodivergent, reported feeling dissatisfied with the support because it did not feel tailored to their personal needs. Some participants with physical health conditions felt the support was not suitable for their specific needs, such as how to get reasonable adjustments in the workplace where required.

Previous poor experiences with DWP left PfJ participants feeling sceptical of, and with low expectations for, employment support. They were also likely to report poor relationships with their Work Coach or advisor.

Non-participants who had lost highly skilled, professional jobs such as a theatre lighting technician during the pandemic felt that Work Coaches were unable to offer them advice relevant to their skills, experience, or sector. This led this group to disengage. Non-participants in this group who felt they did not need employment support or that it was irrelevant for their circumstances were indifferent towards the support they were offered. This group felt negatively about DWP provision because they were able to find a job without support.

*"I don't believe I had much particular assistance in finding a job but to be fair, I was looking myself and know how to do it so I technically didn't need any help."*

Non-participant, Female, 35 to 49

## 8.2 Experiences of those who had left work in the previous 12 months

The experiences of customers who had entered and subsequently left work following the provision were again connected to how they viewed the support they had received.

## 8.2.1 Support that customers perceived to be of high quality

Participants and non-participants who had left employment and felt that they had received high quality support described positive long-term outcomes as a result of the provision. This group described highly personalised support delivered through frequent engagement with a single, trusted advisor. Like those who moved into work, the strength of this relationship was described as being key to their engagement with their PfJ strand and building their confidence. For non-participants, having a consistent Work Coach also helped them to feel that DWP staff were 'on their side' and willing to engage with their individual needs.

*"The support from my Work Coach at the job centre is really good I would say. My Work Coach came up to me a few weeks ago and slid me a paper, with a job at the jobcentre that he thought I would be good for...He gives me tips for interviews, like what to say and ask. I will be more prepared for interviews in future."*

Participant, Kickstart, 26 – 34 [24 when began Kickstart placement]

Amongst customers with mental health conditions, the opportunity to develop a relationship with a single advisor also created a sense of wellbeing support.

*"The Work Coaches are really good and helpful, they are really motivating and supportive and encouraging. E.g. they will give me some interview questions to practice with and some practical help with my concerns if I'm nervous about a job interview."*

Participant, Kickstart, 26-34 [24 when began Kickstart placement]

Positive outcomes amongst participants who felt they had received high quality support included sustained confidence despite leaving employment or viewing time out of employment as an opportunity to build skills which would help them re-enter work, such as gaining new qualifications. This positive change in confidence and motivation to find work highlights how high-quality support may have facilitated resilience amongst participants who moved out of work.

The increased confidence, attributed to PfJ provision, and their experiences of employment helped participants to maintain motivation when searching for work. Support participants received through their provision, such as help with job applications, interview preparation and suggesting relevant job roles continued to be useful when applying for work again.

For participants with no prior experience of work or who had been long-term unemployed, PfJ provision had helped them to gain work experience, leading them to feel more secure and prepared to re-enter work. This was particularly true for those on Kickstart and Restart.

*"It [Kickstart] removed barriers for me... I lacked professional industry experience before."*

Participant, Kickstart, 25-34

Participants reported that leaving work had a negative impact on their financial stability, and for some, their mental health. However, participants suggested that their outlook was more positive than during previous experiences of looking for work and that PfJ provision had made them more resilient to the effects of being out of work.

Non-participants who felt that they had received high quality support reported a drop in their confidence and motivation since becoming unemployed. They did not report feeling as emotionally resilient to the effects of unemployment as participants had done.

Across this group, parents of young children and those with physical health conditions suggested that becoming unemployed had affected their confidence.

### **8.2.2 Support that customers perceived to be of poor quality**

Like those who entered work, participants and non-participants who felt they had received poor quality support often attributed their poor experience to an inconsistent advisor or Work Coach. Inconsistent relationships meant that the advisor was not able to give relevant suggestions for work or skills development as they did not understand the individual's specific situation or ambitions. Where jobs were suggested by Work Coaches, customers in this group described factors such as location and travel costs not being taken into consideration. Again, this was attributed to a lack of consistent, supportive relationship with an advisor.

*"They are still trying to make me work in a factory, probably because I have worked there before. I don't want to work there, I have bad memories there...I keep say ' No, No, No."*

Participant, SWAP, 35-49, Mental and physical health condition

Participants also described a lack of funding for courses that their advisor had recommended, leaving them unable to attend. Having training needs identified and then not met created a sense of frustration, leaving some participants feeling dissatisfied and unsupported.

Amongst non-participants who felt they had received poor quality support, some reported receiving no support at all beyond financial payments or not feeling supported in their job-search. This group was more likely to feel that their outcomes would have been the same without DWP support.

### **8.2.3 Future support needs amongst those who felt they had received low quality support**

When asked about their future support needs, PfJ participants were unsure what further support they would need to re-enter work. Participants who reported that they did not need further support highlighted how the support had already been successful in helping them to enter work. Some non-participants who felt more certain about the

type of support they'd like to receive to help them re-enter work described being unsure if DWP was able to offer these types of support.

*"I'm not sure what else they can do really. They just ask if there are any other job titles I can look for, or if there are any new jobs I can do. They'll ask if there's anything else they can help with, but I don't know what help they have on offer."*

Non-participant, 35-49, complex and mental/physical conditions

Former PfJ participants who found the return to standard Work Coach support disappointing suggested that Work Coaches did not offer meaningful employment support.

*"Often meetings with Work Coaches are just confirming we've met, it's like a meeting to confirm we've had the meeting. We don't talk about work."*

Participant, Kickstart, 18-25

Customers who had received poor quality support were more likely to express concerns that they would not be able to re-enter employment. This group did not feel optimistic that further support would help address their barriers to employment due to their previous poor experiences.

Barriers to engaging with support amongst those with health conditions included concerns about their health deteriorating and lack of comfort discussing their health with an unfamiliar Work Coach. These customers were sometimes reluctant to ask Work Coaches for the support they needed as a result. This again highlights the importance of a consistent single advisor who customers can trust and suggests that this may be of increased importance amongst those with health conditions.

Similarly, there was a perception amongst some customers that finding an employer who understood and could accommodate their needs would be challenging. This was especially true for people who had negative experiences with employers in the past.

*"They [Work Coaches] might not know how bad it is [my mental health condition] - I've not discussed it with them really, they're just there to see if I'm applying for enough jobs, my job search. They don't ask me about anything personal like my health."*

Participant, JETS, 50-64, Complex and Mental/physical conditions

# 9. Conclusions

## Key findings

- On the whole Plan for Jobs participants were positive about their experience of the strand. Most participants achieved an employment related outcome (finding a job, attending job interviews or applying for a job) after they completed their strand. Participants reported achieving a range of additional employment related outcomes such as gaining new skills and qualifications, work experience (where applicable) or gaining confidence in their skills and ability to look for work.
- At wave two, more than 2 in 5 (41%) of those who had participated in a PfJ strand were employed compared to 31% of non-participants. Whilst employment cannot be directly linked to participation in a strand, as there are multiple factors at play, those who took part in a SWAP (53%), Kickstart (48%) or JFS (48%) were significantly more likely to be employed than respondents to the survey overall (participants and non-participants combined).
- Across both participants and non-participants, a named consistent advisor was a key determinant of participants' perceiving they had received high quality support. Having a single advisor enabled customers to feel a sense of trust between themselves and DWP. Customers who reported feeling that they could trust their advisor were more comfortable discussing their support needs and described feeling that their advisor/Work Coach was 'on their side'. This led to increased engagement with the support on offer.
- Some Jobcentre staff felt that the communication about the availability and nature of PfJ was not clear enough to bridge the knowledge gaps and address some common misconceptions around suitability or usefulness of the different strands. Work Coaches reported feeling overloaded with information at times and unclear on what was appropriate upon the launch of a complex multi-strand policy. This lack of clarity about PfJ support upon launch was noted by DWP staff, partners and customers.
- Customers who felt that they had received tailored, personalised provision reported that DWP support had helped them remove specific barriers to employment. For customers with mental health conditions or low confidence, support to recover from, or cope with the effects of this, had brought them closer to the labour market. Similarly, for those with a lack of work experience, or who had spent a significant period out of the labour market, support to gain work experience could mean that they were able to successfully re-enter work. Customers who experienced specific barriers to entering work, such as poor mental health or learning difficulties, but did not receive support to remove

them described feeling unsupported by DWP. Customers who did not feel that DWP could provide for their needs were at risk of disengaging from PfJ provision or future support.

- Participants who had secured sustained employment reported that their work felt relevant to their personal ambitions and aspirations. They also reported confidence in discussing their work experience and levels of expertise and identifying their prospects for future progression.
- Throughout this evaluation specific challenges faced by those who feel unable to work despite being placed in an Intensive Work Search Group have been identified. These barriers included their health condition, transport issues, speaking English as a second language, caring responsibilities, and housing needs. This group of customers were very varied in their requirements and those with more complex issues, such as mental health, are likely to need a cross-government response.

## Policy recommendations

- At a systems level, DWP provision is part of complex and varied local employment support landscape. In commissioning new provisions, there is therefore a need to ensure that new programmes add value to this existing support offer, and do not undermine or duplicate existing successful programmes through the introduction of competing targets, for example.
- To mitigate against the potential of undermining existing programmes and services, it is crucial that Work Coaches are regularly briefed on changes to the provision landscape and are supported to think about what provision would best meet customer needs over and above the need to meet referral profiles for different programmes.
- Work Coaches should also be supported to understand how local careers services and other local partners outside of DWP provision can add value to customer journeys when new provision is introduced. Claimants would also benefit from further clarity on how external provision interacts with eligibility for Jobcentre programmes whilst claimants are engaging in different programmes
- In addition, when considering staff knowledge about provision, it is important that existing staff with familiarity with different programmes are retained as far as possible until this provision comes to end to provide a consistent support offer to customers.
- The case study research highlighted that where there was a high degree of join-up and coordination between local employment services, the efficacy of the system in matching customers to appropriate provision (and therefore supporting their entry into employment) was seen to be enhanced. DWP should consider whether, in commissioning services, it is also possible to

invest in ways to strengthen these local partnerships and ways of working (e.g. through co-location and/or data sharing arrangements)

- DWP should also work with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to consider how the transition from the European Social Fund to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (which DLUHC are responsible for) will affect these local partnership structures (and particularly whether it poses any risks to their sustainment), and the potential implications this has for the delivery of future employment support services.
- DWP should also consider how the Department's aims and objectives affect how Jobcentre staff are able to engage in local partnership structures. In some areas, partners felt that their focus on inclusion and finding sustainable employment outcomes for the local population (both the inactive as well as the unemployed) was at odds with the Department's perceived focus of moving customers into any employment opportunity as quickly as possible.
- Where possible, customers should be signposted to support available to help with particular work barriers such as a lack of skills or financial difficulties. Similarly, support needs to be tailored to those with physical and mental health conditions as well as those with caring responsibilities to cater for their needs and flexibility requirements.
- Most customers report continuous barriers to sustained employment or progression after completing their support programmes, including high travel costs or lack of relevant skills to progress. Options for ongoing support should be considered where appropriate to ensure any employment outcomes can be sustained long term.
- In delivering future services, DWP should look at how existing contracts with providers can be used to respond quickly to changing labour market dynamics. By the time it became operational, some PfJ strands were not seen to respond effectively to the needs of DWP's customer base. While changes were made to some of these contracts over time to give them broader coverage, DWP should consider whether these services can be adapted (or have the scope to be adapted) even more significantly to best respond to the changing needs of the local population and address local labour market needs.
- Across the case study research, common barriers to work entry that were not easily resolved included language barriers and health (particularly mental health conditions). Further training and guidance may be required across the Jobcentre estate to ensure that Work Coaches feel equipped to identify suitable support for customers with these needs. Staff may benefit from further support in mapping out and understanding possible signposting/referral pathways for these customers in their journeys towards employment to identify the best support option for these individuals in the long-term.

- In terms of employer engagement, consideration should be given to how Jobcentre districts can continue to capitalise on the new relationships that were developed over the course of the pandemic (e.g. through the Kickstart scheme). The research identified a clear need for employment support services that address local recruitment challenges (i.e. skills shortages) while also delivering sustainable employment outcomes for customers based on their personal circumstances. While increasing Jobcentre staff knowledge of different career pathways and their alignment with local skills provision and local labour market opportunities would pose a significant challenge, greater use and integration of careers services for this purpose could offer a potential solution.



# 10. Appendix

This chapter sets out the technical details of how the research was conducted.

## Appendix 1: Local authority case studies

### Case study selection and design

Local authority areas were selected in which to conduct qualitative case studies to explore the implementation of PfJ. This unit of analysis was large enough to observe the employment support system, alongside providing enough customers using each strand of PfJ for sampling purposes.

The selected areas were places with the most need for PfJ and employment support and the highest barriers to achieving job outcomes (based on indicators of deprivation and levels of unemployment). In making the case study selection, it was important to include rural and urban locations, and England, Wales, and Scotland, as well as geographies with regional governments given their different funding structures and political context.

Some case studies were paired to enable comparison between areas with similar governance and funding structures. In these cases, the case study selection worked by pairing areas within the same region/city-system. One case study was focused on an identified priority sector: Health, and Social Care. In making this selection consideration was given to the skills/qualification level requirements for vacancies in this growth sector, and their accessibility to UC claimants without extensive skills development. There are vacancies in this priority sector throughout the UK, and the sector offers an accessible path for job seekers.

Table 10.1 shows the case study areas contained in this report. Representativeness and breadth of coverage were difficult to achieve in the selection, which is illustrative of different systems in which national PfJ has been delivered.

**Table 10.1 – Overview of case study areas and rationale for selection**

Area	Fieldwork dates	Rationale for selection
Blackburn with Darwen, North West England	Oct-Dec 2021	Area of ethnic diversity. Badly affected by COVID-19 pandemic with higher cumulative rates of infection compared to regional and national averages.
Manchester City, North West England		Well-established Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA). Unique features giving rise to varied delivery (e.g. JETS subcontracted via the MCA).

Cornwall, South West England		Large Local Authority area recently created from several districts. Largely rural. Seasonal employment.
Rhondda Cynon Taff, Wales	Jan-March 2022	Neighbouring authority to Cardiff. Significant and longstanding economic issues <sup>23</sup> : low earnings, gross value added (GVA), and high levels of economic activity.
Cardiff, Wales		Wales. Strong economy (including public sector and financial services). Pockets of affluence as well as high levels of deprivation.
Peterborough (Health and social care sector), East of England		In selecting the local authority for this case study, regions with the largest vacancy rates in social care were shortlisted. The East region also had health and social care identified in strategic plans. Considering this alongside having a high unemployment rate, Peterborough was selected.
Waltham Forest, London	May – July 2022	Large movement onto UC following pandemic. Diverse area, including Eastern European community. Opportunity to focus on how DWP's offer interacts with devolved structures in London.
North Lanarkshire, Scotland		Scotland. Linked to Glasgow, but with low jobs density.
Middlesbrough, North East		A 'levelling up' target town.
Glasgow, Scotland		Scotland's biggest city. Significant economic change in recent years.

Each case study included qualitative interviews with several stakeholders; Jobcentre staff; provider staff; customers; and wider partners. Over 300 interviews were completed with stakeholders between October 2021 and August 2022. Full details are provided in a later section of the Appendix.

## Recruitment

After liaising with the Jobcentre SPOC in each case study area, volunteers to be interviewed were sought across Jobcentre staff in various job roles. This included senior managers, and customer-facing staff. Staff in sub-contracted providers leading

<sup>23</sup> [Regional economic and labour market profiles, April 2020 \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales)

the main PfJ contracts were also approached to take part. A wider sample of partners, including training providers, representatives from the voluntary and community sector, and employers and employer-representative bodies were snowballed from staff interviewed as appropriate. The Department for Work and Pensions provided a sample of customers known to have used each type of provision.

The recruitment of partners primarily through Jobcentre staff was intended to reflect the working relationships present in the cases. This method necessarily meant partners involved in the research were engaged with Jobcentre and their employment programmes. Introductions to wider stakeholders were also guided and informed by scoping work and the services mentioned by customers. Attempts were made to engage these partners through internet searches where appropriate. The sampling approach sought to capture a diversity of characteristics among respondents and factors that might affect experience of the implementation of PfJ. While there was a breadth of stakeholders involved in each case study, all aspects and viewpoints may not have been represented and there was variation in participation among partner types between areas.

The number of interviews achieved and balance between stakeholder groups varied between case study areas, depending on factors such as the number of Jobcentre offices in the locality, the presence of other funding streams, and number of PfJ strands operating in each area, and at the time of the case studies. For example, the Sector-based Work Academies Programme does not run in Wales using DWP funding, and Restart is not delivered in Scotland.

## **Conduct of fieldwork**

Interviews were conducted over the telephone or via Microsoft Teams, and recordings made with respondents' permission and transcribed word for word.

The case studies in Wave 3 included observations of Work Coach and customer appointments. These enabled the research team to data capture about interactions, including questions and responses so researchers could understand the influence of the place and environment, gather insight in real-time (rather than recalled in interviews) and gather insights rather than rely on self-report (which may elicit differences between what people say and what they do). Observations were structured using AEIOU<sup>24</sup>, an ethnographic method that provides a framework for recording and classifying data about a subject's Activities, Environments, Interactions, Objects, and Users. Observations were followed by short interviews to gather reflections on the session.

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<sup>24</sup> A summary of the AEIOU framework can be found here:  
<https://openpracticelibrary.com/practice/aeiou-observation-framework/>.

## Case study sample profile

The table below (10.2) details the number of interviews completed by case study area, and respondent type.

**Table 10.2 – Case study sample profile**

Case study area	Jobcentre staff	Provider staff	Partners	Customers	Total
Blackburn with Darwen	10	14*	2	7	31
Cardiff	10	10	5	10	35
Cornwall	15	5	10	9	39
Glasgow	6	3	6	10	25
Manchester City	9	3	9	10	31
Middlesborough	14	5	5	10	34
North Lanarkshire	13	3	4	10	30
Peterborough	10	5	14	21**	51
Rhondda Cynon Taff	15	3	7	10	35
Waltham Forest	10	4	6	10	30
National stakeholders			10		10
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>354</b>

\*This included staff from JFS which was delivered nationally

\*\*Total includes seven people studying for a Health and Social care apprenticeship

<b>Programme</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
JETS	24	24%
JFS	13	13%
Kickstart	27	27%
SWAPs	16	16%
IWS/Youth Offer	15	15%
Restart	6	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Claim type</b>		
Single	88	87%

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Couple	13	13%
Total	101	100%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	44	44%
Female	53	52%
Prefer not to say/other	4	4%
Total	101	100%
<b>Whether claimant has dependent children</b>		
Yes	23	23%
No	78	77%
Total	101	100%
<b>Age</b>		
16-24	44	44%
25-49	38	38%
50+	19	19%
Total	101	100%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	79	78%
Black	6	6%
Mixed	5	5%
Asian	5	5%
Other	4	4%
Unknown/ prefer not to say	2	2%
Total	101	100%
<b>Claimant disability/health conditions</b>		
None	59	58%
Yes (MH)	8	8%

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Yes (MSK)	6	6%
Yes (other)	13	13%
Yes (co-morbid)	14	14%
Unknown/ prefer not to say	1	1%
Total	101	100%
<b>Claimant work/benefit status (at interview)</b>		
Economically inactive (not claiming)	4	4%
Claiming benefit	54	53%
Working full-time (30 hours or more/week)	21	21%
Working part-time (1 to 29 hours/week)	21	21%
Self-employed	1	1%
Total	101	100%
<b>Highest qualification level</b>		
No qualifications	5	5%
<Level 2	15	15%
Level 2 or 3	56	55%
Level 4+	24	24%
Unknown	1	1%
Total	101	100%
<b>Work history (prior to current employment for those in work)</b>		
Never worked	7	7%
Unemployed <6 months	28	28%
Unemployed 6 months-24 months	35	35%
Unemployed 2 years+	29	29%
Unknown	2	2%
Total	101	100%

## **Case study data analysis**

The case study strand consisted of over 300 depth interviews, generating a significant amount of varied data to be analysed, including transcripts from recorded interviews (where permission was given), detailed field notes from face-to-face observations, and data from digital diaries.

The analysis approach incorporated two interrelated but distinct phases: at the data management stage, the data were coded and synthesised into a thematic framework. Given the variety, data was managed using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). CAQDAS (Atlas.ti) enabled within and cross-case analysis, giving a consistent structure to facilitate comparison, and enabled data to be reanalysed throughout the evaluation. This approach ensured systematic and consistent treatment of all data units and allowed for the analytical framework to be refined and modified in the early stages of its use. The next stage, interpretation, involved comparing/ contrasting views of respondents and identifying patterns within and between cases. The advantages of using software include that source data is retained within the analysis and coding structures and codes mean that each case, and group of cases, can be explored in depth to understand the drivers and inhibitors of circumstances and contexts.

The approach allowed full within case analysis (looking in detail at each individual case) and cross-case analysis (comparing individual cases and groups of cases such as any differences experience).

## Appendix 2: Quantitative methodology

### Questionnaire development

At wave 1 and wave 2 the questionnaire was developed by the Ipsos team and agreed with the DWP team. At both waves the questionnaire was piloted to test how well the survey questions worked in practice. The pilot illustrated that the questions worked well and that respondents were generally happy to take part.

### Sample design

A representative sample of strand participants was drawn across the Plan for Job strands: Kickstart, Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs), Job-Finding Support (JFS) and Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS). A sample of Universal Credit Intensive Work Search claimants aged 18-24 were also drawn, as the majority would have received Youth Offer support (through Youth Employability Coach, Youth Hub and Youth Employment Programme). For the non-participant research, a representative sample of Universal Credit customers in the Intensive Work Search group who were not participating in any of the strands was drawn.

The DWP sample was drawn in stages, using start data up to the end of October 2021 where available. It was quality assured in December 2021 and January 2022 ahead of Wave 1 fieldwork beginning in February 2022.

Youth Offer customers proved harder to engage during the fieldwork period. An additional Youth Offer sample containing 5,183 records was therefore sent in March 2022.

Ahead of Wave 2 in November 2022, an additional sample was provided by DWP. For participants, the sample provided were near-contemporaries of the W1 sample, with similar start dates on any PfJ provision. This sample was quality assured in October 2022 to remove any duplicates or 'bad' records.

The tables below (10.3) outline start dates of strand participants for each wave of the survey as well as time in IWS for non-participants in Plan for Jobs offers.

**Table 10.3: Start dates of strand participants**

#### Wave 1

Non-participants in Plan for Jobs offers	Universal Credit (UC) Intensive Work Search (IWS) claimants: claiming UC in the IWS group in October 2021.  Stratified by age, gender, self-employed vs not self-employed, and length of claim.
JETS participant	Start date after 1 October 2021
JFS participant	Start date after 1 May 2021



Kickstart participant	Start date after 1 June 2021
SWAPs participant	Start date after 1 August 2021
Youth Offer participant (probable starter on Youth Employment Programme)	Could not be reliably identified from participation data, so a larger sample of under-25 UC IWS claimants with claim lengths of 0-3 months was drawn instead

## Wave 2

Non-participants in Plan for Jobs offers	Universal Credit (UC) Intensive Work Search (IWS) claimants: claiming UC in the IWS group on 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2022.  Stratified by age, gender, self-employed vs not self-employed, and length of claim.
JETS participant	Start date between November 2021 - March 2022
JFS participant	Start date between November 2021 - January 2022
Kickstart participant	Start date between November 2021 - March 2022
SWAPs participant	Start date between November 2021 - March 2022
Youth Offer participant (starter on Youth Employment Programme)	Start date between November 2021 - March 2022

## Fieldwork contact strategy

Wave 1 fieldwork was conducted between 17<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and 8,325 survey interviews were completed. In total, 6,124 customers completed the survey online and 2,201 over the telephone.

Wave 2 fieldwork was conducted between 1<sup>st</sup> November and 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 and 6,950 survey interviews were completed. In total, 4,929 customers completed the survey online and 2,021 over the telephone.

At both waves, DWP customers who had been sampled for the study were invited to take part in an online survey through an email invitation.

Three reminder emails were sent to encourage people to respond. Customers who did not complete the survey within the first two weeks were contacted by telephone

and invited to complete the survey using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI).

## Achieved interviews

A breakdown of interview completes by strands, including non-participants, participants and Restart, is outlined below.

Strand	Wave 1 completed interviews	Wave 2 completed interviews
Kickstart	874	526
SWAPs	790	519
JFS	848	394
JETS	817	799
Youth Offer	526	498
Restart** <sup>25</sup>	273	255
Non-participant	3,462	3568
Early leavers	735	391
<b>Total interviews</b>	<b>8,325</b>	<b>6,950</b>

## Data recoding and reassignment

Some information and participant profiles changed between when the sample was drawn (October 2021) and the Wave 1 survey was conducted (February and April 2022). For example, a participant may have been recorded in the sample as a non-participant and since taken part in one of the strands. To address these changes, recoding and re-assignment took place. At Wave 1 and Wave 2, those who indicated they did not recall participating in a particular strand but identified that they had received certain types of support at three questions in the survey (Q17, Q18 and Q19) were recoded as participants of the strand which reflected the support they had received. Customers who took part in multiple strands were asked to talk about one strand only, usually the strand which at that point had received the lowest number of responses to the survey. Where the sample indicated a customer had taken part in a strand, but the customer did not recall this nor outlined that they received specific types of support within the survey, they were recorded as a non-participant. Additionally, a standalone group of 'early leavers' were defined as customers who had not completed the strand.

<sup>25</sup> \*\*Restart participants were excluded from the sample as they were used for the Restart evaluation. However, 273 customers told us they were or have taken part in Restart when interviewed. The data has not been included in the survey results as they are not representative of all Restart participants.

## **Weighting**

At both waves, each strand, excluding Youth Offer, was weighted to their respective participant profile. For Youth Offer, no reliable population estimates were available, so their data were left unweighted. Non-participants were weighted to the profile of all eligible customers not engaging with Plan for Jobs. All the data was weighted by: gender, length of claim and region.

## **Reporting notes**

Whilst the design of the quantitative survey is reliable, there are several factors and caveats to consider when discussing the results and implications.

### **Self-reported measures**

All results are self-reported and have not been verified. For instance, whether a customer has been referred to another strand, organisation or accessed further support has not been verified.

Evidence suggests that customers were often confused/not confident about who was delivering the support (DWP or other organisation) and might be unable to differentiate between the various types of organisations or types of support. The data presented in this report is based on their stated answers. In addition, delivery varied throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with several strands being delivered online.

Similarly, those who participated in multiple strands were asked to answer questions on one of the strands only. This was made clear throughout the questionnaire. However, customers may not have been able to differentiate between the types of support received or differentiate between Plan for Jobs support and wider support received.

### **Customer recall**

There is a gap between the sampling period (those who started on programmes or made UC claims up to the end of October 2021) and the survey fieldwork period (February – April 2022 and November – December 2022) which might have affected people's recollection.

### **Generalising findings to all Plan for Jobs participants**

The sample of Plan for Jobs participants surveyed are not representative of all Plan for Jobs participants to date. They were selected from a specific cohort of people who started on PfJ strands from mid-2021 to the end of October 2021. As such, the sample is representative of customers receiving support during this period.

Alongside this cross-cutting evaluation of PfJ, there were also individual evaluations covering some of the PfJ strands. These individual strand evaluations will provide more detailed feedback on participants in each strand.

## Influence of Plan for Jobs on outcomes

Employment outcomes are self-reported and have not been verified by other data sources. It is not possible to directly attribute any outcomes to participation in the PfJ programme at this stage. Customers could have gained employment due to several other or contributing factors.

## Survey Data Cluster Analysis

At Wave 1, Cluster Analysis was run on survey responses of unemployed respondents. All unemployed participant and non-participant respondents were included in the cluster analysis.

Cluster Analysis is a statistical method used for grouping individuals into clusters, such that individuals within a cluster are as similar as possible to one another and as different as possible to individuals in other clusters.

The cluster analysis aimed to identify groups of unemployed people distinguished by their confidence and aspirations. Sets of statements taken from responses to two question sets were considered for segmenting participants in the study. The first set of three items related to their ability to enter the job market, whilst the second set of nine items pertained to their confidence with job search skills and activities. The nine items chosen for the cluster analysis segmentation model each measured on a five-point scale running from strongly disagree (1) through to strongly agree (5), or not confident at all (1) through to very confident (5). Three of the items related to confidence in doing a job and six items related to finding work. The statements and their associations with each segment cluster group are discussed in detail in Table 10.4.

**Table 10.4: Statements used in segmentation model**

Statement	Struggling Unemployed	Staying Afloat	Work Ready	Adept but withheld	Total
I am not quite ready to handle a job	4.1	2.4	1.3	4.2	2.8
I have enough skills to do a job well	3.0	4.0	4.7	4.4	4.1
I would take almost any kind of job to get money	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.0
Making a good list of all the skills that you have and can be used to find a job	2.0	3.1	4.4	4.2	3.5
Talking to friends and other contacts to find out about potential employers who	2.0	2.9	4.4	4.1	3.4
Completing a good job application and CV	1.9	3.1	4.5	4.2	3.5

Contacting and persuading potential employers to consider you for a job	1.6	2.5	4.1	3.8	3.0
Searching for jobs online (using computers, Smart phones, internet, etc.)	2.4	3.8	4.7	4.4	3.9
Getting help in order to become familiar with a new job	1.9	3.0	4.3	4.1	3.4
Unweighted n	890	1,222	1,216	773	4,101

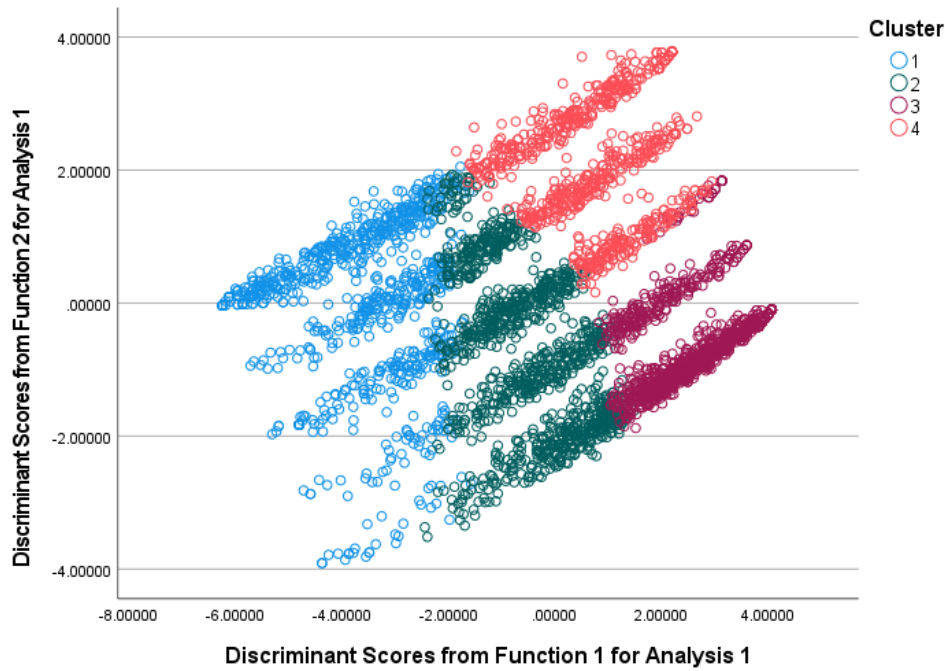
Note: 1="Strongly disagree", 5 = " Strongly agree" 1='Not confident at all', 5 ='Very confident"

Profiling these segments by customers' socio-demographics draws out their common characteristics, barriers and bridges to work, with the aim of enabling DWP to better understand the audience.

A two-step clustering approach was adopted to segment participants on the nine selected statements.

The first step was a hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis to group respondents into clusters by minimizing the variance within clusters and maximizing the variance between them. Having obtained the most appropriate cluster structure, K-means clustering was used to refine the obtained clustering solutions. Following the analysis of K-means outputs, clustering solutions containing four and five clusters were judged to offer the clearest separation between groups of participants. However, having run a discriminant analysis to validate the clustering solutions, the separation of groups in a five-cluster solution was judged to be non-satisfactory because it was difficult to provide a suitable interpretation of one of the clusters. The graph below demonstrates a clear separation of clusters on discriminant scores in a four-cluster solution. This model was chosen for use in the profiling analysis and is described in greater detail in the appropriate section of the report. A detailed description of the clusters is included in [Chapter 3](#) and the detailed profiles of participants can be seen in Table 10.5 and non-participants in Table 10.6.

A correlation matrix of statements from both sets was obtained to screen for presence of collinearity amongst variables. We defined unacceptable levels of collinearity between two statements to occur when the correlation coefficient exceeded 0.7. A high degree of collinearity is an undesirable property in statistical analysis which can adversely affect the robustness and validity of the segmentation analysis. Effectively, the two variables are measuring the same property and one is therefore redundant in terms of additional information. Therefore, if two variables were found to be highly correlated, one of them was dropped from the segmentation analysis. After running the correlation matrix, three items were found to correlate highly with other statements and were removed.



**Table 10.5: Profile of participant segment groups**

Statement	Struggling Unemployed	Staying Afloat	Work Ready	Adept but Withheld	Total average
How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	4.8	5.7	6.8	6.5	6.2
To what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	5.4	6.4	8.1	7.3	7.1
How happy did you feel yesterday?	5.5	6.0	7.3	6.8	6.7
How anxious did you feel yesterday?	7.4	6.4	5.0	5.9	5.8
<b>My physical or mental health issues make it difficult to get a job (%)</b>					
No	38%	62%	80%	65%	68%
Yes	62%	38%	20%	35%	32%
<b>Poor employment record/ lack of work experience make it difficult to get a job (%)</b>					

No	74%	74%	86%	90%	82%
Yes	26%	26%	14%	11%	18%
<b>Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more? (%)</b>					
No	24%	41%	65%	46%	50%
Yes	76%	59%	35%	54%	50%
<b>Support to manage a physical or mental health condition would help to make it easier for you to progress in work/find employment (%)</b>					
No	61%	77%	91%	78%	81%
Yes	39%	24%	9%	22%	19%
<b>Would you feel able to use the internet to access government services if they were available online? (%)</b>					
Yes, able to	56%	80%	93%	86%	85%
Yes, able to but with help	33%	14%	5%	12%	12%
No, not able	6%	3%	1%	1%	2%
Don't know	4%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Prefer not to say	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Weighted n	153	654	761	416	1,984
Unweighted n	141	524	653	324	1,642

**Table 10.6: Profile of non-participant segment groups**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Struggling Unemployed</b>	<b>Staying Afloat</b>	<b>Work Ready</b>	<b>Adept but Withheld</b>	<b>Total average</b>
<b>How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?</b>	4.1	5.4	6.1	5.9	5.2
<b>To what extent do you feel that the things you do</b>	4.6	5.8	7.3	6.9	5.9

<b>in your life are worthwhile?</b>					
<b>How happy did you feel yesterday?</b>	4.5	5.6	6.4	6.2	5.5
<b>How anxious did you feel yesterday?</b>	8.0	6.1	5.4	6.5	6.7
<b>My physical or mental health issues make it difficult to get a job (%)</b>					
No	24%	54%	77%	50%	48%
Yes	76%	46%	23%	50%	52%
<b>Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more? (%)</b>					
No	11%	35%	53%	33%	30%
Yes	89%	65%	47%	67%	70%
<b>Support to manage a physical or mental health condition would help to make it easier for you to progress in work/find employment (%)</b>					
No	49%	73%	86%	69%	67%
Yes	51%	27%	14%	31%	33%
<b>Over the past 12 months, have you received support in CV/Cover Letter writing (%)</b>					
No	89%	75%	73%	76%	79%
Yes	11%	25%	27%	24%	21%
<b>Would you feel able to use the internet to access government services if they were available online? (%)</b>					
Yes, able to	45%	72%	90%	81%	69%
Yes, able to but with help	31%	20%	8%	14%	20%



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No, not able	14%	3%	1%	3%	6%
Don't know	8%	5%	0%	1%	4%
Prefer not to say	2%	0%	1%	2%	1%
Weighted n	510	437	312	308	1,567
Unweighted n	574	411	314	298	1,597

## Appendix 3: Qualitative methodology

### Wave 1 follow-up interviews

Sixty telephone interviews were conducted with customers who had taken part in the wave 1 survey. They had all agreed to be recontacted by Ipsos. The survey sample was drawn in October 2021 and consisted of eligible customers who had or had not engaged with Plan for Jobs since June 2021. Approximately half of the sample reported both complex needs and mental and/or physical health issues. Quotas were established to ensure an even distribution of respondents across each category.

**Table 10.7: Sample breakdown of the wave 1 depth interviews**

<b>Employment status</b>	Employed	20
	Unemployed (and looking)	20
	Unemployed (and not looking)	20
<b>Participation in PfJ</b>	Participant	30
	Non-participant	30
<b>Complex needs / disadvantaged groups</b>	Yes & employed	5
	No & employed	15
	Yes & unemployed but looking for work	6
	No & unemployed but looking for work	14
	Question not asked to unemployed and not looking	N/A
<b>Age</b>	Under 25	18
	26-49	15
	50 and over	27
<b>Gender</b>	Woman	33
	Man	27
<b>Region</b>	East Midlands	5
	East of England	5
	London	7
	North East	5
	North West	3

	Scotland	8
	South East	6
	South West	5
	Wales	6
	West Midlands	5
	Yorkshire & the Humber	5

## Wave 2 follow-up interviews

Sixty telephone interviews were conducted between March and April 2023 with customers who had taken part in the wave 2 survey. They had all agreed to be recontacted by Ipsos. Approximately half of the sample reported both complex needs and mental and/or physical health issues. Quotas were established to ensure an even distribution of respondents across each category.

**Table 10.8: Sample breakdown of the wave 2 depth interviews**

<b>Employment status</b>	Moved into work in the past 12 months	30
	Move out of work in the past 12 months	30
<b>Participation in PfJ</b>	Participant	41
	Non-participant	19
<b>Complex needs / disadvantaged groups</b>	Yes & in work	6
	No & in work	24
	Yes & out of work	7
	No & out of work	23
<b>Mental and/or physical health conditions</b>	Yes	12
	No	48
<b>Age</b>	Under 25	19
	26-49	25
	50 and over	16
<b>Gender</b>	Woman	32
	Man	28
<b>Region</b>	East Midlands	4
	East of England	7

	London	5
	North East	3
	North West	7
	Scotland	8
	South East	7
	South West	4
	Wales	6
	West Midlands	6
	Yorkshire & the Humber	3

**Tool development**

The follow-up interviews with both wave 1 and wave 2 respondents were guided by a topic guide. The topic guides were developed in discussion with DWP and were designed to reflect the aims and objectives of the study. There were 3 discussion guides for the wave 1 follow up interviews for use with participants who were: employed, unemployed but looking and unemployed but not looking. There were 2 discussion guides for the wave 2 follow up interviews, one each for customers who had transitioned into work or transitioned out of work.

**Data management and analysis approach**

All interviews were recorded using encrypted digital recorders. Recordings were either transcribed verbatim or researchers wrote detailed notes, listening back to recordings to ensure no data was lost.

The data collected from the qualitative research was entered into an analysis grid in Microsoft Excel, used as the basis for thematic analysis. The analysis grid grouped the findings from the interviews into themes, based around the study objectives and those which emerged through analysis. In addition, analysis considered similarities and differences among different subgroups such as participant in Plan for Jobs, complex needs, health condition, age, gender and region.

Qualitative research is used to map the range and diversity of different types of experience rather than indicate the prevalence of any one particular experience. As such, numerical language is not used and findings are not aimed to be statistically representative.

## Appendix 4: Research Materials

### Wave 1 questionnaire

#### CATI ADD A TEXT BOX WITH CONTACT'S PROVISION AND EMAIL ADDRESS

For CATI: Good morning/afternoon. Could I speak to [named contact or appointee name if available from sample]? My name is ... I'm calling from Ipsos MORI, an independent market research company.

ALL: [CATI: We are] [WEB: Ipsos MORI is] conducting a survey on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The aim is to find out more about people's experiences with looking for work and using DWP support to help the Department improve the services it provides.

**CATI:** You should have received a letter or an email about this research already.

if necessary: confirm email address [show from sample] where email was sent.

if a letter invite is requested, confirm address [show from sample] and record as 'requested postal invite'

if necessary/verification is requested, more info can be found here:

<https://ipsos.uk/planforjobsinfo>

IF PARTICIPANT: Our data shows that you took/are taking part in [PROVISION NAME FROM SAMPLE:]. We would like to find out more about what was the experience like, what worked well and what could be improved.

IF NON PARTICIPANT: We would like to hear from you even if you've not received any support from DWP so far.

#### SHOW ALL

Your views will help DWP understand the experiences, circumstances, and needs of people like you and the support they need.

The survey should take about 25 minutes to complete depending on your answers.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you can change your mind at any time. Participating will not affect your benefits in any way, now, or in the future.

Your survey answers will be combined with the answers from other people taking part and used for research purposes only. Any feedback you give us will be entirely confidential and your responses will be treated anonymously.

If you would like to read the Privacy Notice beforehand you can access it online at <https://ipsos.uk/planforjobs>

WEB: Please click 'next' if you are happy to complete the survey.

CATI: Are you happy to proceed with the interview?

[mailto:0](#). [CATI: We] [WEB: I] understand that you receive [UNIVERSAL CREDIT/INSERT BENEFIT NAME FROM SAMPLE]. Please can you confirm this information is correct?

1. Yes, that's correct [CONTINUE]
2. No, but I was in the past [CONTINUE]
3. No, I haven't received it before or had any interactions with DWP [THANK AND CLOSE]

## MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

### Section 1: Employment Status and History

ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE APART FROM 13 WHICH SHOULD BE SET AS MC

#### 1. To start with, could you please confirm your current employment status?

If you are doing more than one job please select your main job, that is the one where you earn the most money.

SINGLE CODE. DO NOT READ OUT BUT PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY

1. In paid employment – working full time (30+ hours per week)
2. In paid employment – working part-time (8-29 hours per week)
3. In paid employment – working part-time (under 8 hours per week)
4. Self-employed - working full time (30+ hours per week)
5. Self-employed - working full time (8-29 hours per week)
6. Self-employed – working part-time (under 8 hours per week)
7. Unemployed and seeking work
8. Not employed – stay at home parent
9. Not employed because of long term illness or disability
10. Not employed for another reason
11. Full-time student
12. Retired
13. I'm not looking for work/I'm not fit to work
99. Prefer not to say

ASK EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6), NUMERIC

#### 2. How many separate jobs do you currently have ADD IF SELF EMPLOYED (Q1=4-6) [including your self-employment]?

If you work at several different places but are paid by one organisation/ agency, please count this as one job.

Please typewrite in the number of paid jobs

Please probe fully and write in the number of paid jobs

ALLOW 1-10. SOFT CHECK above 4.

1. [TEXT BOX TO ENTER NUMBER OF PAID JOBS]

98. Don't know

99. Prefer not to say

ASK IF EMPLOYED, Q1=1-6, SINGLE CODE

**3. Which of the following best describes the contract for your IF MORE THAN ONE (Q2=>2) insert [main] job?**

*One answer, READ OUT*

1. A zero-hours contract
2. A casual/flexible contract
3. A temporary/fixed term or seasonal contract with more than three months remaining
4. A temporary/fixed term or seasonal contract with less than three months remaining
5. A permanent or open-ended job/contract
6. Apprenticeship or another training scheme
7. I do not have a contract
8. Something else (specify)
99. Prefer not to say

ASK Q1=1-12, SINGLE CODE

ASK IF NON PARTICIPANT AND HAVE HEARD OF THE PROGRAMMES (Q9 = 1-8)

ALL OPTIONS EXCEPT OPTIONS 2 and 4 APPLY TO NON PARTICIPANT AND DROP OUT

**4. How long have you been IF UNEMPLOYED (Q1=7) [unemployed and looking for work] IF EMPLOYED OR SELF-EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6) [doing this job] IF NOT WORKING (Q1=8-12) [not working]?**

*One answer, DO NOT READ OUT BUT PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY*

1. Less than 3 months
2. More than 3 and less than 6 months
3. More than 6 and less than 12 months
4. More than 12 and less than 18 months
5. More than 18 months
6. Not applicable [SHOW ONLY TO THOSE NOT WORKING Q1=8-12]
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL UNEMPLOYED AND OUT OF WORK, Q1=7-10 AND 12, SINGLE CODE

**5. How much time have you spent doing paid work since leaving education?**

Please think about the paid work you have done as either an employed or self-employed person.

One answer, READ OUT

1. I have never worked before
2. Spent most of my time not working
3. Spent about as much time working as not working
4. Worked solidly with one or two breaks
5. Worked solidly without a break until recently
99. Prefer not to say

IF Q1 = CODE 10 (NOT EMPLOYED FOR ANOTHER REASON) ASK Q6B

ASK IF NOT LOOKING FOR WORK Q1=13

**6b. You mentioned that you are not working but did not say you are seeking work at the moment. Could you tell me why you are not currently seeking work?**

MUTLICODE, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE, REASSURE THEY DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER

1. Due to my health/mental health issues
2. Due to my caring/childcare responsibilities
3. Due to my personal circumstances
4. I am not interested in finding work
5. I have given up trying to find work



6. Other, please specify
7. Prefer not to say

ASK CURRENTLY EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6) OR RECENTLY EMPLOYED (Q1=7-10 and Q4=1-4), SINGLE CODE

**7. What IF EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6) [is] IF EMPLOYED IN THE PAST (Q5=2-5) [was] the main activity of the company/organisation you IF RECENTLY UNEMPLOYED (Q1 = 7-10 AND Q4 = 1-4) [most recently] IF EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6) [work] IF EMPLOYED IN THE PAST (Q1=7-10 and Q4=1-4) [worked] for?**

One answer, *DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE AS NECESSARY*

1. Administration/Office including public sector and human resources
2. Agriculture and Land-Based Services
3. Arts and Media
4. Automotive Industry, passenger Transport, and logistics
5. Beauty and Therapy
6. Care/Childcare/Social Care
7. Chemical, Oil and Nuclear Industry
8. Customer Service and Retail
9. Education / Teaching
10. Energy & Utilities Industry
11. Electricians and Building Services
12. Facilities Management
13. Food and Drink
14. Financial Services
15. Health Industry
16. Hospitality Leisure and Tourism
17. Information Technology and Telecoms
18. Manufacturing & Engineering
19. Security and Safety
20. Sports & Recreation
21. Voluntary, Charity & Social Enterprise
22. Other public sector
23. Other private sector
24. Other voluntary sector
98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE CODE]
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE CODE]

## Section 2: DWP Employment Support Programmes

DWP offers a range of different support programmes to help people look for work, find work, gain qualifications or training or receive other employment-related support.

These include one-to-one or group sessions with a work coach, training provided by an external provider or a youth hub, work experience or work placement or job opportunities with specific employers in your area.

**ASK ALL, MULTICODE 1-8; 9 and 98 EXCLUSIVE**

**9. IF PARTICIPANT: Our data shows that you took part in [PROVISION NAME], [ELSE: which, if any, of the following [IF PARTICIPANT: other] employment support programmes have you heard of? These programmes could be provided by DWP or another organisation.**

*Please select all that apply. DO NOT SHOW PROVISION FROM SAMPLE, AUTOMATICALLY CODE IN AS AWARE.*

*IF NECESSARY: These programme could be provided by DWP or another organisation*

*Multi code, READ OUT*

**1. Youth Hub**

*Click for more detail*

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Informal club spaces providing self-led employment support for people ages 16-24 outside of the Jobcenters. Hubs include physical and virtual safe spaces organised in partnerships with local colleges, charities and training providers where members are free to socialise, get advice, and learn new skills.*

**2. Youth Employment Programme**

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*A structured 13-week programme for people ages 16-24 with a Jobcentre work coach which typically includes CV and jobs application support, matching with local job opportunities, and referrals to a range of traineeships, work experiences, and apprenticeships including Kickstart and SWAPS.*

**3. Youth Employability Coaching**

*IF NECESSARY:*

*A flexible 13-week programme for people ages 16-24 with complex needs who might benefit from tailored one-on-one support. Support might include the work coach*

*attending UC claimant's meetings with support organisations and traineeship providers, as well as continued mentorship after a job has been secured.*

#### **4. Kickstart**

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*One 6-month job, subsidised by the government, that provides experience for future employment. The programme is available to 16-24-year-olds on Universal Credit.*

#### **5. Sector-Based Work Academy Programme (SWAPs)**

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*6-week programme including a work experience in the fields of care, construction or warehouse work, logistics to the public sector, and hospitality; a short module of pre-employment vocational training run by a local college or training provider; help with a job application or an interview for a real vacancy.*

#### **6. Job Finding Support (JFS)**

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*Employment support delivered by a private provider for people who have been unemployed and claiming UC benefits for up to 3 months at the start of the programme. The programme might include a CV review, a mock interview with feedback and guidance, job matching to suitable vacancies and advice and links to suitable employers.*

#### **7. Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS)**

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*Employment support delivered by a private provider for people who have been unemployed and claiming UC benefits for 3 to 12 months at the start of the programme. The programme might include help with IT skills, job search, CV writing, interview support from employment experts .*

## 8. Restart

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*Employment support delivered by a private provider for people who have been unemployed and claiming Universal Credit for 9 months or more at the start of the programme. The programme involves personalised skills training to assist progression into long-term employment.*

9. None of the above [EXCLUSIVE CODE]

98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE CODE]

SCRIPTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROGRAMME ROUTING:

IF Q9=1-3 PARTICIPANT TYPE 5 (YOUTH OFFER)

ASK AL, MULTICODE 1-2; 3 and 98 exclusive

## 10. And have you heard of any of the following:

*Please select all that apply.*

*Multi code, READ OUT*

### 1. Traineeship

**IF NECESSARY/SHOW POP UP:**

*A skills development programme that includes a work placement. It can last from 6 weeks up to 1 year, though most traineeships last for less than 6 months.*

### 2. Apprenticeship

**IF NECESSARY/SHOW POP UP:**

*Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with study. Apprenticeships take 1 to 5 years to complete depending on their level.*

3. None of the above [EXCLUSIVE CODE]

98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE CODE]

IF HEARD ABOUT PROGRAMMES(Q9=1-8), /IN PARTICIPANT SAMPLE, ASK ABOUT EACH PROGRAMME HEARD (Q9)/FROM SAMPLE ABOUT IN A LOOP, RANDOMISE, SINGLE CODE OTHER THAN CODES 4-5 (MULTICODE for 4 and 5)

**12. Thinking about [PIPE IN PROGRAMME NAME FROM Q9] which of the following best applies?**

*Please select all that apply*

*READ OUT, single code 1-3, 6, 98 and 99. Multi code 4 and 5.*

1. I am currently involved in [PROGRAMME NAME]
2. I have been involved before and have now completed it
3. I have been involved before but did not complete it/I dropped out
4. I have never been involved but would be interested in finding out more
5. I have never been involved but would be interested in participating
6. I've never been involved and am not interested
98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

IF PARTICIPANT (FROM SAMPLE) INDICATED NOT HAVING TAKEN PART IN PROVISION (Q9=9) DESPITE INFORMATION FROM THE SAMPLE OR IF DON'T KNOW (Q9=98) OR IF Q12=4-6 FOR PROVISION INDICATED IN THE SAMPLE, CHECK:

**13. Our records show that you were involved in [PIPE IN NAME OF THE PROGRAMME FROM SAMPLE]] in [ADD MONTH AND YEAR FROM SAMPLE]. Can I check if this is correct?**

*One answer, READ OUT*

1. Yes, that's correct: SHOW Q12 ANSWER OPTIONS 1-3,98,99
2. No, I decided to not take part in the programme
3. No, I have never heard of the programme
98. Don't know

SCRIPTING INSTRUCTIONS: CREATE A NEW DUMMY FOR PARTICIPANTS/NON PARTICIPANTS PLEASE [DUMMY\_RESPONDENT TYPE]

\_1= PARTICIPANT:

IF PARTICIPANT FROM THE SAMPLE, Q12=1-2 AND Q13 DOES NOT EQUAL 2-3 OR 98, ASSIGN TO PROVISION BASED ON SAMPLE DATA

OR

IF NON-PARTICIPANT FROM SAMPLE AND Q12=1-2. ASSIGN TO PROVISION BASED ON LEAST FILLED

\_2= NON\_PARTICIPANT:

IF PARTICIPANT FROM SAMPLE AND Q12=3-6 OR Q13= 2-3

\_3=DROP OUT = Q12=3 AND Q12 DOES NOT EQUAL 1 OR 2 FOR ANY OTHER PROVISION, CODE AS DROP OUT AND TAKE THROUGH PARTICIPANT ROUTE GOING FORWARD

ADD NEW DUMMY FOR PROVISION TYPE (1-6)

- FOR PARTICIPANTS, TAKE PROVISION FROM THE SAMPLE
- IF SAMPLE INFO IS NOT AVAILABLE, ASSIGN BASED ON LEAST FILLED

IF TAKING PART IN MULTIPLE PROVISIONS:

= (Q12=1-2 FOR MORE THAN ONE PROVISION), SHOW: For the remaining questions, we would like you to talk about your experiences with [PIPE IN PROGRAMME BASED ON ALLOCATION ABOVE]

IF PARTICIPANT, MULTICODE 1-9

**14. Why did you decide to take part in [PIPE IN PROGRAMME NAME]?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT BUT PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY*

WEB ONLY RANDOMISE:

1. I thought it would help me find work
2. I wanted to find out what it was about
3. I thought I would gain the skills needed for the roles I am interested in
4. It was something to do/reason to leave the house
5. The work coach told me I had to
6. It was a condition for receiving Universal Credit/my benefit
7. I thought my claimant commitment said I had to
8. Other, please specify
98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]

IF HEARD ABOUT PROGRAMMES (Q9=1-8) and NON-PARTICIPANT OR DROP OUT (Q12=3), USE LEAST FILLED TO ASK ABOUT ONE PROGRAMME ONLY, MULTICODE

IF NON PARTICIPANT AND HAVE HEARD OF THE PROGRAMMES (Q9=1-8):

**15. Why did you decide not to take part in [PIPE IN PROGRAMME NAME]?**

IF INCOMPLETE PARTICIPATION (Q12=3) **Why did you decide to leave [PIPE IN PROGRAMME NAME]?**

*Please select all that apply.*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT BUT PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY*

ALL OPTIONS EXCEPT OPTIONS 2 APPLY TO NON PARTICIPANT AND DROP OUT.

RANDOMISE WEB ONLY and ANCHOR THE LAST TWO

1. I found a job myself and did not need the support
2. [NON-PARTICIPANT] I didn't know DWP could help me find employment
3. I didn't trust that DWP would help me find employment
4. Difficulty using or accessing digital technology or the internet
5. Childcare or other caring responsibilities
6. I found other forms of support from elsewhere, please specify
7. I was never contacted by the provider/employer
8. Programme was not relevant to me
9. Lack of flexibility with training schedule/working hours or working options (e.g. working from home)
10. [KICKSTART ONLY]: Because of the 25 working hours working limit
11. [KICKSTART ONLY]: The employer rejected my application
12. It was too far away/too expensive to get to
13. Health-related reasons
14. Housing difficulties (staying in temporary accommodation, including friends, night shelters, emergency hostels, etc.)
15. Other, please specify
16. None of these [EXCLUSIVE]
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

ASK ALL, MULTICODE 1-15

**17. Thinking back over the past 12 months, have you received any of the following support?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT . Prompt codes that have not come through.*

**RANDOMISE for WEB only**

1. Skills assessment
2. Help with identifying job opportunities
3. CV/Cover Letter writing or updating
4. Writing personal Job Finding Action Plan
5. Job interview preparation including mock interviews
6. Arranging interview(s) with prospective employers
7. Referral to another organisation
8. Training to develop new or existing skills or qualifications
9. Other, please specify
10. None of the above [EXCLUSIVE]
11. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]
12. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

**ASK ALL, MULTICODE,**

**18. Have you received any of the following support in the past 12 months?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, READ OUT*

**RANDOMISE**

1. Referral to an apprenticeship scheme
2. A short (less than 6 weeks) job placement with an employer
3. A short ( 6-8 weeks long) job placement with an employer
4. A short (less than 6 weeks) training or support from an external provider
5. A 6-months job with an employer (at least 25 hours a week and minimum wage pay)
6. Hands-on work experience to develop new skills
7. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]
8. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

**19. Have you received any of the following support in the past 12 months?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT . Prompt codes that have not come through.*

1. One-on-one session with a career adviser outside the Jobcentre
2. Digital group session with a career adviser outside the Jobcentre



3. Referrals to other types of support or organisations (e.g. mental health, housing or support with financial matters)
  4. Jobcentre staff attending appointments with you outside the Jobcentre Plus
  5. Jobcentre staff providing one-on-one mentoring after you had started a new job
  6. Other, please specify
  7. None of the above [EXCLUSIVE]
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

ASK ALL WHO RECEIVED SOME SUPPORT AT Q17 (Q17=1-14) OR Q18 (Q18=1-13), MULTICODE 1-7, SHOW ALL SUPPORT RECEIVED AND ASK ONCE

**20. And who did you receive that employment-seeking support from?** Please think of all different types of support you have received.

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT . Prompt codes that have not come through.*

### RANDOMISE

1. A work coach at Jobcentre
2. Someone else at Jobcentre
3. A work coach from another organisation
4. A training provider or local college
5. Another local organisation, specify
6. Employer
7. Other, please specify
8. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]

### ASK PARTICIPANTS, SINGLE CODE

**22. On the scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being very useful and 1 not at all useful how useful was IF PARTICIPANT [PIPE IN NAME OF PROGRAMME] IF NOT KNOWN [the support] in helping you to find employment or progress in your career?**

*One answer, READ OUT SCALE*

1. Not at all useful
2. Not very useful
3. Neither useful nor not useful
4. Somewhat useful
5. Very useful

98. Don't know

ASK IF USEFUL, Q22=4-5, OPEN

**23. Could you tell us why was [PIPE IN NAME OF PROGRAMME] useful in helping you to find employment or progress in your career?**

Please type in below

Please type in a summary of the response

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

98. Prefer not to say

ASK IF NOT USEFUL, Q22=1-2, OPEN

**24. Could you tell us why was [PIPE IN NAME OF PROGRAMME] not useful in helping you to find employment or progress in your career?**

Please type in below

Please type in a summary of the response

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

99. Prefer not to say

ALL PARTICIPANTS

**25. And how satisfied are you with the support you received/are receiving from [PIPE IN PROGRAMME]?**

*One answer, READ OUT*

1. Very satisfied
  2. Somewhat satisfied
  3. Neither satisfied not dissatisfied
  4. Somewhat dissatisfied
  5. Very dissatisfied
98. Don't know

IF PARTICIPANT, MULTICODE 1-10

**26. What, if any, barriers or challenges have you faced when taking part in [PROGRAMME]?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT . Prompt codes that have not come through.*

### RANDOMISE 1-10

1. I was never contacted by the provider/employer
2. It was difficult to get information about the programme
3. I was not clear on what's expected of me
4. Programme was not relevant to me -
5. Lack of flexibility with training schedule/working hours or working options (e.g. working from home\_
6. [KICKSTART ONLY]: Because of the 25 working hours working limit
7. [KICKSTART ONLY]: The employer rejected my application
8. It was too far away/too expensive to get to
9. Health-related reasons
10. Difficulty accessing or using digital technology or internet
11. Childcare/other caring responsibilities
12. Housing difficulties (staying in temporary accommodation, including friends, night shelters, emergency hostels, etc.)
13. Other, please specify
14. None of these [EXCLUSIVE]
98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

ASK IF KNOW ABOUT PROGRAMMES (Q9=1-8), ONLY ASK ABOUT PROGRAMME PARTICIPATED IN (Q9=1-8 AND Q12=1-3 AND/OR Q13=1), FOR NON PARTICIPANTS AWARE OF PROGRAMME (Q9=1-8), ASK ABOUT ONE BASED ON LEAST FILLED. SAME ROUTING AS Qs15/16 SKIP IF DROP OUT

**27. Thinking about [PIPE IN PROGRAMME], how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

### ROTATE/RANDOMISE STATEMENTS

#### ROWS:

1. The Jobcentre gave me all the information I needed to decide whether to get involved or not

2. [FOR THOSE INVOLVED WITH A PROVIDER Q20=3/EMPLOYER Q18=6] The referral process between Jobcentre and IF Q20=31-15 [the work coach outside Jobcentre] IFQ18=6: [the employer] was well managed
3. I had a clear idea of what to expect from [PIPE IN PROGRAMME]
4. [PARTICIPANTS ONLY:] I had a clear idea of what was expected of me while taking part in [PIPE IN PROGRAMME]
5. [PARTICIPANTS ONLY:] The support I received from [PIPE IN PROGRAMME] was tailored to my needs and circumstances

## COLUMNS

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Not applicable
98. Don't know

## ASK PARTICIPANTS, MULTICODE 1-11

### 28. And what happened as a result of taking part in [PROGRAMME]?

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODES AND PROBE FULLY*

#### RANDOMISED

1. I applied for a job(s)
2. I attended a few job interviews
3. I found a job/am starting a job soon
4. I improved my skills/gained new skills
5. I feel more confident about looking for work
6. I feel more confident about myself and my abilities to find work
7. I gained relevant work experience
8. I made new contacts with employers
9. I was referred to another DWP work-related support programme
10. I was referred to another support organisation, other than DWP
11. Other, please specify
12. Nothing – the programme was not helpful in my job search [EXCLUSIVE]
98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

## IF Q28=9 (REFERRED TO ANOTHER PROGRAMME) AND A YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT [DUMMY=5.2], MULTICODE 1-8

### 29. Which, if any of the following support programmes were you referred to at the end of the [PIPE IN PROGRAMME] programme?

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, READ OUT*

**RANDOMISE, ONLY SHOW THOSE NOT ALREADY PARTICIPATING IN**

1. Job Finding Support (JFS) [EXCLUDE IF PARTICIPANT DUMMY=3]
2. Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) [EXCLUDE IF PARTICIPANT DUMMY=4]
3. Restart [EXCLUDE IF PARTICIPANT DUMMY=6]
4. Sector-Based Work Academy Programme (SWAPs) [EXCLUDE IF PARTICIPANT DUMMY=2]
5. Kickstart [EXCLUDE IF PARTICIPANT DUMMY=1]
6. Youth Employability Coaching [EXCLUDE IF PARTICIPANT DUMMY=5.3]
7. Youth Hub [EXCLUDE IF PARTICIPANT DUMMY=5.1]
8. Youth Employment Programme PARTICIPANT DUMMY=5.2]
9. Other, please specify
98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

### **Section 3: General support from Jobcentre Work Coaches**

This section focuses on your experiences with work coaches at Jobcentre Plus [IF PARTICIPANT: other than any interactions you had whilst taking part [PIPE IN PROVISION, IF PARTICIPATED ON MULTIPLE PROVISION, SHOW ALL].

Please refer to any interactions you had recently. If you talk to more than one work coach, please think about the work coach you talk to most frequently.

**ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE**

**32. How often do you usually engage with a work coach from Jobcentre [IF PARTICIPANT (Q12=1-3 and/or Q13=1)]: outside of [PROVISION]?**

*One answer, READ OUT*

1. As frequently as I want/need
2. Once a week
3. Once every two weeks
4. Once a month
5. Every other month
6. Less frequently
7. It varies
8. Never
98. Don't know

**ASK ALL OTHER THAN Q32=8, GRID**

**34. Thinking about the work coach you engage with most frequently, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**ROWS, REPEAT EACH STATEMENT, RANDOMISE**

1. Work coach provides(ed) the support I need(ed) to help me back into work
2. The discussion(s) with the work coach are/were relevant to my career aspirations
3. The frequency of our meetings/engagement is sufficient
4. My needs are (were) listened to
5. I feel comfortable asking the work coach for employment-related support

**COLUMNS, SINGLE CODE**

1. Strongly agree
2. Tend to agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Tend to disagree
5. Strongly disagree
98. Don't know
99. Not applicable

**Section 4: Other support**

**ASK ALL, MULTI CODE 1-9, RANDOMISE 1-8**

**IF PARTICIPANT: Other than the support received from [PROGRAMME], ELSE: 28**

**35. [H]have you ever received job-seeking support from any of the following over the past year?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, READ OUT*

1. A local community or charity organisation
2. A University or National Careers Service
3. Friends and family
4. Recruitment agency
5. Local college or another provider
6. Other (please specify)
7. I have not accessed support
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

**ASK IF RECEIVED SUPPORT (Q35 = 1-9), MULTICODE 1-6**

**37. And what type of support did you receive from IF ONE ANSWERS 1-6 SELECTED AT Q35 [this organisation] IF TWO OR MORE ANSWERS 1-6 SELECTED [these organisations]?**

**One answer,** DO NOT READ OUT BUT PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY.

1. Support related to finding a job
2. Training
3. Help with applying for benefits/funding
4. Information on how to manage health and well-being
5. Information on how to budget/manage my finances
6. Referral to other services (e.g. mental health, housing or support with financial matters)
7. Other, please specify
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

**Section 5: Future / Next Steps**

The next few questions will ask about your plans for the future, any aspirations you might have and next steps.

**ASK IF EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6), GRID**

**38. Thinking about your job IF MORE THAN ONE JOB [Thinking now about your main job, that is the one in which you earn the most money], how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with:**

Please always read out “your job overall” answer option first, all others – randomise

**ROWS, SHOW ALL, RANDOMISE:**

1. Your job overall [ALWAYS FIRST]
2. The number of hours you work each week
3. Your commute to and from work
4. Training opportunities available to you
5. Opportunities for career development
6. Work-life balance
7. Your pay, including your benefits/tax credits
8. Your childcare arrangements whilst you are at work

**COLUMNS:**

1. Very satisfied
2. Fairly satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

4. Fairly dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. Not applicable
98. Don't know

**IF EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6), GRID**

**39. Overall, over the next 12 months how important is it for you to [INSERT STATEMENT FROM BELOW]?**

**STATEMENTS, RANDOMISED:**

1. Increase your hours in your current job
2. Progress in your current job
3. Get a new/ different job

**SCALE, SINGLE CODE:**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Neither important nor not important
4. Not very important
5. Not at all important
6. Don't know

**ASK IF UNEMPLOYED (Q1=7-10), GRID**

**40. Overall, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

**STATEMENTS, RANDOMISED:**

1. I am not quite ready to handle a job
2. I have enough skills to do a job well
3. I would take almost any kind of job to get money

**SCALE, SINGLE CODE:**

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Don't know

**ASK EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED (Q1=1-10), MULTICODE**



**IF EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6)**

**42. Is there anything that makes it difficult for you to progress in your current job?** Progress means an increase in your pay, hours and/or taking on more responsibilities.

**IN UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK (Q1 DOES NOT = 13) Can you think of anything that makes it difficult for you to get a job?**

*Please select all that apply*

**[EMPLOYMENT AND EXTERNAL REASONS], DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODES, PROBE FULLY**

1. **[IF EMPLOYED]** Need to wait until probationary period ends
2. Not enough full-time jobs or well-paid jobs available
3. Not enough opportunities in the sector/area I am interested in
4. Lack of opportunities matching my skills and qualifications
5. Not having certificate/licences required for available jobs
6. **[IF EMPLOYED]** Lack of opportunities for training/ development in current job
7. **[IF EMPLOYED]** Lack of opportunities to increase pay / hours in current job or gain promotion
8. Transport difficulties
9. Having to pay more for childcare if I do more hours
10. My benefits/tax credits would go down / it would not be worth it financially
11. Poor employment record/ lack of work experience
12. My physical or mental health issues
13. My age
14. Housing problems (in temporary accommodation such as with friends, shelters, or hostels)
15. Caring responsibilities which limit the number of hours I can work
16. No access to internet or technology
17. Me or someone in my household got/getting in trouble with the police
18. My or someone in my households alcohol or drug problem
19. Relationship with your parents/family breaking down
20. No, nothing, I am happy with my work situation as it is **[EXCLUSIVE]**
21. Other (specify)
22. None of these **[EXCLUSIVE]**

**ASK EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED (Q1=1-10) AND LOOKING TO PROGRESS (Q1 DOES NOT EQUAL 13) MULTICODE 1-12**

**43. What, if anything would help to make it easier for you to progress in work/find employment?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY*

**RANDOMISE 1-11**

1. Support and training around finding/ getting a new job (e.g. interview skills, CV skills, communication skills)
2. Help with the cost of travel to and from work
3. Support and training with work-related skills (e.g. further education, spoken or written English; IT skills; job-specific skills)
4. Support to manage a physical or mental health condition
5. Support with mine or someone in my household's alcohol or drug problem
6. Access to digital technology and/or the internet
7. Support with using technology/internet
8. Access to affordable/ good quality childcare
9. Support to manage other caring responsibilities
10. Access to affordable housing
11. Something else (specify)
12. None of these [EXCLUSIVE]
98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

**ASK ALL [SCRIPTING TO CREATE A FLAG 'MENTAL HEALTH RISK' FOR AGES 18-24 ANSWER UNDER <4 ON THE SCALE]**

**45. For the few next questions, please answer on a scale of zero to ten, where zero is not at all and ten is completely:**

**ROWS [RANDOMISE]**

1. How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
2. To what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
3. How happy did you feel yesterday?
4. How anxious did you feel yesterday?

**SCALE:**

0 to 10 scale with one being "not at all" and 10 "completely"

98. Do not know

99. Prefer not to say

### ASK ALL, GRID

#### **46. How confident do you feel about doing the following job search skills and activities successfully?**

##### ROWS, ROTATE:

1. Making a good list of all the skills that you have and can be used to find a job
2. Talking to friends and other contacts to find out about potential employers who need your skills
3. Talking to friends and other contacts to discover promising job openings that are suitable for you
4. Completing a good job application and CV
5. Contacting and persuading potential employers to consider you for a job
6. Making the best impression and getting your points across in a job interview
7. Searching for jobs online (using computers, Smart phones, internet, etc.)
8. Applying for jobs online (using computers, Smart phones, internet, etc.)
1. Getting help in order to become familiar with a new job

##### SCALE:

1. Not at all confident
2. Not very confident
3. Somewhat confident
4. Fairly confident
5. Very confident
99. Prefer not to say

### **Section 6: Demographics**

**This is the final section of the survey and [CATI: I'd just / ONLINE: we would] like to ask you a few details about yourself including your health, background and ethnic origin. This information will be used to monitor the experiences that different groups have when they are dealing with DWP. You do not have to answer if you do not want to.**

**All of your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and DWP will not be able to identify you from the anonymised responses that Ipsos MORI supply.**

### ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE

#### **47. What is your highest level of qualification?**

*One answer. DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY*

1. NVQ5 or post-graduate diploma
2. NVQ4 / HNC / HND / Bachelor's degree or similar
3. 2 or more A-Levels, NVQ Level 3, BTEC Level 3 Diploma or equivalent
4. 3 0-Level or equivalent, 5 or more GCSEs of grade A\*-C or equivalent, NVQ Level 2, BTEC level 2 diploma or equivalent
5. 4 GCSEs of less than A\*-C or equivalent, NVQ Level 1
6. Something else (Please specify)
7. No qualifications
99. Prefer not to answer

**ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE**

#### **48. How would you describe your ethnic background?**

*One answer, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY*

1. White [Expandable Header]
  - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
  - Irish
  - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
  - Any other White background
2. Mixed / multiple ethnic groups [Expandable Header]
  - White and Black Caribbean
  - White and Black African
  - White and Asian
  - Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background
3. Asian / Asian British [Expandable Header]
  - Indian
  - Pakistani
  - Bangladeshi
  - Chinese
  - Any other Asian background
4. Black / African / Caribbean / Black British [Expandable Header]
  - African
  - Caribbean
  - Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
5. Other ethnic group [Expandable Header]
  - Arab
  - Any other ethnic group, please write in \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prefer not to answer
99. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, MULTI CODE**

**49. Which of these best describe your living situation?**

Please answer for the accommodation you spend most of your time in.

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, READ OUT,*

1. Living alone
2. Living with partner [MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE WITH OPTION 3]
3. Living with spouse/civil partner [MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE WITH OPTION 2]
4. Living with parents
5. Living with friends/other adults / other family (i.e. not parents)
6. Living with dependent children (under the age of 16, or under the age of 20 and still in full-time education or training, below university or equivalent level)
99. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE**

**50. Which of these best describe the accommodation you are living in at the moment?**

Please answer for the accommodation you spend most of your time in.

*One answer, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY*

1. Private rented
2. Rented from a council or local authority
3. Rented from a Housing Association
4. Being bought on a mortgage/bank loan
5. Shared ownership where you pay part rent and part mortgage
6. Owned outright
7. Living with friends/relatives and paying some rent
8. Living with friends/ relatives and not paying any rent
9. Living in temporary or sheltered accommodation or rough sleeping
10. Something else (specify)
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, MULTICODE EXCEPT 1 and 99**

**51. Do you have any of the following caring responsibilities?**

*By caring responsibilities, we mean caring for anyone who needs help with everyday life due to illness, disability or old age. This could include help with grocery shopping, bathing, dressing, laundry, etc.*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY*

1. No
2. Yes – for my Spouse / Civil Partner/ Partner
3. Yes – for my Parent(s)
4. Yes – for another family member
5. Yes – for a friend
99. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE**

**52. Now thinking about language, is English your first language?**  
**One answer, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE**

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE**

**54. Would you feel able to use the internet to access government services if they were available online?**

*One answer, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE*

1. Yes, able to
2. Yes, able to but with help
3. No, not able
4. Don't know
5. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE**

**55a. What is your personal annual income (pre-tax) earned from all sources?**

*Please include all your income sources: salaries, scholarships, pension and Social Security benefits, dividends from shares, income from rental properties, child support and alimony, etc.*

*One answer. Prompt to code as necessary.*

1. Under £5,000
2. £5,000 - 9,999
3. £10,000 - 14,999
4. £15,000 - 19,999
5. £20,000 - 24,999
6. £25,000 - 34,999
7. £35,000 - 44,999
8. £45,000 - 54,999
9. £55,000 - 99,999
10. £100,000 or more
11. Don't know
12. I don't have a personal income
99. Prefer not to answer

**ASK SCALE AND THEN REPEAT FOR 55b, ASK ALL OTHER THAN Q49=1.  
INCLUDE A SOFT LOGIC CHECK SO THAT PERSONAL INCOME CANNOT BE  
HIGHER THAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

**55b. And what is the combined total annual income (pre-tax) earned by all members of your household?**

*Please include all your income sources: salaries, scholarships, pension and Social Security benefits, dividends from shares, income from rental properties, child support and alimony, etc.*

One answer. Prompt to code as necessary.

- 13. Under £5,000
- 14. £5,000 - 9,999
- 15. £10,000 - 14,999
- 16. £15,000 - 19,999
- 17. £20,000 - 24,999
- 18. £25,000 - 34,999
- 19. £35,000 - 44,999
- 20. £45,000 - 54,999
- 21. £55,000 - 99,999
- 22. £100,000 or more
- 23. Don't know
- 24. I don't have a personal income
- 99. Prefer not to answer

### ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE

We would now like to ask you some questions about your health.

#### **56. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?**

*Please include any intermittent conditions or illnesses, lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more.*

One answer, *DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE*

- 1. Yes – physical condition
- 2. Yes – mental health condition
- 3. Yes – both physical and mental health condition
- 4. No
- 99. I prefer not to say

### ASK IF YES TO HEALTH CONDITIONS, SINGLE CODE

#### **57. Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?**

One answer, *DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE*

- 1. Yes, a lot
- 2. Yes, a little



3. Not at all
99. I prefer not to say

## **Section 7: Thank you**

**On behalf of Ipsos MORI and the Department of Work and Pensions we would like to thank you very much for your time.**

**58. Ipsos MORI and our partner research organisation may wish to contact you to take part in further research on this topic in the next 24 months. Would you be happy to take part in further research? You do not have to commit to anything now, just indicate a willingness to be contacted again.**

1. Yes – Ipsos MORI can contact me
2. Yes – Another research organisation can contact me
3. No

**59 For research and statistical purposes only, the Department of Work and Pensions would like to link your answers to other information they hold so they can further analyse the survey. Your responses will remain completely confidential, and your dealings with DWP will not be affected in any way. The linking is done with a unique survey ID number that retains your anonymity. Are you happy to let DWP link your survey responses to benefit claim information they have about you for survey analysis? You can change your mind at any time by contacting Ipsos MORI at: [planforjobs@ipsos-mori.com](mailto:planforjobs@ipsos-mori.com)**

1. Yes
2. No

**60 . That is the end of the interview. Thank you very much for giving us your time today. CATI: I would just like to confirm with you that my name is XXX and I have been calling you from Ipsos Mori who is acting for and on behalf of DWP.**

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THANK AND CLOSE

## Wave 2 questionnaire

### Introduction and Consent

#### CATI ADD A TEXT BOX WITH CONTACT'S PROVISION AND EMAIL ADDRESS

For CATI: Good morning/afternoon. Could I speak to [named contact or appointee name if available from sample]? My name is ... I'm calling from Ipsos MORI, an independent market research company.

ALL: [CATI: We are] [WEB: Ipsos MORI is] conducting a survey on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The aim is to find out more about people's experiences with looking for work and using DWP support to help the Department improve the services it provides.

**CATI:** You should have received a letter or an email about this research already.

IF NECESSARY: CONFIRM EMAIL ADDRESS [SHOW FROM SAMPLE] WHERE EMAIL WAS SENT.

IF A LETTER INVITE IS REQUESTED, CONFIRM ADDRESS [SHOW FROM SAMPLE] AND RECORD AS 'REQUESTED POSTAL INVITE'

IF NECESSARY/VERIFICATION IS REQUESTED, MORE INFO CAN BE FOUND HERE: <https://ipsos.uk/planforjobs>

IF EARLY LEAVER (Y1 ONLY): Our data shows that you took part in [PROGRAMME NAME FROM SAMPLE:] but did not complete the programme. We would like to find out more about any changes in your circumstances since we last spoke to you.

IF PARTICIPANT: Our data shows that you took/are taking part in [PROVISION NAME FROM SAMPLE:]. We would like to find out more about what the was experience like, what worked well and what could be improved [IF Y1: as well as what might have changed for you since the last time we spoke to you].

IF NON PARTICIPANT: We would like to hear from you even if you've not received any support from DWP so far [IF Y1: and find out more about any changes in your circumstances since we last spoke to you].

#### SHOW ALL

Your views will help DWP understand the experiences, circumstances, and needs of people like you and the support they need.

The survey should take about 20 minutes to complete depending on your answers.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you can change your mind at any time. Participating will not affect your benefits in any way, now, or in the future.

Your survey answers will be combined with the answers from other people taking part and used for research purposes only. Any feedback you give us will be entirely confidential and your responses will be treated anonymously.

If you would like to read the Privacy Notice beforehand you can access it online at <https://ipsos.uk/planforjobs>

WEB: Please click 'next' if you are happy to complete the survey.

CATI: Are you happy to proceed with the interview?

<mailto:0.Y2 SAMPLE> [CATI: I] [WEB: We] understand that you receive [UNIVERSAL CREDIT/INSERT BENEFIT NAME FROM SAMPLE]. Please can you confirm this information is correct?

### SCREEN OUT THANK YOU PAGE

Thank you on behalf of Ipsos. To qualify to take part in this survey, you need to have experience of claiming Universal Credit. If you have any queries regarding the survey or our company, I can give you the project manager's email address, the company number, or the market research society freephone number

Project contact email: [planforjobs@ipsosresearch.com](mailto:planforjobs@ipsosresearch.com)

Project number - 22-073325-01

Company Number - 0131 500 0992

MRS Freephone Number - 0800 975 9596

**Y1 SAMPLE: We last surveyed you in [FEED MONTH / YEAR FROM SAMPLE] when you were receiving [UNIVERSAL CREDIT/INSERT BENEFIT NAME FROM SAMPLE]. Are you currently receiving [UNIVERSAL CREDIT/INSERT BENEFIT NAME FROM SAMPLE]?**

1. Yes [CONTINUE]
2. No, but I was in the past [CONTINUE]
3. [Y2 SAMPLE ONLY=] No, I haven't received it before or had any interactions with DWP [CLOSE AND THANK]

## MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

### Section 1: Employment Status and History

ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE APART FROM 13 WHICH SHOULD BE SET AS MC

**Q1. To start with, could you please confirm your current employment status?**

If you are doing more than one job please select your main job, that is the one where you earn the most money.

SINGLE CODE. DO NOT READ OUT BUT PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY

1. In paid employment – working full time (30+ hours per week)
2. In paid employment – working part-time (8-29 hours per week)
3. In paid employment – working part-time (under 8 hours per week)
4. Self-employed - working full time (30+ hours per week)
5. Self-employed - working full time (8-29 hours per week)
6. Self-employed – working part-time (under 8 hours per week)
7. Unemployed and seeking work
8. Not employed – stay at home parent
9. Not employed because of long term illness or disability
10. Not employed for another reason
11. Full-time student
12. Retired
13. I'm not looking for work/I'm not fit to work
100. Prefer not to say

ASK EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6), NUMERIC

**Q2. How many separate jobs do you currently have ADD IF SELF EMPLOYED (Q1=4-6) [including your self-employment]?**

If you work at several different places but are paid by one organisation/ agency, please count this as one job.

[WEB] Please type in the number of paid jobs

[CATI] Please probe fully and write in the number of paid jobs

ALLOW 1-10. SOFT CHECK above 4.

2. [TEXT BOX TO ENTER NUMBER OF PAID JOBS]

100. Don't know
101. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

**Q2A. Have you had a IF EMPLOYED AND ONE JOB (Q2=1) [a different job] IF EMPLOYED AND MULTIPLE JOBS [other jobs] IF UNEMPLOYED [a job] [Y1 Sample since we last interviewed you in MONTH OF LAST WAVE 2022] [Y2 SAMPLE in the past 12 months]?**

1. Yes
2. No
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL WHO HAVE HAD A DIFFERENT JOB (Q2A = 1)**

**Q2B. How many other jobs have you had [Y2 SAMPLE = in the past 12 months] [Y1 Sample = since we last interviewed you in [MONTH OF LAST WAVE 2022]]?**

**If you work / worked at a lot of different places but are paid by one organisation/ agency please count this as one job.**

1. 1
2. 2
3. 3
4. Four or more
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to say

1

**ASK IF EMPLOYED, Q1=1-6 OR UNEMPLOYED AND HAVE HAD A JOB SINCE W1 / IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, Q1=7-10 AND Q2A=1, SINGLE CODE**

**Q3.**

**IF EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6) AND ONE JOB (Q2=1) [Which of the following best describes the contract for your current job?]**

**IF EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6) AND ONE JOB (Q2=2+) [Which of the following best describes the contract of your current main job?]**

**IF UNEMPLOYED (Q1=7-12) AND HAD A JOB RECENTLY (Q2A=1) 'Which of the following best describes the contract you had in your most recent job?'**

**WEB:** *The main job is the one where you earn the most money.*

**CATI IF NECESSARY:** The main job is the one where you earn the most money

*One answer, READ OUT*

1. A zero-hours contract
2. A casual/flexible contract
3. A temporary/fixed term or seasonal contract with more than three months remaining
4. A temporary/fixed term or seasonal contract with less than three months remaining
5. A permanent or open-ended job/contract
6. Apprenticeship or another training scheme
7. I do not have a contract
8. Something else (specify)
99. Prefer not to say

#### ASK ALL

**Q4. How long have you been IF UNEMPLOYED (Q1=7) [unemployed and looking for work] IF EMPLOYED OR SELF-EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6) [doing this job] IF NOT WORKING (Q1=8-13) [not working]?**

*One answer, DO NOT READ OUT BUT PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY*

1. Less than 3 months
2. More than 3 and less than 6 months
3. More than 6 and less than 12 months
4. More than 12 and less than 18 months
5. More than 18 months
6. Not applicable [SHOW ONLY TO THOSE NOT WORKING Q1=8-12]
100. Don't know
101. Prefer not to say

#### ASK ALL CURRENTLY WORKING, Q1=1-6

Q4A. How long were you out of work for before you started your current job?  
SINGLE CODE.

#### TELEPHONE – DO NOT READ OUT

1. Less than 3 months
2. More than 3 and less than 6 months

3. More than 6 and less than 12 months
4. More than 12 and less than 18 months
5. More than 18 months
6. Not applicable
7. Don't know
8. Prefer not to say

## Section 2: DWP Employment Support Programmes

**Y2 SAMPLE ONLY:** DWP offers a range of different support programmes to help people look for work, find work, gain qualifications or training or receive other employment-related support. These include one-to-one or group sessions with a work coach, training provided by an external provider or a youth hub, work experience or work placement or job opportunities with specific employers in your area.

### ASK Y2 SAMPLE ONLY:

9. **IF PARTICIPANT:** Our data shows that you took part in [PROVISION NAME], [ELSE: which, if any, of the following [IF PARTICIPANT: other] employment support programmes have you heard of? These programmes could be provided by DWP or another organisation.

*Please select all that apply. DO NOT SHOW PROVISION FROM SAMPLE, AUTOMATICALLY CODE IN AS AWARE.*

*CATI IF NECESSARY: These programmes could be provided by DWP or another organisation*

*Multi code, READ OUT*

### 1. **YOUTH OFFER** [SHOW ONLY TO 18-25 AGE GROUP]

*Click for more detail*

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Youth Offer is available to people aged 16-24. The support is provided by a Work Coach within a special Youth Hub (not the Jobcentre) or by a Youth Employability Coach.*

*The type of support you would receive through this includes CV and jobs application support, matching with local job opportunities, and referrals to traineeships, work experience, apprenticeships and to other DWP support, including Kickstart and SWAPS.*

## **2. Kickstart [SHOW ONLY TO 18-25 AGE GROUP]**

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*Between Autumn 2020 and March 2022, this was a 6-month job, subsidised by the government, that provided experience for future employment. The programme was available to 16-24-year-olds on Universal Credit.*

## **3. Sector-Based Work Academy Programme (SWAPs)**

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*Lasting up to 6 weeks, a programme including a work experience in fields such as care, construction or warehouse work, logistics, the public sector, and hospitality; a short module of pre-employment vocational training run by a local college or training provider; help with a job application or an interview for a real vacancy.*

## **4. Job Finding Support (JFS)**

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*Employment support delivered by a private provider for people who have been unemployed and claiming UC benefits for up to 3 months at the start of the programme. The programme might include a CV review, a mock interview with feedback and guidance, job matching to suitable vacancies and advice and links to suitable employers.*

## **5. Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS)**

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*6-months employment support programme delivered by a private provider for people who have been unemployed and claiming UC benefits for 3 to 12 months at the start of the programme. The programme might include help with IT skills, job search, CV writing, interview support from employment experts .*



## 6. Restart

*IF NECESSARY:*

*Click for more detail*

*12-months employment support programme delivered by a private provider for people who have been unemployed and claiming Universal Credit for 9 months or more at the start of the programme. The programme involves personalised skills training to assist progression into long-term employment.*

7. None of the above [EXCLUSIVE CODE]

98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE CODE]

ASK Y2 SAMPLE ONLY:

IF HEARD ABOUT PROGRAMMES(Q9=1-6) OR IN PARTICIPANT SAMPLE, ASK ABOUT EACH PROGRAMME HEARD (Q9)/FROM SAMPLE ABOUT IN A LOOP, RANDOMISE, SINGLE CODE

**Q12. Thinking about [PIPE IN PROGRAMME NAME FROM Q9] which of the following best applies?**

*Please select all that apply*

*READ OUT, single code 1-3, 6, 98 and 99. Multi code 4 and 5.*

1. I am currently involved in [PROGRAMME NAME]
2. I have been involved before and have now completed it
3. I have been involved before but did not complete it
6. I've never been involved

98. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]

99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

ASK Y2 SAMPLE ONLY:

IF PARTICIPANT (FROM SAMPLE): IF Q12=6 FOR PROVISION IN THE SAMPLE, CHECK:

**13. Our records show that you were involved in [PIPE IN NAME OF THE PROGRAMME FROM SAMPLE]] in [ADD MONTH AND YEAR FROM SAMPLE]. Can I check if this is correct?**

*One answer, READ OUT*

1. I am currently involved in [PROGRAMME NAME]
4. I have been involved before and have now completed it
5. I have been involved before but did not complete it
2. No, I decided to not take part in the programme
3. No, I have never heard of the programme
98. Don't know

### Y2 SAMPLE SCRIPTING INSTRUCTIONS:

CREATE A NEW DUMMY FOR PARTICIPANTS/NON PARTICIPANTS/EARLY LEAVERS PLEASE [DUMMY\_RESPONDENT TYPE]

\_1= PARTICIPANT:

IF (PARTICIPANT FROM THE SAMPLE AND Q12=1-2) OR (PARTICIPANT FROM THE SAMPLE AND Q12=6 AND Q13 = 1 OR 4); ASSIGN TO PROVISION BASED ON LEAST FILLED

OR IF NON-PARTICIPANT FROM SAMPLE AND Q12=1-2 ASSIGN TO PROVISION BASED ON LEAST FILLED

\_2= NON\_PARTICIPANT:

IF PARTICIPANT FROM SAMPLE AND Q12=6 AND Q13=2-3 OR NON-PARTICIPANT FROM SAMPLE AND Q12=6

\_3=EARLY LEAVER:

- Q12=3
- OR Q13 = 5 AND Q12 DOES NOT EQUAL 1 OR 2 FOR ANY OTHER PROVISION, CODE AS EARLY LEAVER AND TAKE THROUGH **PARTICIPANT ROUTE** GOING FORWARD

ADD NEW DUMMY FOR PROVISION TYPE (1-6)

- FOR PARTICIPANTS, TAKE PROVISION FROM THE SAMPLE
- IF SAMPLE INFO IS NOT AVAILABLE, ASSIGN BASED ON LEAST FILLED

## IF TAKING PART IN MULTIPLE PROVISIONS:

= (Q12=1-2 FOR MORE THAN ONE PROVISION), SHOW: For the remaining questions, we would like you to talk about your experiences with [PIPE IN PROGRAMME BASED ON ALLOCATION ABOVE]

### ASK ALL, MULTICODE 1-8

**17. Thinking back over the past 12 months, have you received any of the following support?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, READ OUT and prompt fully .*

### RANDOMISE

1. Skills assessment
2. Help with identifying job opportunities
3. CV/Cover Letter writing or updating
4. Writing personal Job Finding Action Plan
5. Job interview preparation including mock interviews
6. Arranging interview(s) with prospective employers
7. Referral to another organisation
8. Training to develop new or existing skills or qualifications
9. None of the above [EXCLUSIVE]
10. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]
11. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

### ASK ALL, MULTICODE

**18. Have you received any of the following support in the past 12 months?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, READ OUT*

### RANDOMISE

1. Referral to an apprenticeship scheme
2. A short (less than 6 weeks) job placement with an employer
3. A short ( 6-8 weeks long) job placement with an employer
4. A short (less than 6 weeks) training or support from an external provider
5. A 6-months job with an employer (at least 25 hours a week and minimum wage pay)
6. Hands-on work experience to develop new skills

7. None of the above [EXCLUSIVE]
8. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]
9. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

ASK ALL, MULTICODE 1-6

**19. Have you received any of the following support in the past 12 months?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, READ OUT and probe fully .*

RANDOMISE

1. One-on-one session with a career adviser outside the Jobcentre
  2. Digital group session with a career adviser outside the Jobcentre
  3. Referrals to other types of support or organisations (e.g. mental health, housing or support with financial matters)
  4. Jobcentre staff attending appointments with you outside the Jobcentre Plus
  5. Jobcentre staff providing one-on-one mentoring after you had started a new job
  6. Other, please specify
  7. None of the above [EXCLUSIVE]
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

ASK ALL WHO RECEIVED SOME SUPPORT AT Q17 (Q17=1-9) OR Q18 (Q18=1-6) OR Q19 (Q19=1-6), MULTICODE 1-7, SHOW ALL SUPPORT RECEIVED AND ASK ONCE

**20. And who did you receive that employment-seeking support from?** Please think of all different types of support you have received.

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT . Prompt codes that have not come through.*

RANDOMISE

1. A work coach at Jobcentre ANCHOR ANSWERS 1-3 (AS A BLOCK) EVEN IN RANDOMISATION
2. Someone else at Jobcentre
3. A work coach from another organisation
4. A training provider or local college
5. Another local organisation, specify
6. Employer

7. Other, please specify
8. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]

ASK PARTICIPANTS OR (DROP OUTS OR NON PARTICIPANTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED SUPPORT AT Q17 (Q17=1-9) OR Q18 (Q18=1-6) OR Q19 (Q19=1-6))  
SINGLE CODE

**22. On the scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being very useful and 1 not at all useful how useful was IF PARTICIPANT [PIPE IN NAME OF PROGRAMME] IF NON - PARTICIPANT OR EARLY LEAVER[the support] in helping you to find employment or progress in your career?**

*One answer, READ OUT SCALE*

1. Not at all useful
2. Not very useful
3. Neither useful nor not useful
4. Somewhat useful
5. Very useful
98. Don't know

ASK ALL, MULTICODE 1-12

**28B. Which, if any, of the following actions have you taken in the past 3 months?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, READ OUT AND PROBE FULLY*

RANDOMISED

1. I applied for a job(s)
2. I attended a few job interviews
3. I found a job/am starting a job soon
4. I improved my skills/gained new skills
5. I feel more confident about looking for work
6. I feel more confident about myself and my abilities to find work
7. I gained relevant work experience
8. I made new contacts with employers
9. I was referred to another DWP work-related support programme
10. I was referred to another support organisation, other than DWP
11. [ONLY EMPLOYED] I spoke to my employer about progression or promotion opportunities
12. Other, please specify

13. **PARTICIPANTS AND EARLY LEAVERS:** None of the above – the programme was not helpful in my job search **NON-PARTICIPANTS** None of the above **[EXCLUSIVE]**
100. Don't know **[EXCLUSIVE]**
101. Prefer not to say **[EXCLUSIVE]**

### Section 3: General support from JobCentre Plus Work Coaches

#### Y2 SAMPLE ONLY:

This section focuses on your experiences with work coaches at Jobcentre Plus **[IF PARTICIPANT: other than any interactions you had whilst taking part [PIPE IN PROVISION, IF PARTICIPATED ON MULTIPLE PROVISION, SHOW ALL].**

Please refer to any interactions you had recently. If you talk to more than one work coach, please think about the work coach you talk to most frequently.

#### Y2 SAMPLE ONLY: ASK ALL, GRID

**CATI ONLY :** For the next set of questions, please answer on a scale of one to five, where one is strongly agree and five is strongly disagree

**34. Thinking about the work coach you engage with most frequently, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

#### ROWS, REPEAT EACH STATEMENT, RANDOMISE

1. Work coach provides(ed) the support I need(ed) to help me back into work
2. The discussion(s) with the work coach are/were relevant to my career aspirations
3. The frequency of our meetings/engagement is sufficient
4. My needs are (were) listened to
5. I feel comfortable asking the work coach for employment-related support

#### COLUMNS, SINGLE CODE

1. Strongly agree
  2. Tend to agree
  3. Neither agree nor disagree
  4. Tend to disagree
  5. Strongly disagree
100. Don't know
101. Not applicable

### Section 4: Other Support

#### ASK ALL, MULTI CODE 1-9, RANDOMISE 1-7

**35. IF PARTICIPANT: Other than the support received from [PROGRAMME], ELSE: [H]have you ever received job-seeking support from any of the following over the past year?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, READ OUT*

1. A local community or charity organisation
2. A University or National Careers Service
3. Friends and family
4. Recruitment agency
5. Local college or another provider
6. Other (please specify)
7. I have not accessed support
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

ASK IF RECEIVED SUPPORT (Q35 = 1-9), MULTICODE 1-7

**37. And what type of support did you receive from IF ONE ANSWERS 1-1 OR 4-6 SELECTED AT Q35 [this organisation] IF FRIENDS AND FAMILY Q35=3 [your friends and family] IF TWO OR MORE ANSWERS 1-6 SELECTED [these organisations]?**

*One answer, DO NOT READ OUT BUT PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY.*

1. Support related to finding a job
2. Training
3. Help with applying for benefits/funding
4. Information on how to manage health and well-being
5. Information on how to budget/manage my finances
6. Referral to other services (e.g. mental health, housing or support with financial matters)
7. Other, please specify
99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

## **Section 5: Future / Next Steps**

The next few questions will ask about your plans for the future, any aspirations you might have and next steps.

ASK IF EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6), GRID

**38. CATI ONLY:** For the next question, please answer on a scale of one to five, where one is very satisfied and five is very dissatisfied:

**Thinking about your job IF MORE THAN ONE JOB** [Thinking now about your main job, that is the one in which you earn the most money], how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with:

Please always read out “your job overall” answer option first, all others – randomise.

**ROWS, SHOW ALL, RANDOMISE:**

1. Your job overall [ALWAYS FIRST]
2. The number of hours you work each week
3. Your commute to and from work
4. Training opportunities available to you
5. Opportunities for career development
6. Work-life balance
7. Your pay, including your benefits/tax credits
8. Your childcare arrangements whilst you are at work

**COLUMNS:**

7. Very satisfied
1. Fairly satisfied
2. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
3. Fairly dissatisfied
4. Very dissatisfied
5. Not applicable
99. Don't know

**IF EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6), GRID**

**CATI ONLY:** For the next set of questions, please answer on a scale of one to five, where one is very important and five is not at all important.

**39. Overall, over the next 12 months how important is it for you to [INSERT STATEMENT FROM BELOW]?**

**STATEMENTS, RANDOMISED:**

1. Increase your hours in your current job
2. Progress in your current job
3. Get a new/ different job



**SCALE, SINGLE CODE:**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Neither important nor not important
4. Not very important
5. Not at all important
6. Don't know

**ASK IF UNEMPLOYED (Q1=7-10), GRID**

**40. Overall, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

**STATEMENTS, RANDOMISED:**

4. I am not quite ready to handle a job
1. I have enough skills to do a job well
2. I would take almost any kind of job to get money

**SCALE, SINGLE CODE:**

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Don't know

**ASK ALL**

**42. IF EMPLOYED (Q1=1-6): Is there anything that makes it difficult for you to progress in your current job?** Progress means an increase in your pay, hours and/or taking on more responsibilities.

**IF UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK (Q1 = 7-10) Can you think of anything that makes it difficult for you to get a job?**

*Please select all that apply*

**MULTICODE DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODES, PROBE FULLY**

1. Not enough full-time jobs or well-paid jobs available
2. Not enough opportunities in the sector/area I am interested in

3. Lack of opportunities matching my skills and qualifications
4. Not having certificate/licences required for available jobs
5. [IF EMPLOYED] Lack of opportunities for training/ development in current job
6. [IF EMPLOYED] Lack of opportunities to increase pay / hours in current job or gain promotion
7. Transport difficulties
8. IF EMPLOYED Having to pay more for childcare if I do more hours IF UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK Childcare costs
9. My benefits/tax credits would go down / it would not be worth it financially
10. Poor employment record/ lack of work experience
11. My physical or mental health issues
12. My age
13. Housing problems (in temporary accommodation such as with friends, shelters, or hostels)
14. Caring responsibilities which limit the number of hours I can work
15. No access to internet or technology
16. No, nothing, I am happy with my work situation as it is [EXCLUSIVE; LOCK CODE AT THE BOTTOM]
17. I have given up trying to find work [LOCK CODE AT THE BOTTOM]
18. Other (specify)
19. None of these [EXCLUSIVE]

ASK ALL UNEMPLOYED OR EMPLOYED (Q1=1-11, 13), SINGLE CODE

**42C. Have you been offered a job in the last six months and decided to turn it down?**

1. Yes
2. No
99. Prefer not to say

ASK IF Q42C=1, MULTICODE

**42D. Why did you decide to turn it down?**

*Please select all that apply*

1. The pay was too low
2. I was worried about losing my benefit payments
3. I was worried about my benefit payments going down
4. I was worried about my benefit payments becoming less predictable
5. I was worried about losing help with energy costs
6. I was worried about losing access to other benefits such as free school meals, school uniform purchases, Healthy Start vouchers, free prescriptions, free

dental treatment, free prescriptions, Sure Start maternity grant, Warm Home Discount

7. It was a temporary or zero hours contract
8. I didn't want to do that type of work
9. I didn't want to work for that employer
10. The hours didn't fit around my other commitments
11. Travel/difficulty getting there
12. I couldn't afford childcare
13. I couldn't find suitable childcare
14. My health condition or disability
15. I am over-qualified
16. Other personal reasons
17. Something else (please specify)
100. Prefer not to say

### ASK ALL

**43. What, if anything would help to make it easier for you to [IF EMPLOYED progress in work] IF UNEMPLOYED [find employment]?**

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY*

### RANDOMISE 1-11

1. Support and training around finding/ getting a new job (e.g. interview skills, CV skills, communication skills)
2. Help with the cost of travel to and from work
3. Support and training with work-related skills (e.g. further education, spoken or written English; IT skills; job-specific skills)
4. Support to manage a physical or mental health condition
5. Support with mine or someone in my household's alcohol or drug problem
6. Access to digital technology and/or the internet
7. Support with using technology/internet
8. Access to affordable/ good quality childcare
9. Support to manage other caring responsibilities
10. Access to affordable housing
11. Something else (specify)
12. None of these [EXCLUSIVE]
100. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]
101. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

**ASK ALL [SCRIPTING TO CREATE A FLAG 'MENTAL HEALTH RISK' FOR AGES 18-24 ANSWER UNDER <4 ON THE SCALE]**

**45. For the next question, please answer on a scale of zero to ten, where zero is not at all and ten is completely:**

**ROWS**

1. How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

**SCALE:**

0 to 10 scale with one being “not at all” and 10 “completely”

98. Do not know

99. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, GRID**

**CATI: For the next set of questions, please answer on a scale of one to five, where one is not at all confident and five is very confident.**

**46. How confident do you feel about doing the following job search skills and activities successfully?**

**ROWS, ROTATE:**

1. Making a good list of all the skills that you have and can be used to find a job
2. Talking to friends and other contacts to find out about potential employers who need your skills
3. Talking to friends and other contacts to discover promising job openings that are suitable for you
4. Completing a good job application and CV
5. Contacting and persuading potential employers to consider you for a job
6. Making the best impression and getting your points across in a job interview
7. Searching for jobs online (using computers, Smart phones, internet, etc.)
8. Applying for jobs online (using computers, Smart phones, internet, etc.)
9. Getting help in order to become familiar with a new job

**SCALE:**

1. Not at all confident
2. Not very confident
3. Somewhat confident
4. Fairly confident
5. Very confident
99. Prefer not to say

## Section 6: Demographics

This is the final section of the survey and [CATI: I'd just / ONLINE: we would] like to ask you a few details about yourself including your health, [Y2 sample only: background and ethnic origin]. This information will be used to monitor the experiences that different groups have when they are dealing with DWP. You do not have to answer if you do not want to.

All of your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and DWP will not be able to identify you from the anonymised responses that Ipsos MORI supply.

Y2 SAMPLE ONLY:

ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE

### 47 What is your highest level of qualification?

One answer. DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY

- 8. NVQ5 or post-graduate diploma
- 9. NVQ4 / HNC / HND / Bachelor's degree or similar
- 10. 2 or more A-Levels, NVQ Level 3, BTEC Level 3 Diploma or equivalent
- 11. 3 0-Level or equivalent, 5 or more GCSEs of grade A\*-C or equivalent, NVQ Level 2, BTEC level 2 diploma or equivalent
- 12. 4 GCSEs of less than A\*-C or equivalent, NVQ Level 1
- 13. Something else (Please specify)
- 14. No qualifications
- 99. Prefer not to answer

Y2 SAMPLE ONLY:

ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE

### 48. How would you describe your ethnic background?

One answer, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE AND PROBE FULLY

- 6. White [Expandable Header]
  - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
  - Irish
  - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
  - Any other White background
- 7. Mixed / multiple ethnic groups [Expandable Header]
  - White and Black Caribbean
  - White and Black African

- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background
- 8. Asian / Asian British [Expandable Header]
  - Indian
  - Pakistani
  - Bangladeshi
  - Chinese
  - Any other Asian background
- 9. Black / African / Caribbean / Black British [Expandable Header]
  - African
  - Caribbean
  - Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
- 10. Other ethnic group [Expandable Header]
  - Arab
  - Any other ethnic group, please write in \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prefer not to answer
- 99. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, MULTI CODE**

**49. Which of these best describes your living situation?**

Please answer for the accommodation you spend most of your time in.

*Please select all that apply*

*Multi code, READ OUT,*

- 7. Living alone
- 8. Living with partner [MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE WITH OPTION 3]
- 9. Living with spouse/civil partner [MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE WITH OPTION 2]
- 10. Living with parents
- 11. Living with friends/other adults / other family (i.e. not parents)
- 12. Living with dependent children (under the age of 16, or under the age of 20 and still in full-time education or training, below university or equivalent level)
- 99. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE**

**50. Which of these best describe the accommodation you are living in at the moment?**

Please answer for the accommodation you spend most of your time in.

**CATI: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE**

- 11. Private rented
- 12. Rented from a council or local authority
- 13. Rented from a Housing Association
- 14. Being bought on a mortgage/bank loan
- 15. Shared ownership where you pay part rent and part mortgage
- 16. Owned outright
- 17. Living with friends/relatives and paying some rent
- 18. Living with friends/ relatives and not paying any rent
- 19. Living in temporary or sheltered accommodation or rough sleeping
- 20. Something else (specify)
- 100. Don't know
- 101. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, MULTICODE EXCEPT 1 and 99**

**51. Do you have any of the following caring responsibilities?**

*By caring responsibilities, we mean caring for anyone who needs help with everyday life due to illness, disability or old age. This could include help with grocery shopping, bathing, dressing, laundry, etc.*

**CATI READ OUT. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**

- 6. No [EXCLUSIVE]
- 7. Yes – for my Spouse / Civil Partner/ Partner
- 8. Yes – for my Parent(s)
- 9. Yes – for another family member
- 10. Yes – for a friend
- 99. Prefer not to say [EXCLUSIVE]

**Y2 SAMPLE ONLY: ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE**

**52. Is English your first language?**

**One answer, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE**

- 5. Yes
- 6. No
- 7. Don't know
- 8. Prefer not to say

**Y2 SAMPLE ONLY: ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE**

**54. Would you feel able to use the internet to access government services if they were available online?**

*One answer, DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE*

- 6. Yes, able to
- 7. Yes, able to with help
- 8. No, not able
- 9. Don't know
- 10. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE**

**55a What is your personal annual income (pre-tax) earned from all sources?**

*Please include all your income sources: salaries, scholarships, pension and Social Security benefits, dividends from shares, income from rental properties, child support and alimony, etc.*

*One answer. Prompt to code as necessary.*

- 25. Under £5,000
- 26. £5,000 - 9,999
- 27. £10,000 - 14,999
- 28. £15,000 - 19,999
- 29. £20,000 - 24,999
- 30. £25,000 - 34,999
- 31. £35,000 - 44,999
- 32. £45,000 - 54,999
- 33. £55,000 - 99,999
- 34. £100,000 or more
- 35. Don't know
- 36. I don't have a personal income
- 99. Prefer not to answer

**ASK SCALE AND THEN REPEAT FOR 55b, ASK ALL OTHER THAN Q55A=1. INCLUDE A SOFT LOGIC CHECK SO THAT PERSONAL INCOME CANNOT BE HIGHER THAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

**55b. And what is the combined total annual income (pre-tax) earned by all members of your household?**



*Please include all your income sources: salaries, scholarships, pension and Social Security benefits, dividends from shares, income from rental properties, child support and alimony, etc.*

One answer. Prompt to code as necessary.

- 37. Under £5,000
- 38. £5,000 - 9,999
- 39. £10,000 - 14,999
- 40. £15,000 - 19,999
- 41. £20,000 - 24,999
- 42. £25,000 - 34,999
- 43. £35,000 - 44,999
- 44. £45,000 - 54,999
- 45. £55,000 - 99,999
- 46. £100,000 or more
- 47. Don't know
- 48. I don't have a personal income
- 99. Prefer not to answer

### ASK ALL, SINGLE CODE

We would now like to ask you some questions about your health.

#### **56. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?**

*Please include any intermittent conditions or illnesses, lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more.*

One answer, *DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE*

- 5. Yes – physical condition
- 6. Yes – mental health condition
- 7. Yes – both physical and mental health condition
- 8. No
- 99. I prefer not to say

### ASK IF YES TO HEALTH CONDITIONS, SINGLE CODE

#### **57 Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?**

One answer, *DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CODE*

- 4. Yes, a lot
- 5. Yes, a little

- 6. Not at all
- 99. I prefer not to say

## **Section 7: Thank you**

**On behalf of Ipsos UK and the Department of Work and Pensions we would like to thank you very much for your time.**

**58 Ipsos UK and our partner research organisation may wish to contact you to take part in further research on this topic in the next 12 months. Would you be happy to take part in further research? You do not have to commit to anything now, just indicate a willingness to be contacted again.**

- 4. Yes – Ipsos can contact me
- 5. Yes – Another research organisation can contact me
- 6. No

**59. For research and statistical purposes only, the Department of Work and Pensions would like to link your answers to other information they hold so they can further analyse the survey. Your responses will remain completely confidential, and your dealings with DWP will not be affected in any way. The linking is done with a unique survey ID number that retains your anonymity. Are you happy to let DWP link your survey responses to benefit claim information they have about you for survey analysis? You can change your mind at any time by contacting Ipsos at: [planforjobs@ipsos.com](mailto:planforjobs@ipsos.com)**

- 3. Yes
- 4. No

**That is the end of the interview. Thank you very much for giving us your time today. CATI: I would just like to confirm with you that my name is XXX and I have been calling you from Ipsos UK, acting for and on behalf of DWP.**

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THANK AND CLOSE