

Realising Talent: supporting people with multiple needs into work

A shared commitment to
devolved solutions

Foreword

People are out of work for many reasons – economic, social, ill-health, personal – and where you live affects your job prospects. The longer a person is out of work, the more scarring the effects of unemployment will be, and the harder it is to support them into sustained work. Councils understand this. Improving the employability of all our residents is critical if we are to achieve local growth, reduce welfare dependency and boost national productivity.

The Work Programme and Work Choice have helped many into work, but have continued to struggle to support those with weaker labour market prospects – just one in five disadvantaged Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants get a job on the Work Programme.

It is unacceptable that after two years on such schemes, 70 per cent of all jobseekers and 87 per cent of all ESA claimants find themselves back at the job centre looking for work. These schemes have not worked for those that most need it, and local government often provides a safety net for those failed by national support. Reform is needed to reflect what we know works.

We believe now is the time for local government to be given the opportunity to improve performance by commissioning employment support from 2017, when current national contracts expire. Set out in this new report, is an LGA proposal for a **devolved employment programme for ESA and JSA claimants facing multiple needs and labour market disadvantage**.

Delivered with maximum local flexibility across England taking into account devolution deals already secured, or in progress, this proposal provides a mechanism through which up to one million claimants will benefit from support.

Councils know that to support people furthest from the labour market into sustained work, much more is needed beyond employment support alone, addressing specific needs such as physical and mental health – recognising good health improves chances of finding and staying in work and enjoying the consequential financial and social advantages – housing and childcare, as well as providing good work experience. Building on this unique and proven capacity, they are also working together across boundaries, and with businesses and local partners to make huge efficiencies to achieve economies of scale to understand, anticipate and respond to the local labour market and the skills local employers actually need.

Evidence in this report demonstrates what local government is already doing to bring these insights and services together to support people into work, including those with physical and mental health conditions, putting into practice their new public health responsibilities. We want to do so much more, but continue to be constrained by a nationally commissioned and fragmented employment and skills system.

With the Government's support and resources behind our proposal, we are confident it will unlock local government's ability to do far more to achieve the Prime Minister's manifesto commitment to support people with multiple barriers into work.

With locally integrated employment, health and skills interventions, alongside a similar case worker approach to that successfully used in the council-led Troubled Families programme, we could improve job outcomes by 50 per cent for equivalent disadvantaged groups across England.

Further budgetary cuts are expected across the board through the Spending Review, making public service reform a necessity. Westminster can no longer afford to spend billions designing schemes around Whitehall departments, while overlooking the benefits of devolving support across England. The question therefore is not should central and local government resources work together for our most disadvantaged people, but how, and when?

We believe our proposal is a step in the right direction, and recognise it means substantial reform, but the potential gains are significant for the local and national economy and for the people whose lives this support could turn around.

We look forward to working with the Government and stakeholders to realise the potential of our proposals.



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Introduction and background

This short paper sets out an initial proposal for how central and local government resources can work together to deliver better outcomes for our most disadvantaged people. Within the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the future of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) employment budgets, there are significant decisions to be made about the level of support for disadvantaged people to find work and move out of poverty. We recognise that our proposal requires detailed discussions with a number of central government departments and substantial reforms, but the potential gains are even greater.

Background

In Realising Talent: a devolved framework for employment and skills (March 2015), we recommended that when current Work Programme contracts expire in 2017, it should be replaced with:

1. Mainstream employment support for the majority of long-term Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants aged 22 and over (assuming that the Youth Obligation provision will be contracted separately); and
2. Specialist employment support programme for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants and JSA claimants facing multiple needs and labour market disadvantage, planned and delivered locally.

The principle was that **together Jobcentre Plus and local government can have more impact and work more efficiently** by: collaboratively identifying residents with multiple needs; mobilising and aligning local resources; encouraging co-location and shared services; and delivering higher job outcomes.

This paper provides further thoughts on how a specialist employment support programme for ESA and JSA claimants facing multiple needs and labour market disadvantage could be delivered in England.

Before we deal with the proposal in detail, below are some ideas on **how mainstream support for JSA claimants** could be developed.

- Realising Talent suggested that there should be separate, mainstream employment support for those claimants who are relatively more employable. This is because for some JSA claimants the current Work Programme has performed moderately well.
- Nevertheless, it continues to be constrained by a failure to capitalise on local job opportunities and an inability to integrate skills provision, which we believe needs to be addressed. There could be significant potential to integrate the Adult Skills Budget (ASB) if local areas have more influence over how a devolved ASB can be targeted.

- We recognise that for long-term JSA claimants without multiple disadvantages (Work Programme Payment Groups one and two: JSA 18-24 and JSA 25+), the current numbers are much lower compared to when the Work Programme was originally commissioned. In the first year of the Work Programme, a total of 432,000 of these JSA claimants were referred, compared to 71,000 in the most recent 12 months.
- This opens up a wider range of options for how support is provided to a smaller number of long-term JSA claimants. One option is to explore how combined Jobcentre Plus and local government services could provide a universal service to claimants up to, for example, the first 18 months on benefits. This could be tested in some areas and can build on how Jobcentre Plus and some local authorities are already working closely together, and will include how skills provision can be better integrated.

The LGA proposal

This paper proposes a new specialist programme for adults with multiple needs. It sets out how the resources and expertise highlighted above can be harnessed. We are confident that in doing so it will lead to an increase in jobs for workless people, improved skills matches for employers, and a more efficient local labour market.

The benefits of a local approach

The advantages of firmly rooting a new programme for multiple needs at a local level are:

Knowledge of the local economy

- knowledge of the local economy and vacancies and the supply-side challenges
- membership and joint work with Local Enterprise Partnerships to drive economic development and regeneration
- links with employers small and large, and forward knowledge of changes in the volume and nature of employer demand, including through Section 106
- reach to work with, and link services for, disadvantaged groups including through the voluntary and community sector.

Existing responsibilities

- relevant statutory responsibilities where they overlap or adjoin age groups (such as NEETs and care leavers) and the supply of opportunities for Raising the Participation Age which could be planned with 18-24 provision

- support for parents (particularly lone parents) through the Family Information Service, childcare support, and other relevant services
- public health responsibilities and local links with health provision
- operational experience in delivering a successful, and expanding, Troubled Families programme, using case workers and co-location
- planning and delivery of Universal Support Delivered Locally (USDL) services and integration of existing local advice services, local welfare support and Discretionary Housing Payment
- intelligence from administering Housing Benefit (HB) and utilisation of HB staff capacity.

Ability to integrate

- in some areas, the added value of integrating locally commissioned employment provision
- as social landlords and/or knowledge of local social landlords where they are currently running provision for workless tenants
- engagement with skills providers through further education and adult and family education
- procurement expertise that currently commissions far larger volumes of services than the value of the Work Programme.

Our proposal sets out a mechanism which allows flexibility to enable local solutions, and works together with Jobcentre Plus to integrate local provision. We recognise from the outset that this approach will need to be phased in, building on those areas already planning and delivering trial programmes.

It is intended to **replace the Work Programme for some of the current 'payment groups'**, namely: JSA early access; JSA ex-IB; ESA volunteers; new ESA claimants: ESA ex-IB; IB/IS; and JSA prison leavers. Since the start of the Work Programme, 585,000 have started in these payment groups which represent 40 per cent of the programme. In the past 12 months 55,000 have started, which is 43 per cent of all starts. As JSA numbers decline, the proportion of those with multiple needs has started to increase.

The job outcomes for these payment groups are considerably lower than the two main payment groups of JSA 18-24 and JSA 25+. **For the disadvantaged payment groups performance is 19 per cent whilst for others it is 33 per cent – a gap of 14 percentage points or 83,000 jobs.** Our aim is to improve job outcomes for disadvantaged claimants and in so doing, close the performance gap.

For this group of disadvantaged claimants we think a new approach is needed, based on:

- addressing multiple barriers to improve employability and unlock job opportunities
- integrating health provision for a new employability and health approach
- integrating skills provision to boost qualifications and productivity
- integrating other resources for disadvantaged people, such as troubled families.

Halving the **employment rate gap for disabled people** is a significant challenge, involving over 1 million people with disabilities and health conditions moving into work in the next five years. We think radical steps are needed to achieve this goal, and our proposal can be an important element in the strategy.

We forecast that around 250,000 people with disabilities could be eligible for the proposed programme over the next five years. With improved job outcomes, the new programme could therefore contribute significantly to the goal of reducing the employment rate gap.

In total, we believe **the new programme could support up to 1 million of the most disadvantaged people**, including troubled families, over the next five years.

A new start

The aim is to help turnaround the lives of those claimants who have significant barriers to finding and keeping a job, especially those with a disability, health condition as well as those with 'treatable' conditions. These groups of people have been poorly served by previous labour market programmes and local government is committed to improving positive outcomes for individuals and their families.

There has been sufficient learning from the Work Programme, DWP ESF Families, Troubled Families, and other programmes, to inform how a localised programme could deliver better results. Coupled with learning from local programmes, including public health, we think a strong national/ local partnership can be formed that will deliver results. Already the extent of local collaboration between Jobcentre Plus and local partners has demonstrated new, more effective, ways of working – we want to build on this collaboration to introduce efficiencies and improve performance.

Who will join the programme?

We want to target those who are the most disadvantaged in the labour market, and who are either very long-term unemployed or are at a high risk of becoming long-term unemployed.

Whilst we make specific proposals for eligibility we recognise that detailed discussions will be needed with DWP on eligibility (including any local flexibility) and therefore the anticipated scale of the programme.

Our assumption is that the Youth Obligation will cater for 18-22 year olds therefore our proposal, in general, covers all adults over the age of 22. There are two caveats to this: 1) there is a case for the most disadvantaged young people to have more intensive support; 2) we suggest a trial in some areas for how the Youth Obligation can be fully integrated into a joint Jobcentre Plus and local government service, for example, building on the learning from MyGo (the dedicated youth jobcentre) in Suffolk.

Our proposed main eligibility criteria for the programme are:

- those who have claimed an out-of-work benefit for the majority of the past two years
- workless families or those with a history of worklessness
- people with physical/mental health issues, learning difficulties and sensory impairments
- lone parents with disadvantages and whose youngest child is three or over
- young people aged 18 to 24 who have never been in waged employment for more than six months, incorporating Youth Obligation but with more intensive support.

It is expected that **every eligible person will have at least two recognised labour market disadvantages**. Annex 1 gives the proposed list of eligibility criteria. This is based on the current DWP list of disadvantaged claimants eligible for early entry to the Work Programme, and criteria recognised in local models.

Whilst the majority of referrals will be through Jobcentre Plus, we also want to explore how referral routes from other agencies (such as health) could work in practice. The ongoing introduction of Universal Credit (UC) also gives the opportunity to build in learning from the ‘Universal Services Delivered Locally’ pilots which target those disadvantaged UC claimants with financial management and digital skills needs.

In addition, we propose jointly testing segmentation and diagnostic tools with Jobcentre Plus, which will lead to a standard assessment tool used by both DWP and local government. This will introduce more consistency and facilitate the sharing of claimant information. We believe these tools could provide a more targeted approach to identify those at a high risk of becoming very long-term unemployed. They can also efficiently identify the nature of the support to help reduce barriers to work – making sure that the claimant is on the right track to increase their employability and into sustained employment.

The offer

- Everyone referred to the programme will have an initial **assessment** to put them on the right track to support. Local government will work with DWP to agree a **standard assessment tool** to be used in every area, enabling the open learning of what works. We will build on current assessment tools, such as those used in ‘Universal Services Delivered Locally’.
- A **personal key worker** will plan with the claimant their steps towards or directly into work. Local authorities will make the best use of existing key workers in their areas and take steps to build capacity and expertise.
- The **right support at the right time** will be provided by key workers matching claimants with existing local provision. The role of the local authority (or their appointed agent) will be to co-ordinate the full range of services that claimants may need. This will involve organising **clear referral routes** between health provision (including physical and mental health and learning difficulties), skills providers, advice agencies and other specialist services. **Integrating existing local provision** will be central to delivering a programme that can reduce duplication and make best use of local expertise. However, there may also be the need for additional provision and this will be planned and commissioned locally.

- Local government will lead the way in encouraging the **co-location of services**, including Jobcentre Plus. This makes sense for claimants who need easy access to the right services, but it could also bring substantial efficiencies and help in the introduction of Universal Credit. To stimulate integration every area will commit to establishing a body, such as **local integration boards** modelled in Greater Manchester, which bring together service leads and providers.
- The integration of skills provision will be aided by the anticipated co-commissioning of the **adult skills budget** between local areas and the Skills Funding Agency. Greater local control of the priorities for the use of the adult skills budget will significantly increase the potential for skills funding to be aligned with the needs of local disadvantaged claimants. The **involvement of employers** through Jobcentre Plus, LEPs and/or local employment and skills board can help ensure the nature of skills and employment provision is geared to their recruitment needs.
- Once referred a claimant should be the **responsibility of the local authority for two years** plus one year in-work (if appropriate) – helping people stay and progress in jobs – to reduce churn. We want to develop and agree a framework for **Service Standards** for claimants that would apply in all areas. These would cover the amount of contact time and its regularity, as well as the support that claimants could expect to receive.

Where would the programme operate?

As with Troubled Families, this programme could operate in every area. However, it is recognised there is a significant scaling-up to be achieved and substantial public sector reform challenges. Therefore we propose two phases. For the first trial phase (2017/18) groups of local authorities should be invited to express an interest.

These are likely to be, but not exclusively, combined authorities, and should include a mix of cities and non-metropolitan areas, taking into account where areas are able to deliver quickly. The second phase would be a planned full roll-out across England from 2018/19.

How will it be funded?

The **combined resources** of:

1. a per capita contribution equivalent to the current DWP employment programme budget for disadvantaged groups
2. local resources from the existing Troubled Families programme
3. existing locally controlled capacity and resources
4. opening access to other funded provision, such as the adult skills budget and European funds
5. exploring the potential for how health services can be part of an integrated service.

A key task of local areas will be to **coordinate resources** to maximum effect. In future we envisage the role of central government funding should be to leverage the contribution of existing local resources into a unified local government and Jobcentre Plus service for disadvantaged people. This will involve a significant step forward in the **joint planning and funding of services** between local government, Jobcentre Plus, and health. In terms of central government contributions, we anticipate a mix of ring-fenced block grants and performance payments.

Accountability would be through **'local outcome agreements'** which sets out the budgetary contributions from partners, agreed targets, and job outcomes. It is expected that these agreements will address short and long-term goals for each target group addressing increases in employability, job outcomes, and the reduction of employment rate gaps.

The total resources covered by 'local outcome agreements' will be based on an agreed formula to identify the inputs from central government and locally controlled resources, and will form the basis for a split in the rewards for success.

It is anticipated there will be **additional benefit savings** due to improved job outcomes as a direct result of the programme. Currently it is estimated only 7p in every £1 saved stays at the local level. We propose an increased proportion of these savings should **return to the local area** to be invested in local services.

On the basis of 1 million participating on the programme over the next five years and a unit price of £2,750, the total cost to all partners will be around £2.75 billion. This unit price is higher than the current average on the Work Programme, but we think it better reflects the existing local expenditure as well as the investment needed to improve outcomes. However, with improved job outcomes compared to the Work Programme and maintaining the success of Troubled Families, over a five year period, the aim would be to deliver overall savings to the public purse.

Improving performance

We believe our approach will lead to an improvement in job outcomes for equivalent groups on the Work Programme. For example, on current evidence for the ESA WRAG group we believe we could **improve job outcomes by around 50 per cent**. However, as for Troubled Families and ESF Families, other progression measures and outcomes should also be included which are known to increase employability, reduce the demand on other services, and help families to progress.

We propose that job outcomes will be measured on the same basis as the Work Programme – sustained job outcomes. In addition, we expect that a proportion of payments will be performance based.

Part of our commitment to improve outcomes will be achieved by **strong relationships with local employers**. Understanding the recruitment and skills needs of local employers is a capability we share with Jobcentre Plus and Local Enterprise Partnerships. We want to bring our knowledge together, informed by local labour market intelligence, to achieve not just more jobs through this proposed programme, but also delivering more Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

The 'local outcome agreements' will set the performance levels which local areas believe they can achieve. However, these will be agreed with central government within a **performance framework** which will set floors for performance above which local areas can set expectations. In total, our commitment will be to demonstrate how programme performance will lead to overall savings to the public purse over five years.

Commissioning and managing the programme

This would **not be a co-commissioned programme**. Responsibility and accountability would lie firmly with the local area through the local outcome agreement. As well as setting out the intended outcomes, the agreements will also set out the financial settlement. However, the role of DWP and Jobcentre Plus locally is critical and they will need to be part of strong governance arrangements. This will mean stronger freedoms and flexibilities for Districts to lead integration and innovation. Furthermore we think there is value of an agreed **framework** that sets standards and good practice in the management and delivery of the programme.

It will be for each area to decide how to achieve their agreed stretch in performance. In some areas local government will choose to contract out all of the co-ordination and delivery functions. However, other areas could decide they will achieve better results by retaining some functions in-house.

When commissioning any element of the programme, local authorities will use existing procurement staff and will ensure that social value is part of the commissioning process. We will explore the use of common Invitations to Tender (ITTs) and commissioning hubs to reduce the market costs of bidders.

Where there are groups of local authorities, there will be one lead authority responsible for finances and procurement processes. We would expect the normal oversight and audit from relevant government departments in the delivery of the programme.

Welfare reform

We see our proposal as an integral part of responding to the challenges that wider welfare reform will bring. Our experience to date shows that individual claimants need advice and support to take the right decisions about housing, family and work. Universal Credit intentionally reduces personal interactions with the majority of claimants. The most vulnerable claimants often need face-to-face support that brings together a number of strands - for example debt, housing and employment. This can only be done most effectively at the local level. **With increasing numbers on Universal Credit** over the next few years we want to ensure there are the mechanisms in place that will help the most vulnerable and provide them with the guidance they may need, including those who are in work and want to progress.

Conclusion

Our proposal is a radical step in public sector reform and how disadvantaged claimants receive support. It is designed to improve outcomes for groups of people that previous programmes have mostly failed. Local government believes it can and will do better by integrating local services to provide personalised support to disadvantaged individuals and families.

Local authority case studies

Leeds City Council: retaining jobs as well as finding them

- Workplace Leeds helps people experiencing problems stay in jobs as well as finding work.
- It has recently expanded its services and helps nearly 500 people a year now.
- Clients praise the staff for being 'approachable', 'honest' and 'caring'.

Workplace Leeds offers a range of services and support to help people with mental health problems stay in work or find new employment. It is run by Leeds Mind in partnership with local mental health, social care and housing services.

It has actually been offering employment support for the past 20 years, but since 2011 has dramatically expanded its services. Four years ago it had just six staff. Now there are 34 and nearly 500 people get help each year.

One of its key services is employment support. Specialists work with those looking to get paid employment.

Service Manager Vanessa Lenzionowski says: "We encourage people to find work which is meaningful, sustainable and fulfilling. "Often they have been struggling to get work and their confidence and self-esteem may be low. The first task is to help them with these issues before moving on to give them support finding employment. We can work with people up to a year, but for some it happens much quicker."

There is a range of help available from peer support to workshops. When the individual is ready they can move on to things such as CV building and interview skills to help looking for jobs and completing applications. Those who have been helped have gone on to get a range of jobs from hairdressers and health workers to librarians, window cleaners and web designers.

The second main service by Workplace Leeds is a job retention service for people who are experiencing difficulties at work.

"They may be off sick or at risk of losing their job," Ms Lenzionowski explains. "Often we only get involved at quite a late stage – it would perhaps be better to work with them at an earlier stage. But we still find there is lots we can do.

"We meet with the clients and discuss what the issues are. Sometimes it involves us going to meet their employers to try to mediate, other times we provide similar support to those looking for work in terms of building confidence and self-esteem.

"There can be delicate situations, but mostly we find employers really want to help, but just don't know what to do. Some of it is about raising awareness with them." As well as the peer support and workshops, there is also the Being Well at Work service, which is an eight-week course for people who want to become more resilient and better able to manage their working environment.

Last year over nine in 10 people who were helped through the job retention service managed to stay in their jobs, including nurses, teachers and IT professionals.

Alongside these two services, IT training is available as well, offering everything from basic skills to advanced qualifications. The service has been awarded an A rating by the British Computer Society.

There are also volunteering opportunities – available to help people gain experience in work as part of the move towards paid employment.

Referrals come from a variety of places including from local mental health services, social care and – through a pilot project – some GP practices. The scheme also has some of its specialists co-located with the mental health teams and at day centres across the city to help ensure the support is available to those who need it.

Sinead Cregan, Leeds City Council's Adult Social Care Commissioning Manager, says she is "really pleased" with the service. "The joint work in our day centres is going really well with many good outcomes for our clients and the IT training is getting excellent results.'

Caroline Bamford, Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, is also full of praise. "Workplace Leeds brings a very person-centred approach to the vocational rehabilitation agenda and the benefits of this are clear."

But what do the individuals who have been helped think? A review of the service by Leeds Beckett University in the spring of 2015 found users valued the work highly. Staff were praised for being 'approachable', 'honest', 'caring' and less 'clinical and non-judgemental' than other services.

Participants were also asked to rate the service. The results showed that ability to understand strengths and weaknesses improved by a third and awareness and simple-coping strategies by 40 per cent.

Feedback from individuals also illustrates the impact the service has. Mark Winters had been out of work for two years with mental health problems when he started getting help from the employment support service. "I'd always worked and enjoyed life. I didn't recognise the person I'd become."

But he says when he was referred to the service he began to think differently and became more confident about applying for jobs. Mark was helped with his CV and was even given money to help him get a new suit for interviews. He was eventually offered an accounts assistant job and has not looked back since. "I can honestly say I love my job. It's at a lower level than before, which is fine with me. There's no stress. I can leave work behind when I go home. Now I'm out there working again, everything has fallen into place. That's how I knew I was back to being the 'real me'."

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Hertfordshire County Council: providing support in-house

- The employment scheme in Hertfordshire is run in-house by the council.
- Managers say the set-up allows staff to 'concentrate on the core job – trying to get people work'.
- One of those who has been helped describes the experience as the 'most rewarding' of their life.

Unlike many services that work with the long-term unemployed, Hertfordshire County Council's supported employment service is delivered in-house.

Work Solutions operates from two sites in the county and employs 30 staff. It was set up over 20 years ago and now has an annual budget of £850,000.

Head of Service Amanda Selley believes being part of the council – it sits in the health and community services department – is an advantage. "Although quite unusual nowadays – it really does help," she says. "It means we can concentrate on the core job – trying to get people in work – rather than always looking for funding and having to diversify to meet varying criteria.

Its key project for those with health problems is the Work Skills Programme, which sees between 170 and 220 people a year.

The scheme initially involves an eight-week group course, which offers three hours of sessions a week. Over the duration of the course participants are offered help with confidence building, interview techniques, CV preparing and finally job applications.

But the support is very much tailored around the individual. Take Luigi, for example. He had been suffering from paranoid schizophrenia with hyper manic tendencies for several years by the time he was referred. He had lost all confidence and self-esteem and was not even confident enough to answer the telephone. Initially all communication had to be done through his partner.

When he started the Work Skills Programme, Luigi was so nervous that he did not even manage to get to the first day. Recognising he would need extra support, his employment adviser met him before the session and brought him in with his partner. Several weeks in, he was still nervous and anxious and so an employment adviser even went to his home to help him and after that kept in almost daily contact with him. By week five and six of the programme things started to change. Luigi was standing up presenting his group's exercises and discussions to the whole training group. By the end of the programme he was having job interviews and went on to find employment.

Ms Selley says: "You need to provide that personal support. With any client the most important thing is to understand what they need and help give them the confidence and motivation to want to work. "These are people who have often been isolated and are lacking social skills. They have not been able to be helped by mainstream services and they need extra support to overcome the challenges they face. That is where we come in.

"If someone needs help with debt issues, we have a welfare rights adviser who can help them. If they need to go and do some training we can signpost them. We can also refer them on to health services if they aren't already getting help.

"And if the Work Skills programme isn't suitable we can arrange one-to-one help too. You have to find the right solution and support for the individual. Saying that, you have to expect people will drop out. This sort of help will not be successful for everyone. Some people don't want to work or are unable to do so through personal circumstances or health issues."

Alongside the Work Skills Programme for people with health conditions, the council also runs a dedicated course for people with a learning disability. Referrals are accepted from a variety of sources, including social services, GPs and mental health services. Self-referrals are also accepted. Many will have been through the government's work programme.

Once the eight-week course is finished, people are allocated to their adviser and work tasters are organised with the idea that they will act as a "stepping stone" into paid employment. These can involve everything from a half-day or full day to doing a few hours over the course of several weeks.

Ms Selley says: "We spend a lot of time cold calling employers. You have to find the right placement for each person and sell their abilities without focusing on the disability.

"It's the same when applying with jobs. We answer adverts but also contact employers directly. It can be quite difficult to move from benefits into employment, so with some people, we use the supported permitted work programme allowing a limited earning potential offset against their benefits.

"I think that transition into work is really important. It's one of the key goals of the county council to support our thriving local communities. So, once employed, we carry on supporting both employee and employer with any work related issues and adjusting to working life."

And it certainly seems to work. Over 100 found employment last year at a diverse range of employers including recruitment firms and cleaning agencies to Costa Coffee and a local library.

Feedback from those who have taken part also illustrate the impact it has. "Before starting the programme I couldn't even bring myself to look at my CV, let alone to begin to rewrite it," says Emmie.

"The course and various interactions with you and my peers has helped me to come out of my shell. It has been the most rewarding investment of my life. From the bottom of my heart, thank you."

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Central London Forward: using economies of scale

- Central London Forward is establishing an employment service across its eight London boroughs.
- The scheme balances local knowledge with economies of scale – with the aim of helping 4,000 long-term unemployed in the next five years.
- London Mayor Boris Johnson has praised the potential of the scheme.

London boroughs have a strong track record in establishing small-scale schemes to improve the employment chances of people with complex barriers to work, including health problems.

But Central London Forward is aiming to develop this by balancing local knowledge with economies of scale through the launch of a new scheme called Working Capital.

The project is aiming to work with nearly 4,000 long-term unemployed clients across Camden, City of London, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Southwark, Wandsworth and Westminster over the next five years. It has been developed in partnership with London Councils, the Mayor of London, the London Enterprise Panel and the Government. The £11 million initiative, funded by the European Social Fund, launches in the autumn.

Working Capital will focus on central London residents who are in the Employment Support Allowance work-related activity group and have left the Government's Work Programme without securing sustained work. In most cases this will mean that participants have been unemployed for at least two-and-a-half years.

Many are likely to have significant mental and physical health-related barriers to employment as well as experiencing other problems associated with long periods of worklessness, including a lack of confidence, skills or experience.

After being referred from Jobcentre Plus, each client will receive dedicated support from a multi-skilled caseworker who will work with them to find out more about the problems they are facing and what assistance they need to get back into work. The caseworker will help them develop and implement an individual plan of action to support them in moving towards and gaining sustained employment.

This is likely to include integrating personalised support with existing council, health and voluntary sector services.

Once employment is found, follow-up support will be provided for six months to help them settle into work. Central London Forward has appointed a provider which will employ and manage the case workers across the boroughs.

The new approach builds on learning from locally-led programmes, including borough-led Family Recovery programmes and specialist health interventions such as Individual Placement and Support schemes.

One such scheme, the specialist Mental Health Employment Service, is delivered by the Central and North West London Mental Health Trust and works with individuals with severe mental health conditions. The service places employment specialists alongside clinical teams including psychiatric nurses and therapists, providing a holistic programme of practical and emotional support to support them towards work. In one central London borough alone in 2014 the service saw over 200 clients with over 20 per cent securing employment opportunities.

Building on this, a number of central London boroughs have been carrying out small-scale projects which link into Working Capital or have helped to lay the groundwork for it.

For example, Westminster has established High Potential, which has used a case worker-based approach with the longest-term JSA claimants, who often have hidden or undiagnosed health barriers to employment.

Since the project began in April 2015, it has engaged over 50 clients, of whom five have already moved into employment.

Kris Krasnowski, Director of Central London Forward, says: "To maximise these links, the Working Capital caseworkers will be embedded within the most relevant team at each of the councils to help them access and navigate the support available from local services and organisations such as housing, health and children's services in order to provide clients with all-round assistance.

"The expertise of local partners in shaping the approach, setting standards and working together to resolve issues will be critical to the success of the programme."

The project is being run as a randomised control trial. On leaving the Work Programme, those eligible to participate will be randomly referred by Jobcentre Plus either to Working Capital or to a control group who will receive standard Jobcentre Plus support.

Mr Krasnowski adds: "A robust, independent evaluation will be an integral part of the programme. CLF and Government expect the trial to show a significant improvement compared to 'business as usual' provision, with Government having agreed that success by Working Capital will open up opportunities to expand the scheme, aligning with broader discussions on local influence over employment support."

At the launch of the scheme, London Mayor Boris Johnson said: "London's economic recovery must benefit the entire city and that means we need to do our utmost to help every Londoner possible to get into work. This plan has the potential to do just that and I hope it can help strengthen the case for greater devolution of power to the capital."

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East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove councils: intervening early

- In Sussex the employment service also helps those who are experiencing their first mental health conditions.
- About 150 people – many young – are helped before they become long-term unemployed.
- Evidence suggests it is an effective way of tackling these problems.

Early intervention is becoming commonplace in terms of improving health – the idea being that if you tackle the problems early, they will be easier to resolve. But when it comes to helping people with health problems find employment, the opposite is often the case with many schemes focussing on people who have enduring illnesses and been out of work for some time.

However, in Sussex an alternative model has been developed to run alongside the more traditional support offered to people with severe mental health problems. Services for both groups are provided by not-for-profit provider Southdown on behalf of the local councils and NHS across three areas – East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove.

While much of the work is with people who have mental ill health and been out of work for some time, an early intervention scheme has also been established to work with people who have just experienced their first psychotic episode, many of whom are teenagers or people in their 20s.

In defined local areas, an employment specialist is co-located with the mental health teams that deal with young people with severe mental health problems. Like mainstream employment support clients are offered personalised help with everything from interview coaching, CV updating and confidence building. When the individual is ready, the specialist is then able to approach local employers to see if they can find them employment in their area of interest.

The approach is based on the Individual Placement and Support model. It was first piloted in this region by East Sussex in 2006 before being adopted more widely.

East Sussex Strategic Commissioning Manager Kenny Mackay says the evidence shows it really works. “The important aspect of the model is capturing the individuals own aspirations and ambitions. This is the significant driver of success.”

Southdown Employment Services Contract Manager Saxon Chadwick agrees, saying the experience so far shows it is particularly effective when offered at an earlier stage.

“Clients such as these do not quite have the entrenched problems and mindset of those who have more long-term problems so in that respect you find it can be easier to work with them.

“But there are still challenges. Some will have low self-esteem and confidence and be unsure about working with their condition, while others will come to us expecting us to find them a job. We tailor the support we provide for each individual and then work hard to find the right employer.”

He says this is a critical part of the process. “It’s hard work. You literally have to get out and pound the streets. We approach employers individually and encourage them to meet with the people we help. Sometimes it starts with a meeting and goes on from there to a few trial days. We find employers are often willing to meet with people who are interested in their line of work. It is partly about acting as a middleman. We then provide on-going support to the client and the employer to help with the settling in.”

The impact such help can have is obvious. Take Sam (not their real name) for example. They had had a few odd jobs, but not had paid employment.

After a period of support from an employment specialist from the Brighton team, they started working for a cleaning firm before moving on to become a healthcare assistant in the NHS.

“Before requesting employment support I had never had full-time work. I volunteered in a charity shop and delivered newspapers for cash in hand. Although these jobs were enjoyable, I wanted something a little more steady, more challenging and with a higher wage.

“What was really helpful with my employment specialist is that I would understand myself better through talking to her. It became clear I had the skills and confidence to get these jobs, Lorna really helped me see that.”

They also believe the experience of work has helped improve their health. “Since finding work my mental health has really improved as these things are all interlinked.

“My advice to others would be to remember there is a lot more to a person than their experiences with mental health problems.” Sam is just one of the young people who has been helped.

The EIS workload has been steadily increasing in recent years since it was launched in East Sussex in 2008 and subsequently expanded to the other two areas. The service now supports about 150 young people a year with an active caseload of about 80 at any one time. This represents about a fifth of the entire employment service workload. Over the last two years just under one in four clients have found paid employment, while further education and voluntary work accounts for another quarter.

The success rate with the clients who have been out of work for longer are slightly worse and the support given to them is longer, reflecting the more entrenched problems.

“I just wish I could turn back the clock and help everyone at an earlier stage,” says Mr Chadwick. “The earlier you intervene in health the better, and the same goes for employment chances. The hope is that by offering support at this stage we will not see these people later on.”

Kate Bones, Director of Occupational Therapy and Recovery Practice at Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the mental health services in the area, is full of praise for the work being done. She says: “They sit alongside our specialists and as far as the client is concerned are part of one team. That is really good and ensures we provide a really integrated service.

“Helping people into work can play an important part in helping them to improve and without the service we would have to rely on the mainstream provision which is not really geared up for people with mental health problems.”

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Portsmouth and Southampton city councils: combining support with regeneration

- Southampton and Portsmouth are benefiting from a major regeneration programme.
- Supporting the long-term unemployed back into work forms a key part of the £1bn programme.
- A pilot project has been created and is showing signs of improving the employment chances of those with physical and mental health problems.

Southampton and Portsmouth are looking to build on their proud history by growing the local maritime, marine and manufacturing industries.

Two years ago they became part of the Government's City Deal initiative with the aim of unlocking nearly £1 billion of investment and creating 17,000 jobs in the area.

A major part of the City Deal involves the re-development of two sites – Tipner and Horsea Island in Portsmouth and Watermark West Quay in Southampton.

But the two cities are also investing in helping people find jobs. A key part of that drive is the Solent Jobs Pilot, a joint initiative between the local councils and Solent Enterprise Partnership.

The aim is to help 1,000 of the very long-term unemployed back into work. The programme is targeted at people with health problems – both physical and mental – who have left the Government's Work Programme without finding work.

The cost of the two-year scheme is anticipated to be between £4 million and £5.8 million. Local partners are providing funds from their own budgets with EU and government funds making up the rest.

Work on an initial pilot, involving 100 people who have been out of work for at least two years, started in January.

Referrals have come from the local Job Centre service – although in the future the plan is to accept them from a wider variety of sources.

Those who have been accepted on to the pilot have had a range of conditions from mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, learning difficulties and physical ailments, including back pain, arthritis, diabetes and heart conditions.

There are three distinct phases to the pilot. The first step involves an holistic assessment with an employment support adviser, following which an action plan is agreed.

If appropriate the individual is referred to cognitive behavioural therapy. A 10-day course is offered, which covers issues such as improving confidence, self-esteem and motivation.

Individuals can also be referred to other services such as substance misuse, debt advice, money management and health trainers before some skills and employability training is done. The latter can involve intensive training in entry-level skills if needed.

Once the participants are ready they move on to the second stage and are offered an appropriate employment placement. These are paid at the minimum wage and involve up to 25 hours work a week for up to 26 weeks.

City Deal Programme Manager Kathryn Rankin says: "We have seen a whole range of placements from retail and hospitality to IT, marketing and cleaning. Many of the roles are entry-level jobs, but people are bringing a range of skills and experience that they can demonstrate to employers.

"We have worked with employers to ensure there is a range of placements. Part of it is about raising awareness and getting employers to be more strategic in planning for the sort of skills they will need for the future and improving their understanding of the labour market."

Finally, there is a period of intensive, personalised post-placement support. Support workers are available to provide weekly one-on-one or telephone help and advice. For those who have got jobs, this can involve visits to ensure early issues are ironed out.

“I think that is one of the key things we have learnt is that people do need a lot of support during that transition into employment,” says Denise Edghill, Southampton City Council’s Head of Skills and Regeneration. “You can’t just stop benefits and support like that. These are people who have been out of work for a long time so even with the training and the placement behind them it is important to be there for them.”

An initial evaluation of the pilot will be carried out later this year, before the expected start of the programme in full next year. The ultimate target is to get at least a fifth of those taking part into employment that lasts a minimum of one year.

While it is still early stages, there are encouraging signs though. By the end of July, nearly half of the 100 people taken on had gone on to start placements.

Alan is typical of the people who have benefitted. He joined the programme in March 2015 after spending more than two years out of work. He has dyslexia and ADHD.

After being given support, he was offered a trial shift with a local removals firm. The owner of the family-run firm was so impressed that he invited him back straightaway. Within two months, Alan had moved in to his own place and continues to thrive.

But the jobs pilot forms just one part of the employment support element of the City Deal. There is also a £3 million Employer Ownership of Skills programme that identifies immediate skills needs in small and medium enterprises in the advanced manufacturing sector. The Local Enterprise Partnership is acting as the broker and collating information on this, which will then be used to develop extra training courses locally.

A rapid response service is also being created to help those who are made redundant find new work quickly and a £700,000 young person’s fund is being created to trial innovative new approaches to tackling young unemployment in the 18 to 24-year-old age group. The goal is clear: making sure local people are in a position to benefit from the regeneration programme.

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Greater Manchester Combined Authority: how flexible services can make a difference

- Greater Manchester has been running an employment service for 18 months – and has already had 4,000 referrals.
- A key part of the drive has been the willingness of wider services that support the clients to be flexible.
- Dental services have been changed, new debt advice clinics set up and training schemes expanded.

Tackling long-term unemployment means helping people deal with a complex range of problems. That requires input from a variety of agencies and – as the example of Greater Manchester shows – the ability to be adaptable.

Greater Manchester launched its five-year Working Well project last March. Delivered by two providers and part-funded by central government, the £14.9 million scheme is aimed at people who have spent two years on the Work Programme and, therefore, need more personalised and intensive help to find employment.

Each person referred to the service is given a key worker who can provide support for up to two years. Their caseloads are kept small – about 40 per worker – to ensure they can provide comprehensive support that continues once work has been found.

They provide an assessment and can help with everything from interview coaching to CV writing. Once a job is found, that support continues through regular contact to help them settle into employment. But the involvement of other agencies is often essential before that stage is reached.

Some 70 per cent of clients have a mental health condition, while a similar number also have physical health problems. However, helping them overcome any barriers to employment they may face is not always as straightforward as referring them on to local services.

The case of a 29-year-old man from Bolton who had never worked is a classic example. He was eager to find employment, but faced a significant barrier – he had no teeth. But despite efforts to get him dental treatment by his key worker, it was not possible because local practices were not willing to take on such a complicated case. Eventually the case was referred up and led to a change in policy with incentives put in place to encourage dentists to take on cases like this.

Since undergoing treatment, he has completed security qualifications, undertook voluntary work and found employment with a sports retailer.

Debt has also emerged as a common problem so Bolton Money Skills Service has established a dedicated clinic for Working Well clients as well as providing training to key workers.

Meanwhile, in Bury the Troubled Families programme has been extended to people on the programme and in Rochdale basic skills training for 18 to 24-year-olds has been offered to older Working Well clients.

Theresa Grant, Chief Executive of Trafford MBC and Portfolio Lead for GM Employment and Skills, says: “The people on the programme have very complex needs so it is essential public services are adaptable. Everyone in Greater Manchester realises we have to change with the times and the reaction to the Working Well programme is proof of that.”

Thomas Britton, from Greater Manchester's Public Service Reform Team, agrees, praising the way everyone has pulled together. “At the very start we got all the major partners to sign up to a set of principles which stressed this and the importance of integration and the response since then has been fantastic.”

Another key part of the process is the local integration meetings that are held monthly in each of the 10 local authority areas. Major partners attend, along with members of the Working Well programme board and key workers.

“It is a problem-solving session really,” says Mr Britton. “The key workers describe what issues they may be facing and we talk about what can be done. That is exactly what happened with the dental case. You need that to get results.”

And while it is still early days, those results certainly seem to be coming. About 4,000 referrals have been made to the Working Well service from its launch in March 2014 to September 2015 and 135 people have started jobs, which is above target for this stage of the programme. These have ranged from sales and admin positions to working in the building trade and care sector.

Feedback from those who have benefited also illustrates the impact it has had as the following testimony illustrates.

One participant said: “When I first came to you I had no confidence that I would ever be able to move forward from my past and build a future and a career and you made me realise I am worth more and I can do anything and achieve anything.

“I’ve been to work related groups and one on ones before for the last two years and never got anywhere; they didn’t do anything. You actually care it’s not just a job to you it’s your passion.”

Public sector partners are also full of praise. Ian Munro, Group Chief Executive of the New Charter Housing Trust, says: “Working Well has had an extremely positive impact on a wide range of people. Many of the customers housing providers deal with find themselves in a combination of circumstances which makes entering the job market extremely difficult.

“Acknowledging that those who have a number of barriers to employment and for whom the Work Programme has been unable to fully support has been a major step forward in devising the sort of support many housing organisations have been working towards.”

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North East Combined Authority: improving job outcomes through service integration

- The seven councils in the North East Combined Authority are launching a 'trailblazer' project to help those with mental health conditions find work.
- Employment coaches are being co-located with psychological well-being services to share responsibility for clients with an emphasis on starting job search quickly.
- The coaches will also work with local businesses, building on existing local authority relations with employers.

The Mental Health Trailblazer project being launched in the north east to support unemployed people with mental health conditions aims to get straight to the point. For those who are ready, the job searching starts within a month.

"Our focus is on helping people find paid employment as quickly as possible, so we are aiming to get straight down to it" says Kevin Higgins of Northumberland County Council working on behalf of the North East Combined Authority. "The people we will be seeking to help will be those that are ready to start looking for work.

"As soon as people are referred they will be assessed and if they are right for the programme an employment coach will start discussing what sort of work they will need. Obviously there will be cases where expectations will have to be managed about what is right for the person."

Key to the programme is integrating employment support with the local Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programmes commissioned by clinical commissioning groups. The 26 employment coaches will be co-located with the IAPT services with the idea that they will share responsibility for the cases so the support complements each other.

The model is based on the NICE approved Individual Placement Service model where each individual receives tailored support to help them into employment while continuing with their clinical recovery.

Martin Armitage, the operational director for County Durham and Darlington IAPT, which helped to pilot the scheme last year, believes this integration will be of great benefit.

"The experience of the service is that co-locating mental health professionals and employment support workers to work together results in the best outcomes for our clients. It is well known that there are links between people's work status and their mental wellbeing.

"People who have experienced mental health conditions find it hard to obtain employment and equally importantly find it hard to remain in work when experiencing mental health conditions."

The programme – due to launch later this autumn - is being run across the seven councils that are part of the North East Combined Authority with Northumberland County Council taking responsibility for the management of the programme. It is one of four Growth Deal mental health and employment trailblazers.

The aim is to support 1,500 people over the next two years. They will mainly be people who have completed the Work Programme and are Employment Support Allowance or Jobseekers Allowance claimants with an identified mental health condition.

Kevin Higgins says another important aspect will be the work that is done with employers. "We will tailor our approaches depending on what each individual is looking for. It will be a matter of identifying what they want, helping them to target those jobs and making sure they are well prepared, but we will also be actively looking to engage employers too."

However, he says the project will not be starting from scratch. “All the local authorities are already thinking about how – through their wider economic development work – opportunities can be provided for these groups. We can also build on other schemes like our successful Generation North East project.”

Generation North East is a collaboration between five of the north east councils and is aimed at young people aged 18 to 24 who are struggling to find work. Employment Advisors and Peer Mentors are on hand to offer young people personalised advice and support to progress into sustained employment or high quality apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience and trials.

But it works both ways with business advisers also working with businesses giving them advice on how to grow their workforce through young people and working with them to address skills gaps and find the right candidates for jobs that become available.

Recent successes include the creation of a digital marketing apprentice post at a Durham-based finance business that went to a 19-year-old local woman.

Meanwhile, a work experience scheme with Royal Mail has helped participants gain skills and find local jobs including a 21-year-old man who found his “dream job” at a housing organisation.

This two-way approach is something that the employment coaches employed on the trailblazer project will seek to replicate by helping businesses see the benefits of tapping into this part of the workforce.

And to make sure it is cost effective, the Cabinet Office-backed Behavioural Insights Team has been commissioned to carry out a full evaluation of the project along with the other trailblazer areas. “We are confident it will work, but this way we will know for sure whether it does,” adds Mr Higgins.

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Gloucestershire County Council: using apps to engage people

- Gloucestershire County Council's Forwards Employment Service has launched an app to help it to reach out to people with disabilities and health problems.
- It complements the host of other services it offers, including drop-in groups to help with everything from confidence building to writing CVs.
- Forwards also supports "social businesses" to help improve the employment chances of its clients.

Gloucestershire County Council has been developing the employment support it provides to those with disabilities and health problems for the past three years.

The Council's Forwards Employment Service has a variety of different schemes in place to help with everything from writing CVs to providing work placements.

But to help it maximise the impact these have it has recently launched a dedicated app.

It has a range of functions including the locations of local projects, tips to help with applying for jobs and preparing for interviews and advice on where to look for jobs.

Gloucestershire's Disability Employment Commissioner Vikki Walters says the idea behind the app is to make the services more accessible and to appeal to younger people.

'We have worked hard to really provide a good range of support to people and we want to make the most of it. The app is about finding new ways of encouraging and supporting people.'

But the app is just the latest example of how Gloucestershire's Forwards Service has tried to innovate in its desire to help vulnerable people into work.

The team, which has a £300,000 two-year budget, took over the running of Work Clubs in 2012. These are held in six locations across Gloucestershire and provide help with confidence building, CVs, job applications and interview skills.

They are operated on a drop-in basis and the support can last for anything from a few weeks to a few months. At any one time, there will be 60 people taking part in the sessions.

Ms Walters says Forwards Works Clubs operate an open-door policy. "Anyone with disabilities or health conditions can come to us for help to find sustainable employment.

"We provide a variety of support. The Work Clubs are about building confidence, preparing people for work. But we also work with a number of amazing partners, from health providers to employers and voluntary bodies who can help with other aspects, including money and budget management, debt advice and benefits advice." For some people, the support from the Work Clubs will directly lead to employment. But for others extra support is needed so Forwards has started working with a range of "social businesses" to help people with the move into the workplace.

These partner organisations have been provided with a little council support, such as a contribution towards start-up costs, and then agree to provide work placements for clients of Forwards.

Some of these placements will be paid jobs, while others will take the form of work experience.

There are two cafes, a sports retail and coaching group and a recycling business, but the longest-running is Future Clean, a car washing service. Over the last two years the social businesses have employed 35 people as well as providing countless work experience opportunities.

Forwards also supports an internship scheme run in partnership with Gloscol, Remploy and Premier Inn, which gives 14 people with complex disabilities in their last year of education an opportunity to gain experience in the workplace.

Meanwhile, the council runs a healthcare business, GIS, which supplies medical aids and equipment to local health and care organisations. It runs an assisted employment for scheme for people with disabilities and uses any profits it makes to help support and train them.

Councillor Kathy Williams, the Cabinet Member for Long-term Care, says: “These jobs and placements help build people’s confidence and are a really rewarding experience for both the employer and the employee.”

One person who has benefitted from Forwards support is Sarah. She has learning disabilities and found it difficult to find work after leaving education. Sarah had always wanted to work in retail and found a work placement with the sports retail and coaching social business Sofab Sports. Following her placement she secured a paid job there working Saturdays.

Sarah is enthusiastic and her desire to work led her into another placement with Future Clean. While not in retail it offered the chance to work with people to develop her confidence and customer service skills. Sarah has now been working with Future Clean for a year on a full-time paid basis. She still wants to work in retail and with the help of Forwards she still pursues this and has continued to work for Sofab on Saturdays.

Sofab Managing Director Chris Rawlins is full of praise and believes more employers should utilise the skills of people such as her. “Sarah brings a different perspective she has suggested changes to the shop which we have implemented. She is bright, cheerful and competent, she has a lot to offer any employer and I know she will continue to learn and develop.

“Employers who may be nervous about employing disabled people needn’t be, everyone has something to offer and it can make a real difference to your business by employing people from diverse backgrounds.”

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Annex 1:

Detailed eligibility criteria

This detailed list of eligibility criteria is based on the current criteria for early entry to the Work Programme. As such it is the eligibility which DWP uses to determine those whom they think are disadvantaged and at greater risk of long-term (or very long-term) unemployment.

JSA claimant referrals

JSA NEET – JSA claimants aged 18 who were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) for a six month period directly prior to or become NEET during their current claim to benefit or 18 year olds who had previously claimed hardship payments when 16 or 17.

JSA Claiming 22 of 24 months – JSA 'Repeaters' who are claimants who had previously claimed JSA for 22 out of the last 24 months and have undertaken three months pre-activity.

JSA Ex-IB – JSA claimants who had previously received incapacity benefits and who have undertaken three months re-activity.

JSA disadvantaged – JSA claimants who have undertaken three months activity and where the claimant is one of the following groups:

- an ex-offender (someone who has completed a custodial sentence or a community sentence) or offender (someone who is serving a community sentence)
- a disabled person (under the Equality Act definition)
- a person with mild to moderate mental health issues
- a carer on JSA

- an ex-carer
- a homeless person
- ex-HM Armed Forces personnel or an HM Armed Forces reservist
- a partner of current or former Armed Forces personnel
- a person for whom a drug/alcohol dependency (including a history of) presents a significant barrier to employment
- JSA benefit cap - those claimants who may be affected by the benefit cap
- Care Leaver aged 18 -25.

JSA ex-offender – Access from dayone for JSA claimants making an advance claim prior to leaving prison and those prison leavers making a claim to JSA within 13 weeks of their release.

JSA joint claim partner – entry from the point at which their partner enters the programme.

Low skilled – those with qualifications at or below NVQ Level 1 and/or have literacy, numeracy, or ESOL needs.

ESA claimant referrals

ESA Work Related Activity Group – referral to programme within 3 months of claim

ESA Support – information and advice on what the programme can offer.

Universal Credit referrals

In addition to the equivalent groups above, all those who are identified as requiring support through the pilots for Universal Services Delivered Locally (USDL).



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