

## New Deal for Young Unemployed People: The Gateway

This qualitative study was carried out in May 1998 and involved a combination of depth interviews and group discussions, with New Deal participants on Gateway, in four ES pathfinder districts. These were selected to reflect different regional locations, labour markets and delivery models for New Deal. Participants were purposively selected to ensure diversity of characteristics and circumstances and modes of entry to New Deal. A total of 61 young people took part, including 7 leavers.

The results of the research show:

- the main barriers to employment were seen as a lack of basic skills and qualifications, a lack of confidence, demotivation through failure to find work, high competition for jobs and employers' attitudes;
  - clients' understanding of the programme was that it was designed to help people into jobs wanted, it provided the possibility of obtaining paid work experience, and it provided opportunities to go to college to obtain qualifications;
  - generally, responses to New Deal were favourable. There was little evidence of outright hostility, although there was some cynicism from those who had been on previous government schemes;
  - the approach and manner of the New Deal Personal Adviser is believed to be crucial. Most young people felt positive about their Personal Adviser when he/she was perceived to be proactive. The expectations of a productive relationship with the Personal Adviser and the prospect of gaining work increased client enthusiasm after the initial interview.
- young people appreciated direct help with jobsearch and careers advice from Personal Advisers whilst on Gateway. Specifically this meant help with looking for vacancies, contacting employers, discussing long term career plans and referral to other agencies. The identification of training needs was also welcome, except in cases where it was felt to be enforced;
  - lack of information and poor recall resulted in a varied awareness of the services available under Gateway, the types options and New Deal terminology;
  - job search activities were significantly changed during Gateway. These changes included different strategies for finding work, different approaches for applying for jobs, and changes in the nature of work being sought;
  - New Deal seems to be stimulating young people to think differently about their careers or encouraging them to take a longer term view.

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