

**MFA Post Implementation Review**  
**Qualitative research report**

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## **Disclaimer**

The views in this report are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Employment Service or the Department for Work and Pensions.



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# Acknowledgements

Our thanks to Rita O'Neil, Peter Taylor, Sarah Dymond and Claire Hinchcliffe at the Employment Service for their advice and support throughout the project. We would also like to thank the Employment Service and Benefit Agency staff involved in the areas visited who gave up time to talk about the More Frequent Attendance process with us.

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

BA	Benefits Agency
BFIS	Benefit Fraud Investigation Service
BIS	Benefits Investigation Service
ES	Employment Service
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
JMSD	Jobseeker Mainstream Services Division
JMS8	Jobseeker Mainstream Services Team 8
MFA	More Frequent Attendance
MFA1	More Frequent Attendance Form 1 Form used by ES to refer working and signing cases to BFIS / BIS
MFA2	More Frequent Attendance Form 2 Form used by BFIS / BIS for non-ES referrals to instigate MFA action
MI	Management Information
PIR	Post Implementation Review
QB21	Report of a Suspected Fraud form (QB = Queen's Bench)

# Executive Summary

The More Frequent Attendance (MFA) policy was introduced in January 2001. It entails asking Jobseekers who are suspected of working while claiming Jobseeker's Allowance to attend extra advisory interviews in addition to their normal Fortnightly Jobsearch Review. The interviews are arranged at unpredictable times and at short notice with the intention of disrupting any routine undeclared working activity. The interviews are entirely work-focused; Jobcentre staff do not confront clients with their suspicions of fraudulent activity. Candidates for MFA are checked with the Benefit Fraud Investigation Service (BFIS) / Benefits Investigation Service (BIS) before interviews are set up.

Qualitative research was commissioned to aid the MFA Post Implementation Review. The overall aim was to find out how the MFA process is working in practice.

## Research design

A qualitative methodology was used, tailored to the availability of Employment Service (ES), BFIS and BIS respondents. A mix of depth interviews and paired depth interviews and trio, mini and standard group discussions were carried out. The respondents included ES Business Managers, advisers and frontline staff, Management Information (MI) co-ordinators, and BFIS / BIS administrative staff and investigators. The fieldwork was set up by the Jobseeker Mainstream Services Division (JMS8) and carried out by BMRB Qualitative in late July and early August 2001 involving Jobcentres in England, Wales and Scotland.

## MFA awareness and involvement

Jobcentre staff awareness of, and involvement in, the MFA policy varied considerably across the research sample. On the whole, there had been minimal activity and the process appeared to have made little impact on many Jobcentres.

Few staff had been actively involved in carrying out the process on an on-going basis. In many Jobcentres, MFA had been forgotten by staff who were busy with other tasks, and were not being regularly reminded or encouraged to make MFA referrals. In some cases MFA activity also appeared to be limited by BFIS / BIS delays; the local BFIS / BIS took much longer than the agreed ten days to return MFA1 forms. (The MFA1 form is the form used by ES to refer working and signing cases to BFIS / BIS.) In some cases these delays ran into weeks, and ES staff had to ring and remind BFIS / BIS to return the forms on a number of occasions.

As a result, many Jobcentres had made relatively few MFA referrals and had carried out only a handful of MFA interviews. Furthermore, MFA activity would appear to have slowed down since launch.

In the absence of a target for MFA, ES staff had little idea of how many referrals they should be making or how many interviews they should be carrying out. It was not until quarterly data was circulated by Head Office that District Office staff and Business Managers became aware of how low the numbers were in some areas.

A few Jobcentres had not attempted to implement MFA as they were achieving the same result using an alternative process. For example, they were getting jobseekers into the Jobcentre on a weekly basis as part of the New Deal Gateway, enhanced Restart, or the weekly signing for long term unemployed people. Respondents from such Jobcentres reported that these processes had the desired effect of encouraging jobseekers to terminate their claim to JSA.

MFA was less than top-of-mind among BFIS / BIS staff. It was seen as an ES policy that made very little difference to the way BFIS / BIS worked, and they did not recognise that MFA had any benefit for them. For example, they did not appreciate that it could help reduce their workload. In addition, some BFIS / BIS staff were unaware (or had forgotten) that non-ES referrals could be passed to Jobcentres for MFA interviews, using the MFA2 form. (The MFA2 form is the form used by BFIS / BIS for non-ES referrals to instigate MFA action.)

### **MFA introduction and implementation**

There was positive feedback from those who attended the regional handover events prior to national implementation in January 2001. However the Jobcentre communication meetings that followed appear to have had rather limited effect in some cases. For example, when details were passed on by a member of staff who had received them second hand, that is, from someone who had not attended the regional event in person, Jobcentre staff had often been left quite vague. Many reported that they would find out more about MFA if they ever needed to. However, in the meanwhile, they were either unable to make referrals, or were not motivated to do so.

In some Jobcentres, the appointed MFA co-ordinator had taken a much more proactive approach. These individuals had often been personally involved in generating referrals and / or undertaking MFA interviews.

Despite the varying levels of interest among Jobcentre staff, most had understood the aim of the new process and thought that it was a good idea when they first heard about it. However many also anticipated problems. Some thought that it would require quite a lot of work for relatively little result, and / or that it would only be effective for a small number of jobseekers. Others anticipated that some frontline staff would have a problem referring clients they knew well, or that BFIS / BIS's involvement might lead to timing problems.

This latter concern reflected the fact that, in some areas, the relationship between ES and BFIS / BIS was not good. In these instances, Jobcentre staff were often quite critical about their local BFIS / BIS colleagues; the latter staff were not necessarily aware of these feelings.

This negativity appeared to be due to mismatched expectations in terms of what could be achieved by BFIS / BIS, and BFIS / BIS's role relative to ES. There was also a feeling among more experienced, longer serving Jobcentre staff that ES fraud investigation had been much better when ES had had its own fraud investigators based at Jobcentres.

In two of the three Fraud Sectors, all referrals sent to BFIS / BIS are now evaluated by the Portal computer programme. This has reduced the investigator's role considerably. It means that they do not return the MFA1 form to Jobcentres, and have no opportunity to use the MFA2 form.

The ES Management Information co-ordinators reported on the problems that they had experienced with the original regional and district collation sheets. These problems had been reduced considerably when the forms and guidance had been revised and re-issued by JMS8.

### **Key recommendations**

The research feedback suggests that, without some form of intervention, the number of MFA referrals and interviews will not increase in the future. It is therefore recommended that the ES considers a relaunch for MFA.

It is recommended that the relaunch include an information campaign for Jobcentre staff. In order to give MFA a clear role and increase its perceived relevance, it may help to present it within the context of the ES's "toolbox" of processes that can reduce fraudulent claiming.

It would also be helpful if proactive MFA co-ordinators were involved in the campaign as they have useful experience that can be passed on to Jobcentre staff. They are also more likely to get the attention of, and be able to motivate, Jobcentre staff than those without hands-on experience.

It is recommended that the ES tries to get a more accurate picture of the BFIS / BIS referral response problem reported by some research respondents by comparing ES and BFIS / BIS statistics (if possible). If the delayed return of MFA1s by BFIS / BIS staff is a widespread or significant problem, it is suggested that the BFIS / BIS role in the MFA process be reviewed with the aim of increasing BFIS / BIS staff awareness and commitment to the process. If this is not possible, it is suggested that BFIS / BIS's involvement is reduced in order to ensure the least possible delay in setting up MFA interviews.





# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the research

The More Frequent Attendance (MFA) policy was a direct result of one of the recommendations in Lord Grabiner's report on the informal economy. This was a recommendation to require jobseekers, who were suspected of working while claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, to attend interviews at the Jobcentre at unpredictable times and at short notice, with the intention of disrupting any routine undeclared working activity. Legislation already in place allowed Jobcentre staff to call in jobseekers at any time, but notice had to be given in writing.

Under the new policy, jobseekers can be asked to attend additional interviews with as little as 24 hours notice. These interviews, where possible, are arranged over the telephone, or, if the client does not have a telephone, a letter is sent or handed to the client when they next attend the Jobcentre. Further interviews can be arranged while the client is attending the Jobcentre for Fortnightly Jobsearch Review. However, the interviews are to remain entirely work-focused, either matching clients to job vacancies or reviewing recent job search activity. Jobcentre staff are not being asked to confront clients with their suspected fraudulent activity.

After operating in four pathfinder areas from October 2000, the new policy was implemented nationally in January 2001. The research which is being reported here was commissioned by the Employment Service (ES) and conducted by BMRB Qualitative as part of the Labour Market Research and Evaluation: Research Partnership. Interviews and discussion groups with relevant staff from the Employment Service and the Benefits Agency (BA) were carried out in July and August 2001.

## 1.2 Aims of the research

The overall aim of this research was to find out how the More Frequent Attendance process is working in practice. Feedback was required on the impact of the policy on those involved (ES and Benefit Fraud Investigation Service / Benefits Investigation Service staff) and on their office organisation generally.

In addition, staff views were sought on specific issues relating to the introduction and implementation of the new process in order to:

- provide feedback on the implementation of MFA, looking specifically at
  - set-up timings (ie did they receive information in time?)
  - effectiveness of implementation process

- views on introductory programme run by Head Office
- check whether the policy is being applied correctly, with a focus on
  - assumptions made in applying policy
  - delivery v policy intent
- review responses to the MFA forms and guidance, looking at
  - comprehensiveness
  - clarity of English, accuracy and conciseness
  - effectiveness in supporting the policy
  - targeting (ie is it aimed at the right people?)
  - areas of weakness
- identify any training requirements
  - do people have the right skills to do their job?
- review the Management Information (MI) requirements and processes, covering
  - ease of recording details
  - views on amount of information required
  - effectiveness of forms designed to support the data collation
- look at the working relationships between ES and BFIS / BIS
  - before and after introduction of MFA
  - BFIS / BIS response time for ES referrals
- identify strengths and weakness of the process concentrating on
  - what's working well / best practice
  - areas requiring improvement
- look at the impact of MFA on job performance, particularly on
  - job starts and referrals to programmes
- identify any health and safety issues, specifically
  - carrying out of local risk assessments
  - incidents due to MFA

### **1.3 Research methodology**

This research adopted a qualitative methodology. Qualitative methods, such as group discussions and in-depth interviews, are ideal for exploring complex issues. Using these techniques BMRB Qualitative was able to explore a range of issues and opinions during the interviews and discussions. A detailed understanding of respondent views would not have been so readily accessible using other research methods. This research did not aim to produce statistics, or

measure the extent of views and opinions, rather it aimed to identify the range of views and experiences of respondents with regard to the MFA policy. The research consisted of depth interviews, paired depth interviews, trios, mini groups and standard group discussions with staff involved in the MFA process from both the Employment Service and the Benefits Agency. In addition, a telephone interview of about 30 minutes was carried out with an ES staff member who was unable to attend the discussion in their area.

The methodology was tailored to respondent availability. It was originally planned to carry out discussion groups or mini groups with all the staff, except ES Business Managers. This was reviewed following feedback from Jobcentres and district and regional ES offices. Full details of the interviews and discussion sessions carried out are given with the sample details in the next section of this report.

The numbers involved in the group discussions ranged from three to seven individuals. These sessions lasted around 90 minutes and were used to explore and collect staff views in detail. They provided an opportunity for sharing and reviewing information on individual experiences, and for collecting examples of both positive and problematic aspects of the process.

Business Managers were interviewed separately from other ES staff because it was thought that their inclusion in a discussion with their staff might be an inhibiting factor. Individual interviews, paired interviews and a trio group of Business Managers were carried out. The individual and paired interviews lasted approximately one hour. ES staff and BFIS / BIS staff were interviewed separately as one of the objectives of the research was to explore the relationship between the two agencies. Please note that in order to maintain confidentiality, it is not possible to give details about individual offices.

## 1.4 Research sample

Four sample groups were included in the research:

- Jobcentre frontline staff and advisers
- Jobcentre Business Managers
- BFIS / BIS staff (administrative staff and investigators)
- ES district and regional MI co-ordinators

The sample was constructed so that group discussions of ES frontline staff and advisers were carried out in each of six locations. Research was carried out with ES Business Managers, BFIS / BIS staff, and ES district and regional MI co-ordinators in three locations.

The achieved sample was as follows:

**ES Jobcentre staff**

- four trios
- one mini group of four people
- one group discussion of seven people
- one 30 minute telephone conversation

**ES Business Managers**

- one depth interview
- two paired depth interviews
- one trio

**ES district and regional MI co-ordinators**

- two trios
- one mini group of four people

**Benefits Agency (BFIS / BIS)**

- one trio
- two mini groups of four people

## **1.5 Recruitment, locations and fieldwork**

The interviews and discussion sessions were set up by JMS8 at ES Head Office in Sheffield. The fieldwork was carried out in late July and early August 2001 in the following six locations:

- Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire
- Selby, Yorkshire
- Ellesmere Port, Cheshire
- Bedlington, Northumberland
- Dartford, Kent
- Ringwood, Hampshire

Fourteen Jobcentres across the country were selected to be involved in the review. They were selected according to criteria which would ensure that all regions were represented, and that a mix of small, medium and large offices and rural and urban offices were involved.

In order to make most effective use of resources Jobcentres from neighbouring districts or regions were brigaded together. It should be noted that some of the Jobcentres represented in the research were very small (eg seven staff including a single adviser). The BFIS / BIS respondents came from offices in three Fraud

Sectors. The MI co-ordinators came from four ES district offices and five ES regional offices.

The fieldwork was conducted by three researchers from BMRB Qualitative (Andrew Thomas, Christine Garland and Nick Pettigrew) who each visited two of the six areas included in the study.

## 1.6 Report outline

Following this introductory section, **Chapter two** describes how MFA was introduced to Jobcentres and BFIS / BIS offices. **Chapter three** looks at the relationship between ES and BFIS / BIS staff. **Chapter four** reports on the implementation of the MFA process at Jobcentres, including the level of MFA activity to date. **Chapter five** covers Management Information issues, as reported by district and regional MI co-ordinators. **Chapter six** details BMRB Qualitative's recommendations on how the issues identified during the research could be addressed by the ES.

## 2

## 3 MFA introductory process

### 3.1 Current awareness and involvement

At the beginning of the interviews and discussions, the respondents' current awareness of, and involvement in, the MFA process was explored and varying levels were reported. However it was clear that for many Jobcentre staff, the new process had had very little impact.

The most informed and involved ES respondents were those who were acting as MFA co-ordinators in their Jobcentre or for the district as a whole. They had usually been involved in the introduction of the new process and in carrying it out.

The Business Managers were generally aware of what was happening in their Jobcentres, but were not actively involved. They left the running of the MFA process to the co-ordinator. Where a co-ordinator was not formally appointed (in the smaller Jobcentres), it was left to a senior member of the adviser team. (In very small Jobcentres where there was only one adviser, they were given MFA responsibility almost by default.) The Business Managers reported that, from their point of view, it had not been necessary for them to get more involved. They also had lots of competing demands on their time.

The remaining Jobcentre staff (mostly in frontline positions) typically reported little involvement to date. Many had not made referrals or been involved in any other way. These staff had little (or nothing) to report about the new process.

Across the Jobcentre sample as a whole, the feedback suggested that MFA has a low (if not very low) profile within Jobcentres.

*"I must admit that the staff I work with don't seem to be aware of what it's about really"*

*"I think it's probably been forgotten about, to be honest"*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

The district and regional MI co-ordinators were very aware of their role in the process, as it had been problematic to start with. However MFA was a relatively small part of their job overall.

The awareness and involvement of BFIS / BIS staff tended to mirror that of the Jobcentre staff. Awareness was often vague and most respondents had had little involvement in the new process to date.

### 3.2 Finding out about MFA : Jobcentre staff

Jobcentre staff respondents were asked how they had first heard about MFA and about the way the new process was introduced to them. A minority had been told about it, or found out that a new policy was being developed, before Christmas 2000. These tended to be Business Managers who had read about the new initiative in internal communications.

A further, albeit limited number of respondents recalled the regional handover events held during December and January 2001. They knew about these sessions because they had either attended in person, or had been involved in sending a representative for their Jobcentre or district. Regional and district MI co-ordinators reported that they were not invited to these briefing meetings; there was some feeling that this put them at a potential disadvantage when it came to setting up their part of the process and liaising with other offices.

*“They just presumed that you would know”*  
(ES MI co-ordinators)

Most Jobcentre staff had first heard of the MFA policy when it was reported in the press or other media at the beginning of 2001. Many felt that the reporting had been unhelpful as it flagged up the nature of the process and linked it firmly with benefit fraud. Some felt that it might have alarmed their clients, and could lead to a client responding badly if asked to attend an extra interview at short notice.

*“A little bit of uneasiness”*  
(ES Business Managers)

*“There was a lot of confusion in the paper... they (clients) expected to be brought in daily”*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

### 3.3 Introductory events

The staff who attended the **regional events** reported positively on the level of explanation and process detail that they had been given. It would appear that these individuals had, more often than not, been responsible for informing Business Managers of the new policy. Hence the cascading of information was not necessarily down the ES hierarchy. This impacted on the level of attention paid to, and perceived relative importance of, the new process; staff always pay more attention to something passed down to them from their immediate superior or line manager.

The majority of Jobcentre respondents learnt how the MFA process worked at one of their **weekly communication meetings**. The explanations were sometimes carried out by a colleague who had attended the regional event. However it would appear that, in many instances, the person briefing the Jobcentre staff was reporting second hand. They were passing on information that they had received from someone else who had attended a regional event.

Perhaps not surprisingly, their grasp on the details of the process was not always very detailed and / or they could not always answer all the questions asked by colleagues. This was exacerbated by the fact that in some cases, these individuals had not received the final guidance or were still awaiting the final version of the forms to be used for the process.

*“Nothing much was said”*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

In some areas, ES staff reported that they had been joined by a representative from their local BFIS / BIS office for the communication meeting. In theory, contact details were exchanged. However many respondents were not aware that there was (or should have been) a nominated BFIS / BIS MFA contact for their office.

For many members of the Jobcentre staff, their involvement in the introductory process seems to have ended after hearing about MFA at the communication meeting. They were not given the impression that they needed to find out anything more, and so had not done so. They took a pragmatic attitude claiming, when asked during the research, that they would find out more as and when they needed to. They had a very passive, reactive attitude to MFA.

Few of these staff claimed to have seen or read the **MFA guidance**. Again, they reported that they would certainly do so if they ever needed to know more about the process. They assumed that their co-ordinator or adviser team leader would have a copy of the guidance on file, or would be able to tell them what it said, if necessary.

*“Because it didn’t really relate to me, I just slipped past it”* (on ESCOM)  
*“Not read them, only skimmed”*  
*“I’ll read that when I come to it, if I’ve got to do it”*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

It should be noted that because the guidance had not been read and / or some of the communication meeting briefings had been less than detailed, respondents did not necessarily know about every element of the process. For example, some were unaware of the MFA2 form and the possibility of

undertaking additional interviews with jobseekers who had been referred to BFIS / BIS by a source other than ES.

Among the MFA co-ordinators and adviser managers who had read the guidance, feedback was fairly positive. The only criticism made of the guidance was that it was repetitive in places, and this made it over long.

*“Very good, very straightforward, just too much of it”*

*“Rather thick”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

### 3.4 Jobcentre staff response to the MFA idea

The Jobcentre briefings had not generated a great deal of immediate interest or involvement in the process. However the staff had had **no problem understanding or accepting the idea** behind MFA. They were able to describe what it was for and what it aimed to do. They knew that the extra interviews were to interrupt those who were working and not declaring it, and that calling clients into the Jobcentre at short notice gave ES staff an opportunity to confirm their suspicions and / or indirectly encourage the client to terminate their claim to JSA.

Many reported that they thought MFA was a good idea. However in stating this view, most also immediately qualified it.

*“I think it’s good, yeah, (if) used correctly”*

*“A good theory – if it works”*

*“In theory it sounds good”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

For example, some thought it was a good idea but that it would have **relatively little impact given the amount of work that it involved**.

*“More paperwork”*

*“More things to do... with no results”*

*“We’re already pushed to the limit”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

They felt that an extra interview arranged at short notice would not be a problem for people who were self-employed or who worked at night. It would not deter hardened fraudsters. Some respondents felt that there were only a relatively small number of clients who would be suitable candidates for MFA and whose behaviour could be influenced by the process.

*“Might intimidate a small minority of people”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

Some respondents thought that MFA was a good idea but that **it did not add anything really new or different to the processes already available** to staff working in Jobcentres. They reported that they were already able to call clients into the Jobcentre more frequently if they wanted to. They also knew of other, existing procedures which involved weekly contact with clients on a short-term basis.

Other respondents qualified their positive assessment of the new process by describing **practical problems** that they thought would arise. They asked who would do the extra interviews given that, in many Jobcentres, advisers' time was booked days (if not weeks) ahead. The attitudes of some frontline staff were also reported as potentially problematic. Some of these staff were known to be reluctant to fill in form QB21 because they did not want their clients to ever find out that they suspected them of fraud. This suggested that they would be reluctant to make a referral using a form QB21 and MFA1.

*"They don't feel it's part of their responsibility in their job"*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

A further possible problem related to BFIS / BIS. The past experience of some Jobcentres led staff to **doubt that BFIS / BIS would respond as required**. As ES has no authority over BFIS / BIS staff, this was seen as a problem that Jobcentre staff could not solve quickly or easily.

It should be noted that these concerns do **not** appear to have been dealt with (or, rather, dealt with satisfactorily) at the Jobcentre communication meetings. Respondents did not feel that they had been given reassurance about what would (or would not) be a problem or a limiting factor on MFA efficacy. They had also not been given any possible solutions to address the expected problems. As a result, these respondents had remained vague about the potential benefits of new process and / or were less than motivated to put it into practice.

### 3.5 BFIS / BIS response to MFA idea

The BFIS / BIS respondents had little interest in MFA, mainly because it had little impact on them. It was very clear from the BFIS / BIS staff feedback that they did **not** see MFA as a way of reducing their caseload. They did **not** spontaneously mention the fact that they could pass QB21s back to ES which otherwise would have been "overloaded" (ie filed) due to lack of evidence.

They did **not** mention that by passing back a referral for MFA, there was a possibility that evidence of further fraud may be revealed (which they could then act on) or that the client would be prompted to terminate their claim to JSA as a result of a MFA interview.

They did **not** mention that the MFA2 form enabled them to pass third party referrals to ES, again potentially reducing their workload. In fact, some BFIS / BIS staff members appeared to be unaware (or had completely forgotten) about the MFA2 form.

In reviewing how they had heard about the new process, it was clear that there had been little explanation or discussion when MFA was launched. There had been no BFIS / BIS equivalent of the Jobcentre communication meeting. Some BFIS / BIS respondents recalled a letter, dated 23 January, that they had received giving details of the new policy but generally speaking, recall was rather vague. Few had needed to use the information given in the letter very much, if at all.

A few BFIS / BIS respondents reported that investigators had been invited to attend the weekly communication meeting at a local Jobcentre when the MFA process had been introduced. However there was little enthusiasm about their involvement in this part of the introductory process, and it was not seen to have had any real benefit for them. The lack of interest in MFA meant that there had been little motivation to get involved in the process.

One BFIS / BIS team member described a particular scenario that had led to a decision not to participate further in the MFA process. They had sent an ES referral back to a Jobcentre with the go-ahead to carry out MFA interviews. At a later date, they noted that the client had now signed off. They expected that BFIS / BIS would be credited in some way for that person leaving the JSA register. They checked their assumption and were disappointed to find that this was not the case. As a result, the respondent had decided that it was not worth getting involved in MFA as it had no tangible benefits for BFIS / BIS.

In two of the three Fraud Sectors, BFIS / BIS staff reported that they no longer evaluate referrals made from ES and other agencies. These are now reviewed by the Portal computer programme which scores them according to a number of set criteria. This determines whether a particular referral will go forward for investigation. In these areas the BFIS / BIS respondents had no further involvement once a referral was sent off to Portal. They assumed that Portal staff returned MFA1 forms to Jobcentres once they had been scored, but did not know for sure. The Portal review process also meant that local BFIS / BIS staff never had an opportunity to use the MFA2 process (ie passing non-ES referrals to a Jobcentre for MFA).

When asked for their overall verdict on MFA, comments were quite negative.

*“Damp squib”*  
*“Feeble”*

*“Just more forms”* (to fill in)  
(BFIS / BIS staff)

## 4 ES and BFIS / BIS relationship

### 4.1 Status of the relationship

The views expressed by the different respondents in the research sample prompted a review of the relationship between Jobcentres and their local BFIS / BIS office. Some ES staff reported that the relationship was satisfactory. However at other Jobcentres, ES staff were very negative about their BFIS / BIS colleagues and how they worked.

*“The way they (BFIS / BIS) spoke to our staff (at an awareness session) really alienated the staff... terrible”*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

In describing what they thought of BFIS / BIS and the reasons for their views, the more experienced, longer serving ES staff usually took a historical perspective. Their criticism reflected the fact that, in the past, ES had its own team of investigators based at Jobcentres. Since this team had been absorbed into BFIS / BIS, the subject of fraud had had a much lower profile within Jobcentres. They felt that this had impacted directly on how often suspicions were reported via a referral to BFIS / BIS.

It was also felt that the approach of BFIS / BIS staff was biased to Benefits Agency needs, and that investigators had little understanding of ES fraud issues. The different locations of BFIS / BIS and Jobcentre staff, and the lack of regular, routine contact between ES staff and fraud investigators were often felt to exacerbate these problems.

*“Not a lot of like working together”*  
*“Unknown faces”*  
*“They are never there”*  
*“We’ve probably had a chap from the fraud office many years ago, but not recently”*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

*“What liaison?”*  
(ES Business Managers)

It should be noted that when looking at the relationship between ES and BFIS / BIS, there were **conflicting reports** from ES and BFIS / BIS respondents working in the same areas. Specifically, the BFIS / BIS staff did not report that the relationship was as unsatisfactory as the ES staff did.

For example, Jobcentre staff in one group discussion claimed very little BFIS / BIS contact. The BFIS / BIS staff in the same area reported frequent meetings. In fact, they had checked their records before attending the discussion and could report the exact number of meetings they had had at that Jobcentre in the last 12 months. In a second area, Jobcentre staff were extremely critical of their BFIS / BIS colleagues, and gave no indication that they knew any of them by name or had any idea of how they handled Jobcentre enquires or fraud referrals. In the BFIS / BIS group discussion that followed, the respondents reported that they thought the relationship between ES and BFIS / BIS was fine, and went on to describe how specific investigators were responsible for processing referrals from each of the Jobcentres in their area.

The launch of the MFA process would appear to have had a negative impact on the relationship in some areas. When the BFIS / BIS response to MFA had been poor, the relationship was in danger of deteriorating, even if it had been generally satisfactory in the past. In areas where the relationship had already been negative, BFIS / BIS delays had exacerbated the problem.

## 4.2 ES view on BFIS / BIS follow up of ES referrals

In most cases Jobcentre staff criticism of BFIS / BIS was based on their experience of dealing with BFIS / BIS staff, or experiences reported to them by ES colleagues. These had created less than positive expectations of how BFIS / BIS handled ES referrals.

There was a feeling that BFIS / BIS staff had little interest in ES referrals. Many respondents thought that BFIS / BIS were more interested in big fraud cases that were easy to investigate. They believed that BFIS / BIS staff were more likely to follow up cases involving large amounts of money which could be tracked via a paper trail. Giro cheque fraud was the most commonly mentioned type of fraud case that ES staff thought BFIS / BIS staff preferred to Jobcentre referrals.

*“They are only interested in the big-wigs”*

*“Not interested in common (or) garden persons”*

*“You get the feeling that they don’t want referrals”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

Jobcentre staff thought that this situation had worsened since BFIS / BIS’s working practices had been amended to take into account the provisions of recent Human Rights legislation. They knew that investigators now had to apply for permission to carry out surveillance and that this delayed the start of their investigations. It was also thought to deter investigators from applying for permission in the first place unless they thought that there was a good chance that surveillance would produce the desired result, that is, evidence that enabled a prosecution.

Many Jobcentre respondents reported specific experiences that backed up these views. For example, a Jobcentre staff member had seen a jobseeker working at a local fair during the day and had immediately reported it to the local BFIS / BIS team. The Jobcentre staff member had expected BFIS / BIS to follow up immediately by visiting the fair to catch the jobseeker in the act. This had not happened, even when the jobseeker was seen and reported a second time.

In addition to the specific examples reported by Jobcentre respondents, there was a more general complaint that ES staff rarely received any feedback on their referrals.

*“No feedback”*

*“You never hear anything back”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

As a result they did not know if any of their suspicions had been investigated, and if so, what had happened as a result. They had no evidence that ES referrals were worthwhile, even in a small proportion of cases, which was demotivating. Some ES staff felt that it was hardly worth bothering to make referrals if BFIS / BIS were not going to follow up, and / or if BFIS / BIS staff were never going to catch anybody as a result.

*“You need the feedback to keep the interest”*

*“You need to know a result from a referral, otherwise you’re probably not going to ... refer again”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

*“Recently we referred one... obviously committed fraud and nothing’s happened... everyone knows... that makes you think, is it really worth it?”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

*“Nothing was done”*

*“A bit frustrating”*

(ES Business Managers)

Other staff were more pragmatic. They could understand why ES referrals were always going to be a relatively low priority for BFIS / BIS. They said that they knew (or thought) that BFIS / BIS was over-stretched, with a workload that was too much for their current level of resources. They also knew that given the way Jobcentres worked, ES referrals rarely gave hard evidence of fraud. Most ES referrals simply reported a member of staff’s suspicions. These were always going to require follow-up work, probably including surveillance, to confirm those suspicions and to generate the evidence needed for a prosecution.

*“They’re stretched, they’re always out”*

*“Resources are quite stretched”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

It should be noted that regardless of whether Jobcentre staff understood why BFIS / BIS worked the way they did, the end result was often the same: ES staff had low expectations of how BFIS / BIS would respond to the new MFA process.

These expectations had been confirmed by experiences to date in some areas. Jobcentre staff reported that there had been delays in getting the MFA1 back making the process time consuming and rather frustrating. However this was not always the case; other respondents were more positive, and confirmed that in their area BFIS / BIS was meeting the ten day deadline.

*“We’ve been sending it through to them, it’s going to the bottom of the pile... they’re not sending it back within ten days”*

*“It could be three or four weeks”*

*“We’ve only had one back in about five weeks”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

### **4.3 BFIS / BIS view of ES referrals**

BFIS / BIS respondent views of ES referrals were explored during the research. Their feedback confirmed that, from their perspective, ES referrals are a low priority. They make up a very small proportion of the referrals that are made to BFIS / BIS and they usually do not provide hard evidence of fraud. When compared with referrals from other sources, the non-ES referrals are more likely to be followed up.

Some BFIS / BIS staff were aware that Jobcentre personnel disliked the fact that ES referrals were a low priority for BFIS / BIS. However, they thought that ES staff were expecting too much from them. They also explained that it was not easy to give feedback. If a referral was investigated, it often took some time (possibly months) before they got a result. If a referral was not investigated immediately, there was always the possibility that it might be in the future, so again it was hard to give accurate feedback to ES.

The BFIS / BIS workload situation suspected by some ES staff was also confirmed by staff in the BFIS / BIS groups.

*“We are just bogged down by paperwork”*

*“The new Human Rights Act has got us tied upside down and inside out”*

(BFIS / BIS staff)

## 5 Implementing MFA at Jobcentres

### 5.1 Encouraging and making MFA referrals

The MFA activity undertaken to date was clearly very dependent on the individuals involved. In particular, it reflected the ability and attitude of the person within the office who had been assigned responsibility for the new process.

In some instances, it was clear that this person was very keen, and had personally undertaken and / or encouraged MFA action by their colleagues. For example, in order to help their colleagues understand the new process, a couple had prepared and circulated summary notes, or some form of checklist, to help get over the basic idea and the key stages of the process.

These individuals tended to be staff members who had a proactive attitude to progressing clients, and who were able to do so in a positive and firm way that got results (ie the client was progressed into a job or training initiative). It was also clear that these individuals did not worry that they might appear unfriendly to their clients. They reported that, in order to do their job, they had to be quite tough with some clients (albeit in a professional way) to get results.

*“Absolutely no qualms”*

*“... make it as awkward as I possibly can if they are working. If they are genuine, well fine, we’re doing a job search... they’re benefiting”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

However respondent feedback suggested that not every MFA co-ordinator took a proactive approach. When the responsibility for MFA had been given to an inexperienced or new member of staff, they had, perhaps not surprisingly, found it difficult to implement. As a result, MFA’s profile had declined in these Jobcentres since the launch, and activity was very low or had stopped.

*“I was... back off sick leave and I was told that I was going to be the MFA co-ordinator and I said, what does that mean, what is MFA?”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

*“Sort of faded into the background”*

*“Died a death”*

(ES Business Managers)

It should be noted that in some smaller Jobcentres, the Business Manager had no choice when assigning responsibility for MFA as there was only one adviser at the Jobcentre. This individual was often already busy with all the other parts of their job, and this impacted on the level of MFA activity generated in the office.

Staff changes had also reduced MFA's profile in some offices.

For example, the nominated co-ordinator had left and the person taking over had taken a while to get to grips with the process and / or was less than motivated to undertake or encourage MFA activity. In some cases, it would appear that there was a delay before a new person was appointed. Staff changes also meant that the contact lists produced at launch (designed to enable easy contact between MFA co-ordinators and other staff) went out of date, and updated lists were not circulated.

*"But all the named staff have changed"  
"I don't know who is responsible for..."*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

The few respondents who had made a referral and / or had seen the MFA1 form reported positively on it:

*"Fairly straightforward"  
"Don't think they're daunting forms to fill in"*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

## 5.2 Setting up and carrying out MFA interviews

Adviser respondents who had carried out MFA interviews reported that they had set up their own interviews. This was felt to be the easiest option as they knew when there was time in their diary for an extra interview. It should be noted, however, that interviews were not always being set up immediately after the return of the MFA1 form from BFIS / BIS. In some cases, the adviser's diary was simply too booked up; this was especially the case when there was only one adviser at the Jobcentre.

*"Tend to be booked up anywhere between four and six weeks in advance"*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

No problems were reported with the setting up and carrying out of MFA interviews to date, and there had not been any hostile responses from clients. Nor had there been any Health and Safety issues which Business Managers had needed to address. (It should be noted that few respondents had carried out MFA interviews, and most of these had only carried out a small number.) In one or two instances, advisers reported quite positively on their MFA interviews.

*"It's getting a result... it's making them look for work which before they hadn't been"*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

### 5.3 MFA activity carried out to date

The MFA activity undertaken since launch varied considerably between Jobcentres. One Jobcentre had undertaken a much higher number of referrals than other offices (50 – 60), and had interviewed some 50 or so people to date. However for the majority, the level of MFA activity was low and had taken some time to set up and carry out.

Some Jobcentres were carrying out the MFA process, but doing so **very slowly**. MFA activity had often slowed down since the launch of the process.

For example:

- one Jobcentre had only made seven referrals since February 2001. They had got go-ahead on all of these from BFIS / BIS but had only actually set up and carried out two MFA interviews by the time of the research.
- another Jobcentre had made slightly more referrals: 20 or so to date. However only four had been returned by BFIS / BIS so limiting possible interview activity. (They were still waiting to hear about the other 16.)
- a third Jobcentre had made three referrals and had carried out three interviews.

Several Jobcentres reported little or no activity as a result of **problems with BFIS / BIS**.

*“We’re trying to chase (it) up now because it’s gone by the wayside”*  
*“They’re not even authorising us for the MFA, they’re not saying this is a suitable case whereas we’re 99% certain that it is”*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

For example:

- one Jobcentre had made two referrals quite soon after the introduction of the new process but had not had any response from BFIS / BIS. As a result, they had not made any further referrals and no interviews had been carried out.
- a second Jobcentre had made 12 referrals but had been told by BFIS / BIS soon after the start of the process that BFIS / BIS would not be returning any with a go-ahead for MFA. Both the Business Manager and MFA co-ordinator at this particular Jobcentre had been told this by their BFIS / BIS contact. However they did not know whether this meant that BFIS / BIS were definitely planning to investigate their referrals in future, or whether they were “overloading” them due to insufficient evidence.

*“They (BFIS / BIS) wanted to take ownership and they sort of more or less said, don’t expect us to refer them back to you to do the interviews, we actually would like to do the interviews”*

(ES Business Manager)

- a third Jobcentre reported that they had to wait up to five weeks before getting BFIS / BIS feedback on their referrals. As a result, they had changed their way of approaching the first stage of the process. Instead of sending referrals through to BFIS / BIS, they collected them at the Jobcentre and the MFA co-ordinator physically went through them with a BFIS / BIS investigator who made a regular fortnightly visit to their office.

The investigator was able to give a verbal response to each referral, before taking copies of the forms and phoning through from the BFIS / BIS office to confirm whether any of the named individuals were currently under investigation by BFIS / BIS. The respondent who reported this revised approach stated that it was working well as it avoided the long waits that they had previously experienced.

Finally, a couple of Jobcentres appeared to be doing **their own version of the MFA process**. In other words, they appreciated the need to encourage jobseekers claiming JSA fraudulently to terminate their claim, and carried out a process that they felt achieved this – but was not MFA.

For example:

- one particular Jobcentre did not receive any BFIS / BIS response to their initial referrals. They did not see this as a major problem as they were carrying out Enhanced Restart interviews and felt that this process (with its multiple, frequent interviews) would have the same deterrent effect as MFA. They therefore did not bother to chase BFIS / BIS for a response or continue making further MFA referrals.
- respondents from a second Jobcentre explained that they were not making any MFA referrals as they were using the Penzance model. This meant that they got long term unemployed people into their office weekly. They reported that this had had a definite effect on the number signing on (ie it prompted some to terminate their claim to JSA). They therefore saw MFA as duplicating the effect of the Penzance model and did not feel that it was necessary for them.
- the New Deal Gateway process was also reported to be achieving the same result as MFA.

*“They have to go along to the Gateway... they were having to sign off basically”*  
(ES Jobcentre staff)

## 5.4 Reasons for lack of MFA activity

The reasons for the lack of MFA activity at Jobcentres was explored in some detail during the research. As already mentioned, some of this was caused by a **slow or limited response from BFIS / BIS**. In other Jobcentres, it appeared

that the low level of activity was directly related to the **low profile** of MFA among staff. This meant that it was not top-of-mind and so **easily forgotten about**.

*“You tend to be aware of whatever’s uppermost in your mind”*

*“It’s whatever’s current at the time”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

There was also **no incentive to use** the process; unlike many of the processes used within Jobcentres, staff were not set any targets for MFA. In addition, there was **no incentive to encourage staff to find out** more about the process and how to implement it. (This will be necessary for a process which is used infrequently and which can easily be forgotten about.)

Some Jobcentre staff mentioned workload issues and the number of other tasks that they had to do when explaining why there was so little MFA activity. These staff appeared to have **little time** to undertake something new, or to think about undertaking a new process, or to find out details about it.

*“There are so many initiatives that staff have got to take on board”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

The feedback also suggested that, in some Jobcentres, there remained a **concern about how clients would respond**. There was a worry that they would be hostile to the idea of having to visit the Jobcentre at short notice. This was reported by, or attributed to, frontline staff more than advisers. They felt uncomfortable with the idea of starting the MFA process with someone who they were on first name terms with. In one or two Jobcentres, this concern had been discussed early on and it had been agreed that most (if not all) of the MFA activity would be undertaken by advisers. This meant that frontline staff did not see it as their responsibility to report or make referrals. It should be noted that no hostile responses from clients were reported by those who had carried out MFA interviews.

There was a further factor which contributed to the low level of MFA activity. It was clear that when the process was first introduced, most staff had **little idea of what interview numbers were expected** by Head Office. There was no target, and they were not given anything to act as a guide or benchmark. They therefore did not know whether the number of referrals and / or interviews being undertaken in their Jobcentre was good or bad.

Some Business Managers reported that they had checked how neighbouring Jobcentres were doing with MFA, and had been reassured to find that they had similar levels of referrals and / or interviews. This led them to believe that there was no need to change the way that MFA was being carried out in their Jobcentre.

## 5.5 Expectations for the future

Few respondents thought that the current level of activity would increase without a change in the way the process was perceived by staff and how it was currently being carried out. In the absence of any such change, they expected the current level of activity to continue.

*“It’s always going to be like this”*

*“... get even lower”*

*“Never going to be masses of people”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

In some areas, it was felt that the current level of activity could not improve unless the response from BFIS / BIS improved.

*“We want some BFIS enthusiasm”*

(ES staff member)

It was also pointed out that the nature of the process meant that it would always have a minor role to play within Jobcentres. Even if given a higher priority, it was felt to be a process that could only be used for a relatively small number of people. It was unlikely to be used for certain jobseekers (eg potentially violent people or those with a known history of signing on and off regularly) who were often those most suspected of claiming JSA while working. Some respondents also felt that as long as there were other more established (or higher priority) processes requiring weekly interviews for jobseekers which could achieve the same result (ie encouraging jobseekers to terminate their claim to JSA), MFA was not really necessary.

Some respondents were more positive, and felt that the situation could be improved if the profile of MFA could be raised within Jobcentres. They felt that an enthusiastic co-ordinator giving regular reminders to staff could help establish MFA as a routine process that was automatically considered as and when Jobcentre staff felt suspicious about jobseekers.

*“Make sure that we are doing what we should be doing”*

(ES Jobcentre staff)

## 5.6 MFA resources

Some ES staff (mainly Jobcentre Business Managers and MFA co-ordinators) were aware that extra resources had been allocated for the carrying out of the MFA process. It was not, however, seen as a major issue. This reflected the fact that resources for new initiatives get allocated at district level and they rarely have a direct impact in terms of staffing levels at Jobcentres.

For example, when the district allocation is divided up, it equates to part of an extra staff member and / or so many hours of a staff member's time per Jobcentre. This extra resource cannot be readily identified and ring-fenced for the new initiative.

When asked whether extra resource was, in fact, needed for the new process, responses were very varied. In some Jobcentres, no extra resource was needed as few referrals had been made and no MFA interviews had been carried out so far. In other Jobcentres, the numbers and type of staff in the office was the critical factor. For example, interviews could only be done by an adviser so in small Jobcentres, MFA activity was dependent on the availability of the single adviser. The extra resource would therefore have to be in the form of another, part-time adviser for it to make any difference.

There was a general feeling among Business Managers that if a new policy was a high priority, it would get done, whatever the resource situation. If it took up more resource than had been allocated, some other task of lower priority would just be delayed as a result.

Feedback from the MI co-ordinators in district and regional ES offices tended to confirm this view. They felt that resource was not the main problem with the implementation of the new process so far. They reported that the problem lay with its low priority, and that this was responsible for the low level of activity to date.

*"Low profile"*

*"Put on the back burner"*

*"Fairly low on the list of priorities"*

(MI ES staff)



## 6 Management Information issues

### 6.1 Collecting and collating MFA data

The district MI co-ordinators reported that in order to collect the necessary MFA statistics, they usually had to chase Jobcentre staff each month. In some cases, the person who they dealt with had changed since the launch of the process which hampered communication and speed of response. Having more than one person filling in and returning the form each month was also felt to impact on the accuracy of the data supplied. They felt that not all Jobcentre staff were aware of the correct information requirements (eg completed interview numbers rather than referrals).

*“... these weren’t necessarily the people that were going to be collating the information”*

(ES MI co-ordinators)

Their feedback also confirmed that there had been initial problems with the collation sheets filled in by district and regional staff. The main problem had been due to the ambiguity of the definitions listed on the sheets, and the relationship (or lack of one) between successive entries. For example, the numbers recorded were not necessarily mutually exclusive so could not be checked by totalling them up to 100 per cent. It was therefore harder to spot errors. When first introduced, it had taken up to five days for the district and regional staff to complete and double check their collation sheets.

*“In the beginning it was horrendous”*

*“Very, very complicated”*

(ES MI co-ordinators)

Some of the respondents had created their own working spreadsheets on which to list individual Jobcentre or district data so they had an easier way to double check the final collation sheet which was completed and forwarded up the ES hierarchy. (District staff sent their sheets to their regional office. The regional collation sheet was sent to ES Head Office.)

These problems had been reduced (or removed) when revised forms and guidance had been issued by JMS8. The process now took half a day or so to do. However, a few of the MI respondents reported that the new forms had not necessarily reached all the people involved in the process. Some also had a few outstanding criticisms of the revised forms.

## 6.2 Outstanding issues with collation sheets

Some specific areas on the collation sheets were commented on during the MI co-ordinator sessions. Firstly, additional formulae were suggested to help the double-checking of the data. These were as follows:

- The total number of interviews arranged should always be more than the number of clients where the claim has been terminated before an interview has happened
- The number of MFA cases is less or equal to the number of interviews attended

Secondly, in one area, there was a concern that definition two (d) was being interpreted incorrectly. Respondents felt that it differed from what they had expected before the reissuing of the collation sheets. They thought that two (d) had been added to the form specifically to help the column of numbers at section two add up. However this was not actually the case. In addition two (d), as currently defined, appeared to them to duplicate another entry on the form.

It was also pointed out that there was no six (a) on the collation sheet.

## 7 Recommendations

The feedback from the Post Implementation Review research suggests that without some form of intervention to change the current situation, the number of MFA referrals and interviews will not increase. Therefore in order to achieve any significant increase, **it is recommended that ES consider some form of relaunch for MFA.** It should be noted that this assumes that such an initiative is feasible given the relative priority of MFA and the other activity that is currently being undertaken within ES.

Assuming that a relaunch initiative is feasible, **it is suggested the following key aims are set for relaunch activity** targeted at ES staff:

- To raise awareness of the MFA policy and its profile within Jobcentres
- To fill in the gaps in knowledge of the process among Jobcentre staff
- To offer reassurance and / or practical solutions to the expected (or actual) problems with the new process which may be stopping people from carrying it out
- To ensure that the MFA process is “owned” by a suitable ES staff member who can ensure that awareness and knowledge levels are maintained among Jobcentre staff, and that they are encouraged to make referrals on an on-going basis

### 7.1 Jobcentre recommendations

In order to achieve the relaunch aims listed above, **it is recommended that ES consider developing an information campaign for MFA.** In order to maximise interest in such a campaign and ensure its relevance to Jobcentre staff, it is suggested that the communication takes a wider perspective than just the MFA process.

For example, it is suggested that MFA is presented alongside other ES processes that can be used to reduce (or help reduce) fraudulent claiming. It is felt that by taking such an approach, MFA’s role in the ES “toolbox” will be made clearer to ES staff and there will be less chance of it being ignored or dismissed because it is too similar to other processes.

When considering the possible format of the proposed information campaign, the research feedback suggests an opportunity to exploit MFA knowledge and experience existing at Jobcentre level. It is felt that Jobcentre staff are more likely to be reassured and motivated by people working in the same sort of environment as they do, and who can report that they are carrying out higher levels of MFA referrals and interviews without any major problems. **It is therefore recommended that the information campaign includes face-to-face sessions at Jobcentres involving proactive co-ordinator(s)** from Jobcentres elsewhere in the region.

In addition to reprising the necessary details about how the process works, these staff can share personal experiences and suggest ways of avoiding or solving problems. It is felt that this approach will make more impact, and will be more likely to be acted on, than if these sessions were run entirely by non Jobcentre staff, or if the campaign consisted solely of written or electronic communication material.

Given the need to raise the profile of MFA and ensure that all Jobcentre staff appreciate its importance, **it is recommended that Business Managers are involved in the relaunch process.** Their role would be to help underline the campaign message and maintain awareness on an on-going basis. Business Managers may also need to consider appointing suitable MFA co-ordinators where none exist, or finding a more suitable co-ordinator where the person currently in the post is not experienced or keen enough to achieve the desired results.

**It is also suggested that the relaunch activity includes a check of Management Information responsibilities at Jobcentres.** It would appear that in some cases, the MFA co-ordinator supplies the monthly statistics. In other Jobcentres, returns have been made by different people depending on who was available at the time, and this is felt by MI co-ordinators to impact on the accuracy of the data, and the promptness with which it is supplied. A relaunch of the MFA process would be a suitable time to check who within a Jobcentre is responsible for supplying MI data, and get agreement that it is always done by someone who has relevant knowledge about what is required.

Finally **we suggest that ES consider some form of loose target** to help focus the minds of Jobcentre staff on the MFA process. While it is appreciated that there is a wide range of important issues currently being addressed within the Employment Service, it is felt that without some form of point of reference (eg X referrals within the next six months), it will be hard for Jobcentre staff to monitor their performance. Without a way of doing so, it will not be clear to staff whether or not their Jobcentre is meeting Head Office expectations, and hence whether or not further action is necessary.

## 7.2 BFIS / BIS recommendations

While the response from BFIS / BIS offices varies considerably around the country, it would appear that some Jobcentres are having major problems getting BFIS / BIS to respond promptly to MFA referrals. This is, in turn, reducing the number of MFA interviews being carried out. If MFA is to improve in these Jobcentres, this reported problem needs to be addressed. **It is recommended that ES get a more accurate picture of the nature and scale of the BFIS / BIS problem by reviewing MFA statistics collected by BFIS / BIS.**

For example, a comparison of BFIS / BIS data, giving the number of MFA responses made by a BFIS / BIS office, with ES data on the referrals made by Jobcentres to that BFIS / BIS office, will give an indication of whether a real problem exists. An investigation of BFIS / BIS response timings (if available) would also help reveal if ES staff claims are valid and if so, how long it is actually taking BFIS / BIS offices to respond, over and above the expected ten days.

If it is confirmed that major timing problems do exist (via a review of BFIS / BIS data or by another method), **we recommend that ES review and change the role of BFIS / BIS within the MFA process.** The aim of this review would be to maximise the chances of MFA working successfully in the future, whilst not upsetting current fraud practices within BFIS / BIS in any way. We suggest the following minimum changes are considered:

- MFA response time for BFIS / BIS is changed from ten days to a period that BFIS / BIS staff feel they can guarantee to deliver
- The profile of the MFA process is raised within BFIS / BIS offices and the level of staff knowledge is increased via a series of briefing meetings held by District Managers
- The perceived relevance of the process is increased by clear explanations of the MFA benefits for BFIS / BIS
- The role of Portal in the MFA process is clarified so it is understood who is responsible for returning the MFA1 form to Jobcentres. The potential use of the MFA2 form also needs to be reviewed as it would appear that it cannot be used in Portal areas.

If such changes are **not** feasible, **we suggest a more radical alternative which would change BFIS / BIS's role to one of simply checking the proposed MFA interviewee details.** In this scenario, BFIS / BIS staff would only need to confirm whether or not the named individual was under investigation. If they were not, the decision whether to carry out MFA interviews would be taken by ES staff once this information had been supplied by the local BFIS / BIS office. We envisage that this check could be carried out by a member of BFIS / BIS's administrative staff, and would no longer need to involve investigators. This could possibly speed up the process considerably. The QB21 would remain at the BFIS / BIS office so the case could be investigated at a later date.

Longer term, **we recommend that ES and BFIS / BIS look in more detail at the relationship between Jobcentre and BFIS / BIS staff** in order to get a better understanding of the problems that appear to exist. The research feedback suggests that mismatched expectations are at the heart of the current problem. This in turn suggests that the role and priorities of each agency need to be better communicated, and that clear performance standards need to be established. It is, of course, possible that such a review may be unnecessary given that ES and BA are now within the same government department and changes in the way the two agencies work may already be planned.



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## 8 Appendices and annexes

- Topic guides
- ES Jobcentre staff guide
  - ES Business Manager guide
  - ES MI co-ordinators guide
  - BFIS / BIS staff guide



**Job number : 1156 - 773**

**Job name : MFA Post Implementation Review**

## **8.1**

## **8.2 ES STAFF : DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Note:** This Guide indicates the areas to be explored in the groups/interviews, the likely order in which topics will be covered and the kinds of questions and techniques which may be used. However, it must be remembered that this is qualitative research and that the approach will therefore be flexible depending on the dynamics of each group/interview. The Guide may also be revised as the research proceeds to take account of the findings as they emerge.

### **Introductions / warm up**

- Moderator introduction
- Background on research aims, format / length of discussion etc.
- Explanation of BMRB International's involvement, independence etc.
- MRS Code of Conduct, tape-recording and confidentiality
  
- Respondent introductions
- Different job titles represented in group
  - for each, brief explanation of main tasks / role
- Location of each respondent
- Contact / relationship between respondents

### **Background to MFA**

Check that MFA policy is being operated in their office

- level of involvement to date

Awareness of MFA process

- understanding of what process is and why it has been introduced

General awareness of fraud issues within their office / team

- level of fraud in area
- ease of identifying and addressing

Action taken prior to introduction of MFA if suspicious about client

- who involved / what action required
- how satisfactory

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Awareness of / past contact with BFIS / BIS

- if so, what and when?

Experience / awareness of BFIS/BIS awareness sessions

- how regular
- how useful

Perceived need for a new process to aid fraud detection / reduction prior to ES

**Briefly** check opinion of how MFA is working to date

- spontaneous comments
- probe perceived usefulness and efficacy
  - reasons for views

### **Introduction / implementation of new MFA process**

How first heard of new process

- reactions on hearing about
- level of awareness within their Jobcentre

Briefing meetings, workshops etc. carried out to introduce MFA process

- what carried out, where, when and who involved
  - check respondents' attendance
  - if not, why not
- areas covered by training
  - practical details, rationale and effectiveness issues
- how useful / necessary
  - did it prepare respondents for MFA process?
  - if not completely, what was missing?

Advice / background information received before January implementation

- what supplied and when
- how useful
- anything missing / additional info required

If necessary, prompt so that the following types of info are covered

- info cascaded from regional office
- info from colleagues in your district
- articles in *Connect*
- articles in *Inside ES*
- info on ESCOM

Check that the guidance and forms were received in time to be read and digested prior to January implementation

***If not already covered:*** check whether respondents feel that training and info prepared them sufficiently for start of MFA

- why / why not?
- additional training needs
  - if so, what area(s)?

### **MFA process review**

Check involvement of each respondent

- how are they involved in the process?
- level of contact with the MFA client
- who else is involved in the process?
  - specifically, all advisers or just specific members of the team?
- do they have a MFA co-ordinator
  - if so, how chosen?

Types of client that they are using the MFA process for

- identifying behaviour / other criteria

Number / frequency of referrals to date

- check who keeps records of these details

Numbers of MFA interviews carried out to date

- check who keeps records of these details

Respondents asked to talk through how the MFA process works from their point of view, with each different respondent contributing their part of the process. At each stage, explore:

- what practically happens
- how easy or not it is to action / carry out
- level of satisfaction
- issues arising / problems / potential improvements

#### ***Process review to include:***

- how process starts / who instigates and why
- impact on adviser workload
  - level of notice / need to plan ahead
  - who decides which adviser handles?
- making referrals
  - ease of completing QB21 and MFA1
  - any problems with MFA1 / areas needing improvement
  - how sent to BFIS / BIS

- BFIS / BIS dealing with referrals from ES
  - how are BFIS / BIS responding to referrals?
  - specifically, timing / promptness of response (within 10 days?)
- BFIS / BIS passing referrals to ES
  - have they received any MFA2's?
  - original source of referral before BFIS / BIS?
  - number received / frequency?
  - how handled / dealt with?
- client signs off / transfers / return to benefit before MFA interview fixed
  - if this is happening, what do they do?
  - how often?
- **arranging interviews**
  - who contacts jobseeker?
  - if not adviser, who is it and reason for their involvement?
  - methods used to contact jobseeker
  - amount of notice given of interview
  - ease of getting hold of jobseeker
  - variation by methods used
  - frequency of arranging interview
  - e.g. how many interviews are being arranged in a typical week?
  - how do they explain need for extra meeting
  - range of responses from jobseekers
  - any hostility / barriers to attending from jobseeker
  - ease of persuading / arranging interview
  - any experience of requesting postal jobseekers to attend MFA
  - why and what happened?
- **carrying out of interview**
  - ease of carrying out interview
  - behaviour / response of client
  - any hostility of jobseeker / interviewing problems
  - health and safety issues
  - awareness of what action to take in case of verbal or physical assault

- **carrying out of interview continued**
  - continuity of adviser across MFA interviews; why / why not?
  - examples of need for flexibility
- paperwork completed / circulated post interview
- decisions required following interview
  - what, how easy, who else involved etc.
- continuation of process, where required
  - how many MFA interviews are being done?
  - how does this vary with client?
- ending the process
  - what prompts them to halt the process
  - what has happened with client(s) since?

***If not already covered***, check MFA results to date

- perceived effectiveness of process
- are results seen to be worth the level work generated by MFA process?

Review time taken to set / up carry out process. Specifically:

- preparation time before making client contact
- preparing for interview once arranged
- undertaking the interview
- updating the client record post interview (clerical or electronically)
- completing Individual Client Sheet report

### **Involvement with BFIS / BIS**

***If not already covered***, explore:

- who they deal with in BFIS / BIS and why
- type / frequency of contact
- location of BFIS / BIS personnel
- nature of relationship prior to introduction of new MFA process
- nature of relationship and level of satisfaction since start of MFA process
  - nature of changes
  - variation by respondent / BFIS or BIS individual / level of seniority
- level / nature of feedback received when referrals passed on from ES
  - level of satisfaction

- impact of BFIS / BIS contact / involvement on them
  - practically (workload and resource)
  - in terms of motivation / morale

Check if there is any feeling that BFIS / BIS is “using” ES to do their job

- e.g. referring to ES simply as a result of lack of time / resource

## **New forms / information requirements**

***If not already covered:*** review the following:

- MFA1
- MFA2
- Individual client sheet
- Guidance

For each, check

- ease of understanding
- ease of usage / completion
  - need to request info or advice through Central Support Unit
  - of so, what, why and help received
- areas needing improvement
- suggested changes / improvements

Check involvement in collection of management information

- time required / impact on workload
- areas that could be improved
  - what and how?

Usage / view of MFA management information guidance

- need for improvement
- if so, what and how?

## **Overview and summary**

**As necessary,** confirm and explore further the impact of the MFA process on them both personally and for their office as a whole, covering:

- workload
- resources
- relationships with clients

Perceptions of how they think their clients view the new process

- perceived usefulness / benefits
- examples of positive and negative responses

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What's working well and why

- examples of good practice

What's not working well and why

- improvements required

Moderator to summarise / check findings

Final comments

Thank respondents and close



**Job number : 1156 - 773**

**Job name : MFA Post Implementation Review**

## **ES BUSINESS MANAGER : INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**Note:** This Guide indicates the areas to be explored in the interviews, the likely order in which topics will be covered and the kinds of questions and techniques which may be used. However, it must be remembered that this is qualitative research and that the approach will therefore be flexible depending on the dynamics of each interview. The Guide may also be revised as the research proceeds to take account of the findings as they emerge.

### **Introductions**

- Moderator introduction
- Background on research aims, format / length of discussion etc.
- Explanation of BMRB International's involvement, independence etc.
- MRS Code of Conduct, tape-recording and confidentiality
  
- Respondent introduction
- Job title, areas of responsibility and key tasks
- Staff responsibilities
- Location
  
- Relationships with other ES, BFIS / BIS and BA personnel

### **Background to MFA**

General awareness of fraud issues within their office / team

- level of fraud in area
- ease of identifying and addressing

Action taken prior to introduction of MFA if suspicious about client

- who involved / what action required
- how satisfactory

Perceived need for a new process to aid fraud detection / reduction prior to MFA

**Briefly** check opinion of how MFA is working to date

- spontaneous comments
- check perceived usefulness and efficacy
  - reasons for views
- level of understanding / involvement by staff

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If office is not operating MFA policy, explore

- reasons why
- when do they intend to start operating it?

### **Introduction / implementation of new MFA process**

How first heard of new process

- when first told and by whom / what
- reactions on hearing about

Staff responses to new initiative

- what and why
- variation by type of staff

***Briefing meetings, workshops etc.*** carried out to introduce MFA process

- who initiated
- what carried out, where, when and who involved
  - check interviewee's attendance
    - if not, why not
  - which members of his / her staff attended?
- areas covered by training
  - practical details, rationale and effectiveness issues
- how useful / necessary
  - did it prepare respondents for MFA process?
  - if not completely, what was missing?

Contact with BFIS / BIS during introductory stage

- when, why, who
- areas discussed and decisions made
  - e.g. contacts procedures
- benefits of contact

Contact with New Deal Partners during introductory stage

- when, why, who
- areas discussed and decisions made
- benefits of contact

Contact with ES Direct during introductory stage

- when, why, who
- areas discussed and decisions made
- benefits of contact

Staff allocation / involvement in new process

- how decided method of implementation / delivery for their office
- who involved

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**If not already covered:** check internal meetings held with adviser team

- issues / areas needing explanation or discussion
- areas of concern
  - how addressed
- areas requiring additional training
  - how addressed
- process to decide who would carry out interviews

Advisers involved in MFA

- are all advisers involved or just specific member(s) of the team?
  - reasons why
- do they have a MFA co-ordinator?
  - if so, how chosen?
  - if not, who handles admin?

Feelings about how well current arrangements are working

- any areas needing review / change
- if so, what and why

**Advice / background information** received before January implementation

- what supplied and when
- how useful
- anything missing / additional info required

**If necessary, prompt so that the following types of info are covered**

- info cascaded from regional office
- info from colleagues in district
- articles in *Connect*
- articles in *Inside ES*
- info on ESCOM

Check that the guidance and forms were received in time to be read and digested prior to January implementation

**If not already covered :** impact of new initiative on staff morale

- e.g. did staff think it a good idea or did they think that it's not really their job / dislike getting involved in fraud related area
- how have attitudes changed since initiative first introduced?
- following training and / or MFA experience?

Impact on general awareness / interest in fraud related issues of staff

**If not already covered:** check whether interviewee feels that training and info prepared them and their staff sufficiently for start of MFA

- why / why not?
- additional training needs
  - if so, what area(s)?

## **MFA process review**

Types of client that they are using the MFA process for

- identifying behaviour / other criteria

Number / frequency of referrals to date

- e.g. how many per week / month

Number of MFA interviews carried out to date

- e.g. how many per week / month

Interviewee asked to talk through how the MFA process works from their point of view. At each stage, explore:

- what practically happens
- how easy or not it is to action / carry out
- level of satisfaction
- issues arising / problems / potential improvements

### ***Process review to include:***

- impact on adviser workload
  - level of notice given / need to plan ahead
  - who decides which adviser handles?
- making referrals
  - which members of staff are making the referrals?
  - any problems with MFA1 / areas needing improvement
- BFIS / BIS dealing with referrals from ES
  - how are BFIS / BIS responding to referrals?
  - specifically, timing / promptness of response (within 10 days?)
- BFIS / BIS passing referrals to ES
  - what non-ES referral have they received?
  - original source of referral before BFIS / BIS?
  - number received / frequency?
  - how handled / dealt with?
- client signs off / transfers / return to benefit before MFA interview fixed
  - if this is happening, what do they do?
  - how often?
- arranging interviews
  - who contacts client (adviser or other member of staff)?
  - feedback from those fixing interviews
  - any hostility / barriers to attending from jobseekers
  
  - methods used to contact jobseeker
  - time spent by staff arranging interviews
  - any experience of requesting postal jobseekers to attend MFA

- carrying out of interview
  - feedback from advisers
  - behaviour / response of clients
  - any hostility of jobseeker / interviewing problems
  
  - health and safety issues
  - has manager carried out risk assessment?
  - any incidents as a result of MFA action?
  - staff awareness of what action to take to report an incident
  
  - continuity of adviser across MFA interviews
  - why / why not?
  
- decisions required following interview
  - what, who involved etc.
  
- continuation of process, where required
  - how many MFA interviews are being done with individual clients?
  - how does this vary between clients?
  
- ending the process
  - what prompts them to halt the process? -
  - what has happened with client(s) since?

Level of satisfaction with carrying out of process

- how long has it taken staff to get it up and running?
- is everybody comfortable with it?
- any problem areas

***If not already covered***, check views on MFA results to date

- perceived effectiveness of process
- are results seen to be worth the level work generated by MFA process?
- could manager make a business case for MFA?
  - why / why not?

### **Involvement with BFIS / BIS**

***If not already covered***, explore:

- who they deal with in BFIS / BIS and why
- type / frequency of contact
- location of BFIS / BIS personnel
  
- nature of relationship between ES and BFIS / BIS prior to introduction of new MFA process
  
- nature of relationship and level of satisfaction since start of MFA process
  - nature of changes
  - variation by individual / nature of job or level of seniority

- level / nature of BFIS / BIS feedback received on ES referrals
  - level of satisfaction
- impact of BFIS / BIS contact / involvement on them
  - practically (workload and resource)
  - in terms of motivation / morale

Check if there is any feeling that BFIS / BIS is “using” ES to do their job  
e.g. referring to ES simply as a result of lack of time / resource

### **New forms / information requirements**

***If not already covered:*** review the following:

- MFA1
- MFA2
- Individual client sheet
- Guidance

For each, check

- ease of understanding by them / their staff
- ease of usage / completion
- areas needing improvement
- suggested changes / improvements

Check who is involved in collection of management information

- time required / impact on workload
- areas that could be improved
  - what and how?

### **Overview and summary**

***As necessary,*** confirm the impact of the MFA process on them both personally and for their office as a whole, covering:

- workload
  - manager, co-ordinator, advisers, other staff etc.
- resources
  - need for / receipt of additional funding?
  - if so, why and what for?
  - how satisfactory?
- staff morale
- relationships with clients
- Jobcentre targets
  - any impact or too early to say?
- relationships between ES / BA / BFIS / BIS staff
- referrals to Sector Decision Maker
  - any impact or too early to say?

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Perceptions of how they think their clients view the new process

- perceived usefulness / benefits
- examples of positive and negative responses

What's working well and why

- examples of good practice

What's not working well and why

- improvements required

Moderator to summarise / check findings

Final comments

Thank interviewee and close



**Job number : 1156 – 773**

**Job name : MFA Post Implementation Review**

## **DISTRICT AND REGIONAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION CO-ORDINATORS : DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Note:** This Guide indicates the areas to be explored in the groups, the likely order in which topics will be covered and the kinds of questions and techniques which may be used. However, it must be remembered that this is qualitative research and that the approach will therefore be flexible depending on the dynamics of each group. The Guide may also be revised as the research proceeds to take account of the findings as they emerge.

### **Introductions**

- Moderator introduction
- Background on research aims, format / length of discussion etc.
- Explanation of BMRB International's involvement, independence etc.
- MRS Code of Conduct, tape-recording and confidentiality
  
- Respondent introductions
- Different job titles represented in group
- for each, brief explanation of main tasks / role
- Location of each respondent
- Contact / relationship between respondents

### **Introduction / implementation of new MFA process**

Awareness of MFA process

- understanding of what process is and why it has been introduced

How first heard of new process

- reactions on hearing about
- level of awareness within their office

Briefing meetings, workshops etc. carried out to introduce MFA process

- who instigated
- what carried out, where, when and who involved
  - check respondents' attendance
- if not, why not
- areas covered by training
  - practical details, rationale and effectiveness issues

- how useful / necessary
  - did it prepare respondents for MI part of MFA process?
  - if not completely, what was missing?

Advice / background information received before January implementation

- what supplied and when
- how useful
- anything missing / additional info required

Check that the guidance and forms were received in time to be read and digested prior to January implementation

Any issues arising from MFA Management Information guidance

- areas needing clarification
- suggested improvements

### **MFA process review**

Respondents asked to talk through how the MFA process works from their point of view. At each stage, explore:

- what practically happens
- how easy or not it is to action / carry out
- level of satisfaction
- issues arising / problems / potential improvements

Process review to include:

- ES contact
  - who do they deal with at Jobcentres
  - consistent or varying contact?
  - if same person, what benefits?
  - frequency of receipt of information
  - is it on time each month
  - if not on time, why not?
  - resulting problems / action taken?
  - e.g. how much chasing up required?
- information supplied
  - format received
  - how easy to understand / use
  - queries / requests for clarification
  - any incidents through Central support Unit
  - if so, what and why?
  - areas on Individual Client Sheet needing review or revision
  - e.g. situation difficult to record
  - suggested improvements

- information supplied
  - ease of usage of district collation spreadsheets
  - areas needing review or revision
  - suggested improvements
  - ease of usage of regional collation spreadsheets
  - areas needing review or revision
  - suggested improvements
  - how often do they get a NIL return?
  - does it make any difference to their process?

- Smoothness of process
- how automatic / easy
  - any weak links in the chain?

- If not already covered:** ease of making and get replies to queries
- did they know who to contact?
  - how easy was it find the right person to talk to?
  - who did they ask for advice / guidance?
  - usefulness of responses
  - need for clarification / additional explanation

- Outstanding issues
- what issues have been clarified / sorted since MFA was introduced?
  - are there still outstanding issues that are causing problems / delays?
  - if so, what and how are they being addressed?

- Time taken to process / supply information
- how long does it take to fill in form?
  - impact on rest of job

- Views of amount collected
- too little, too much, just the right amount?

- Perceived usefulness of information
- who uses, how and feedback received

## **New forms**

***If not already covered***, review opinion of design and ease of usage of:

- Individual client sheet
- District collation spreadsheet
- Regional collation spreadsheet
- Guidance

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If not mentioned, check views on original forms and revised versions:

- were there problems with the original forms?
  - if so, what
- how were they changed?
- has it improved them? why / why not?
  - if it has improved them, how?

Further changes required / improvements suggested

### **Overview and summary**

What's working well and why

- examples of good practice

What's not working well and why

- improvements required

Moderator to summarise / check findings

Final comments

Thank respondents and close

**Job number : 1156 - 773**

**Job name : MFA Post Implementation Review**

## **BFIS / BIS STAFF : DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Note:** This Guide indicates the areas to be explored in the groups, the likely order in which topics will be covered and the kinds of questions and techniques which may be used. However, it must be remembered that this is qualitative research and that the approach will therefore be flexible depending on the dynamics of each group. The Guide may also be revised as the research proceeds to take account of the findings as they emerge.

### **Introductions**

- Moderator introduction
- Background on research aims, format / length of discussion etc.
- Explanation of BMRB International's involvement, independence etc.
- MRS Code of Conduct, tape-recording and confidentiality
  
- Respondent introductions
- Different job titles represented in group
  - for each, brief explanation of main tasks / role
- Location of each respondent
- Contact / relationship between respondents

### **Background to MFA**

Check that MFA policy is being operated in their office

- level of involvement to date

Awareness of MFA process

- understanding of what process is and why it has been introduced

Action taken by ES involving BFIS / BIS prior to introduction of MFA

- who involved, what action required
- how satisfactory

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Other past contact with ES

- if so, what and when?
- e.g. BFIS / BIS awareness sessions for ES

Nature of BFIS / ES relationship prior to MFA

Perceived need for a new ES process to aid fraud detection / reduction prior to MFA

**Briefly** check opinion of how MFA is working to date

- spontaneous comments
- probe perceived usefulness and efficacy
  - reasons for views

### **Introduction / implementation of new MFA process**

How first heard of new process

- reactions on hearing about
- level of awareness within their office

Briefing meetings, workshops etc. carried out to introduce MFA process

- who instigated
- what carried out, where, when and who involved
  - check respondents' attendance
  - if not, why not
- areas covered by training
  - practical details, rationale and effectiveness issues
- how useful / necessary
  - did it prepare respondents for MFA process?
  - if not completely, what was missing?

Advice / background information received before January implementation

- what supplied and when
- how useful
- anything missing / additional info required

Check that the guidance and forms were received in time to be read and digested prior to January implementation

Staff allocation / involvement in new process

- specific staff responsibilities
- e.g. MFA co-ordinator within BFIS / BIS office
  - if so, who and how decided

## **MFA process review**

Respondents asked to talk through how the MFA process works from their point of view, with different respondents contributing their part of the process. At each stage, explore:

- what practically happens
- how easy or not it is to action / carry out
- level of satisfaction
- issues arising / problems / potential improvements

Process review to include:

- ES referrals
  - BFIS / BIS dealing with referrals from ES
  - ease of responding to QB21 and MFA1
  - are ES giving all the requested / necessary info?
  - quality of ES referrals
  - have they changed since MFA introduced?
  - if so, how?
  - any referrals from ES Direct?
- non ES referrals
  - BFIS / BIS passing referrals to ES
  - have they sent any MFA2 forms to ES?
  - how many / how frequently?
  - how do they decide when to do this?
  - where are these referrals originating from?
  - reasons for sending to ES for MFA?
  - perceived usefulness of MFA2 process
- taking the decision to refer client to ES for MFA process or to instigate formal BFIS / BIS investigation
  - criteria used
- timing
  - how long is it taking to respond to ES / MFA referrals?
  - is 10 day turnaround period being met?
  - why / why not?
- any involvement of BFIS / BIS following MFA interviews
  - if so, what, when and why

## **Involvement with ES**

***If not already covered***, explore:

- who they deal with in ES and why
- type / frequency of contact
- location of ES personnel
  
- nature of relationship prior to introduction of new MFA process
  
- nature of relationship and level of satisfaction since start of MFA process
  - nature of changes
  - variation by respondent / ES individual / level of seniority
  
- impact of ES contact / involvement on them
  - practically (workload and resource)
  - in terms of motivation / morale
  
- ES related issues that need further consideration / revising

Explore views on quality of referrals

- how does ES quality vary with referrals from other sources?
- if so, how and why

Explore views on how MFA initiative has impacted on their workload

- on number of cases being investigated
- on number of cases being overloaded
- investigators' workload vs. admin person's workload

## **New forms**

***If not already covered***, review opinion of design and ease of usage of:

- MFA1
- MFA2

Changes required / improvements suggested

## **Overview and summary**

What's working well and why

- examples of good practice

What's not working well and why

- 
- improvements required
- Moderator to summarise / check findings

Final comments  
Thank respondents and close