York Consulting

Employment Service

EVALUATION OF RE-ENGINEERED NEW DEAL 25 PLUS

February 2002

York Consulting Limited

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADF	Adviser Discretion Fund
AM	Adviser Manager
BET	Basic Employability Training
CPK	Client Progress Kit
CPR	Client Progress Record
DMA	Decision Making and Appeals
DPQMT	District Programme Quality Management Team
ES	Employment Service
ESF	European Social Fund
FCP	Full Client Picture
IAP	Intensive Activity Period
JSA	Jobseekers Allowance
LMS	Labour Market System
ND25+	New Deal 25 plus
NDPA	New Deal Personal Adviser
NDYP	New Deal for Young People
PWD	Persons with disability
SA	Senior Adviser
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget

Executive Summary

Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the implementation and delivery of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme and to draw out innovation and good practice. The methodology consisted of detailed interviews in each of six case study areas. The case study areas were purposively sampled and are broadly representative across the UK.

The three stakeholder groups covered were Employment Service (ES) staff, providers and employers. In-depth interviews, and in some cases focus groups were undertaken. These were driven by separate, structured topic guides. During the study 223 stakeholders were interviewed: 129 ES staff covering all roles with responsibility for Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus; 35 providers that deliver provision directly or via subcontracts; 59 employers with varying degrees of involvement in the programme, ranging from provision of work experience to recruitment of clients to subsidised or unsubsidised jobs.

Operation of the programme

The key issues to arise out of implementation of the programme are covered below.

A range of methods to stimulate early entry from target groups has been employed and numbers are now almost exactly on profile. Stock has been brought forward in some areas.

Differing Gateway models are being used including locally developed prescriptive approaches and externally contracted management. There is agreement that the Gateway period works effectively for those clients that are work ready. Mixed views exist on the value of the Gateway period for the ‘harder to help’ client groups. There is evidence that Gateway provision needs further development and that in some areas contracted provision is not being fully utilised. In the case of the ‘harder to help’ groups the Gateway period is mainly used for IAP planning.

Weekly meetings between clients and NDPAs are taking place in all case study areas and have led to improved relationships. Case conferencing is widely regarded as a positive process. It has been implemented fully in most case study areas but remains patchy and informal in some.

A range of IAP models have been adopted to address the needs of each case study area. The extent to which provision is flexible and tailored depends on the individual provider and the skills of the NDPA. The levels of face-to-face meetings undertaken by NDPAs while clients are on the IAP is low. Many NDPAs are experienced and confident, although some lack confidence and skills to engage with providers and employers across aspects of the programme. The ADF is a helpful tool for NDPAs, although it has taken time for NDPAs to change their 'mindset' in respect of discretion to utilise it effectively.

Developments such as the creation of Senior Advisers posts and the DPQMT are generally seen as positive steps.

Stakeholder Views

ES staff view the re-engineering of New Deal 25 plus as a positive move because it is more flexible than the previous national programme. There has, however, been some frustration amongst the ex-pilot case study areas that perceive the programme as having less flexibility than the pilot provision. Initial training of staff is regarded as having been inadequate in the first six months. Providers also view re-engineering as positive, particularly the underpinning financial support, although low numbers of referrals to the IAP and occasionally poor NDPA understanding of the new provision have been a source of frustration. Employers are generally happy with the programme, but would like more ES staff contact at all stages.

Good Practice and Innovation

Key areas of good practice are:

- the development of specialist provision, for example, for those experiencing mental health problems;
- ES internal management of work experience provision;
- 'employer' routeways within the context of a sectoral routeway;
- regular attendance of provider staff at Jobcentres – working with NDPAs and clients;
- district organised events for NDPA training and provider networking;
- DPQMT relationship building with providers and communication back to NDPAs of relevant issues;
- local management information systems;
- use of Senior Adviser role to support development of NDPAs;
- activities of NDPAs such as matching older NDPAs with the 50 plus client group, specific projects to develop relationships with employers, use of ADF to

secure sustainable employment, regular face-to-face contact with clients on IAP;

- development of standards outlining working arrangements between providers and ES staff;
- providers focusing on the outcomes of sustainable employment;
- providers continually improving provision in dialogue with ES.

Key areas of innovation include:

- Full Client Picture interview - an externally contracted independent client review;
- Gateway Access Unit - providing management of all Gateway provision through one provider;
- DPQMT staff undertaking face-to-face client visits;
- Adviser tool kit to develop skill in matching provision to client needs;
- ADF invoicing system and ADF voucher;
- Internal ES roles such as Link Adviser and Recruitment Consultant;
- NDPA points system for caseload management.

Conclusions

Overall the evidence indicates that following some initial teething problems the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme is considered by all stakeholders to be a positive development. Most aspects of the national design are working effectively or are in the process of being implemented. However, the extent to which the programme can operationally deliver its aims, such as tailored provision and job outcomes, is dependent on further developments taking place:

- NDPAs require more understanding of provision and improved skills, confidence and resource (time) to develop dialogues with employers and providers;
- ES must continue to develop positive relationships and viable contracts with providers;
- Thirdly, regular monitoring is required to ensure that local operations continue to improve and develop.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report is based on case study research involving Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme implementers as part of the evaluation of the programme. The aim of the study is to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the changes made to the programme since April 2001 and to highlight areas of innovation and good practice.

Background

1.2 The New Deal 25 plus programme is one of a number of strands of the Government's welfare to work agenda. The programme aims to help unemployed people aged 25 and over into jobs, or to improve their prospects of gaining employment.

1.3 Prior to April 2001 a series of 28 pilot programmes had been running nationwide, alongside a significantly different national implementation of New Deal 25 plus. The pilots were designed to test the effects of variations on the national model. Results indicate that the programme is successful at moving unemployed adults more rapidly back into work[1].

1.4 The re-engineered programme builds on the most effective elements of both the pilot programmes and the New Deal for Young People. It is intended to embrace the following:

- greater flexibility and intensity (including basic skills and soft skills);
- a package of provision, developed with an Adviser, tailored to individual needs;
- close working with Advisers to help identify next steps and help apply for jobs;
- additional responsibilities, e.g. benefit sanctions for those who refuse to take part.

[1] "Towards Full Employment in a Modern Society", Employment Green Paper

1.5 The specific areas introduced as part of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus are identified in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1: Key areas introduced as part of the Re-engineering

Eligibility	Widened to accept programme participants at 18 months (out of previous 21 months) of unemployment
	Five early entry categories: - people with disabilities - ex-offenders - homeless people - refugees who have been granted the right to claim JSA - people recovering from drug addiction
	People aged 50 or over can choose whether or not to participate
	People aged 25-49 who do not participate in the IAP risk losing benefit
Gateway	Maximum of 4 calendar months
	Screening for basic skills needs using CPR, with those identified being referred for fuller assessment
	Provision for jobsearch and identified needs such as employability e.g. Gateway to Work
	NDPA Case conferencing
	On-going weekly interviews
Intensive Activity Period	Adviser plans individualised programme for the IAP from a menu of provision: - Basic Employability Training (BET) - self employment support - Education and Training Opportunities (ETO) - work experience placements - work-focused training - help with motivation and soft skills
	Lasts for 13 weeks but can be extended to 26 weeks Extended time on IAP for some provision (decision made at 10/11th week, with assumption that 50% will have the longer period)
IAP Delivery Models	Three broad approaches: - Modular approach - Routeways approach - Combination approach
Follow-through	Weekly interviews for those returning to JSA after IAP
	Short intensive period of jobsearch (6 weeks) and access to Gateway-type provision
	Small minority of people will have up to 3 months in follow-through
	After follow-through return to JSA regime
	18 months after entering Follow-through clients not securing employment aged 25-49 will be eligible to re-enter Gateway
Employer Subsidy	£75 per week (£50 for part time employment)
Adviser Discretion Fund	To cover essential costs of entering employment

Evaluation Objectives

1.6 The Employment Service has identified the following specific evaluation objectives:

- to make an assessment of the most effective implementation and delivery arrangements of re-engineered New Deal 25 plus, and to explain reasons for their effectiveness;

- to identify best practice that can be disseminated to field staff to encourage cross-programme learning and effective management of the programme;

- to contribute to the evidence base about what works for whom, why and under what circumstances.

Methodology

1.7 The methodology involved undertaking case studies in six units of delivery with the following approximate numbers of interviews in each case study area:

- ES Staff (20-30);
- Providers (5-7);
- Employers (10);

1.8 The aim was to undertake the majority of interviews on a face-to-face basis. Almost all the ES staff interviews were undertaken face-to-face, as were interviews with main providers. Some subcontractors were contacted by telephone. Approximately half the employer interviews were undertaken face-to-face, with the remaining interviews conducted by telephone.

1.9 Case studies were lead by individual consultants who undertook the majority of interviews. Interviews were driven by detailed topic guides designed for each stakeholder group. Three separate but related topic guides (Appendix A) were designed for ES staff to capture the differing perspectives from strategic, management, and operational levels.

1.10 Sampling of staff, providers and employers was achieved through discussions with the initial ES contacts given to the researchers at the start of the project, following clearance. The plan was to undertake ES staff interviews on a 'snowball' basis to identify key people to speak with throughout the study, but ensuring a balance between managers and frontline staff by interviewing a large selection of New Deal Personal Advisers (NDPA).

1.11 For providers, the aim was to speak to the main providers, supplementing any additional interviews with subcontracted providers. For employers as large a list as possible, of those involved in the programme since April 2001, was requested from the ES in order to randomly sample. Employers proved to be the hardest group to access with many refusing, not contactable or denying awareness of the programme.

1.12 Actual numbers achieved for each stakeholder group are presented in **Table 1.2**. The interviews were undertaken between 5 November 2001 and 12 February 2002.

Table 1.2: Achieved Interviews

	ES	Providers	Employers
Target (per Case study)	20-30	5-7	10
Case Study Area			
1	14 +70*	8	11
2	31	6	9
3	20	5	12
4	22	6	10
5	20	6	7
6	22	4	9
Total	**129 + 70**	**35**	**58**

* large group of 70 held during an Adviser meeting

1.13 In **Table 1.3** the numbers of each staff role interviewed across all six case study areas are presented. It shows that individuals from a broad range of Employment Service staff roles were interviewed as part of this work, with a major focus on NDPAs.

Table 1.3: ES Staff Interviewed Across All Case Study Areas

Job Description	ES Staff Interviews
District Manager	4
District Operations Manager	2
District Programme Manager	4
District Quality Manager	3
Jobcentre Manager	4
ND & Adult Training Manager	3
New Deal Co-ordinator	4
Regional Quality Manager	2
DPQMT Manager	1
District Quality Assessor	1
Quality Monitoring Officer	2
Business Manager	21
Quality Manager	3
Adviser Manager	3
Senior Advisers	7
NDPAs	(61+70)
Team Leader	2
LAM	1
District Marketing Officer	1
TOTAL	**(129+70)**

2 Overview Of Case Studies

2.1 This section represents an overview of the six case study areas. It confirms that the case study areas are broadly representative of the following characteristics:

- demography;
- involvement in the New Deal 25 plus pilot;
- number of providers;
- IAP approach;
- size of Unit of Delivery in terms of the New Deal 25 plus client group.

2.2 The demographic descriptor is a broad categorisation based on the understandings of the interviewers undertaking fieldwork in each geographic area. The six case study areas reflect the demographic structure across Great Britain (**Table 2.1**) with a combination of rural, rural-urban mix and urban conurbation areas. Each one is taken from a separate UK Employment Service operational region.

Table 2.1: Demographic Descriptor of Case Study Area

Case Study Area	Demographic Descriptor
1	Rural
2	Rural-Urban Mix
3	Urban Conurbation
4	Urban Conurbation
5	Rural
6	Rural-Urban Mix

2.3 In **Table 2.2** an indication is made of whether each case study area was involved in the pilot, the number of main providers in each case study area and the general IAP model being used.

2.4 Two out of the six case study areas operated ‘November’ pilots. This has proved to be a key factor influencing attitudes to the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus. The stakeholders within ex-pilot case study areas feel that the national model of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus offers less flexibility than the pilot did. These issues are explored in more detail at the relevant parts of the report.

Table 2.2: Summary of UoDs

Case Study Area	Pilot?	Providers	IAP Model
1	✓	7	Modular
2	X	11	Modular / Routeway
3	✓	3	Routeways (sectoral)
4	X	14	Routeways (sectoral)
5	X	12	Routeways
6	X	6	Modular / Routeway

2.5 The numbers of main training providers contracted within each area range from three to fourteen. Those with fewer main training providers often have a number of sub-contractors. The extent to which the main contractors subcontract provision varies, for example case study area three has no subcontractors where as case study area one with more main contractors has 10 subcontractors.

2.6 In addition, Table 2.2 shows the IAP model operating in each case study area. Each type of model is covered by the study, although, as the report will demonstrate, there is a high degree of variation within these models. The models are not mutually exclusive. They include:

- modular approach – managed by ES and offers the full range of elements of IAP described in Table 1.1. Provision is usually offered through a series of individually contracted modules;

- routeways approach – offers the same core elements of IAP through one or more different routeways, packaged and managed by a routeway provider, often focused on a particular sector or client group;

- ‘employer routeway’ – is a specific example of the routeway approach linked to one single employer.

2.7 The size of client caseloads is indicated in **Table 2.3**. The case studies represent a broad spectrum from small to large as measured by both the total entries to New Deal 25 plus over the previous three years and total entries to the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme in the first months of operation.

2.8 The numbers and ratio of early entries to total entries varies across the six case study areas. Qualitative evidence describing the different approaches to stimulating early entry is detailed in the report. However, the extent to which numbers are influenced by demographics or operational methods are not within the remit of this study.

Table 2.3: Numbers Entering New Deal 25 plus and Enhanced New Deal 25 plus

	ND 25 plus total entries*	Enhanced ND 25 plus – entries**	Early entry
Area 1	1310	486	150
Area 2	1368	388	64
Area 3	2709	388	100
Area 4	3155	480	103
Area 5	2692	357	32
Area 6	4415	825	78

* July 1998 – March 2001 **March 2001 – July 2001
Source: ES Data

3 Generic Cross-Cutting Themes

3.1 This section analyses the operation of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme across the six case study areas. The analysis is structured around the following series of cross cutting themes:

- barriers;
- eligibility and sanctions;
- Gateway;
- intensive activity period and follow-through;
- Adviser discretionary fund and employer subsidy;
- operational arrangements within the units of delivery.

3.2 Each of the themes draw on evidence from the interviews with Employment Service staff, training providers and employers.

Barriers to Employment

3.3 The client group entering Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus increasingly faces a complex set of barriers to their return to employment. According to those consulted as part of this study, most clients face multiple barriers. The most common areas mentioned that represent barriers to the client group include:

- basic skills needs;
- benefit reliance/financial difficulties;
- drug dependency;
- a history of offending;
- poor confidence and low aspirations;
- lack of motivation;
- transport difficulties;
- limited employment horizons.

3.4 The final item in this list, limited employment horizons, relates to two categories of client in different ways. Firstly, people who have worked in traditional industries, but who are resistant to considering alternative forms of employment. For example, it is common for strong stereotypical preferences to be shown by male clients who have been made redundant from industries such as manufacturing and mining. In most areas the sectors with employment opportunities tend to be seen by these clients as ‘female’ jobs in sectors such as retail and care. Secondly, people who have held senior and well paid jobs, often with large mortgages, will not consider ‘downsizing’ their employment horizons to the realities of the job market.

3.5 Other barriers were mentioned on a less consistent basis across all case study areas. However, in the areas where they are relevant, they are seen as important, for example, English language skills and homelessness in inner city areas.

3.6 Barriers such as those described above represent the challenge for the New Deal 25 plus programme. The changes introduced through the re-engineering and previous developments are designed to address the needs of individuals facing these barriers to employment.

Eligibility and Sanctions

Early entry

3.7 The Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus eligibility criteria includes those individuals claiming Job Seekers Allowance for 18 out of the previous 21 months and also made early entry available for five specific groups including:

- people with disabilities;
- ex-offenders;
- homeless people;
- refugees who have been granted the right to claim JSA;
- people recovering from drug addiction.

3.8 Clients aged over 50 are given the option of participating in the Intensive Activity Period.

3.9 These newly introduced eligibility criteria are being followed, although there is some feeling across all stakeholder groups that more clients would benefit from being placed onto the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme earlier than 18 months. In case study areas where the pilot programme had operated, there was frustration that groups previously eligible for early entry were now excluded. A number of Advisers across the case studies feel that the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme could be of benefit to the 50+ age group and that this would also be a good source of positive outcomes. In one case study area a senior Adviser believed that it was down to the skill of the Personal Adviser to sell the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme to a potential client aged over 50.

Generating starts

3.10 A number of strategies have been employed to boost the numbers of clients coming onto the programme. These have included:

- advertising to recruit disabled clients for early entry;
- briefings to front line staff;
- actively recruiting people with disability (PWD);
- checking with those participating in Restart interviews;
- introducing the stock clients to the programme.

3.11 One particular technique to encourage 50+ clients onto the programme was described by one Adviser as *"we try to avoid up front declaration of the voluntary nature of the programme – but they can still read the leaflet if they choose to, which makes it clear that it is voluntary"*.

Sanctions

3.12 The decision making and appeals (DMA) process is seen as a positive tool, although staff are keen to point out that it is not used often. Mandating clients can be effective as illustrated in the following example, where sanctions were threatened and the client eventually got work:

> *"One man was formerly rather lazy, but following the threat of sanctions, got work very quickly. At some point later he thanked staff for encouraging him into work"*

3.13 However, such a positive scenario is generally regarded as unusual, with the threat of sanctions being stronger than the ability of the process to motivate clients and obtain sustainable job entries. It is primarily seen as a welcome last resort which can be particularly useful to 'discourage people trying to play the system'.

3.14 The low numbers of clients subject to the DMA process means that Personal Advisers often have limited experience of how to build a case. Where the process has been undertaken, it is described by Personal Advisers as time consuming, with significant paperwork. One Senior Adviser commented that Personal Advisers are "sometimes not trusting their own professional judgement". Overall this is regarded as part of the development process of a newly introduced programme.

Gateway

3.15 A wide variety of practices are taking place in the operation of the Gateway period. These are identified and highlighted under the following sub-headings:

- structure;
- operation;
- performance.

3.16 Overall the Gateway is regarded as a positive development, which enables NDPAs to spend more time with their clients, to understand their needs and issues more fully.

Structure

3.17 In all case study areas, the development of the local Gateway structures has been influenced by experience with the New Deal for Young People programme. This influenced the planning of provision, combined with the experience of the New Deal 25 plus client group within each unit of delivery. In one particular area, the results of a skills audit influenced the planning of Gateway course development.

3.18 In some case study areas, prescriptive local Gateway models have been developed. These generally fit within the national programme design, but potentially have the effect of limiting the flexibility available to NDPAs. Some examples of the local elements of these Gateway models include:

- all clients attend a basic skills assessment, followed by a two week part-time job search programme at a programme centre. Following this, all clients attend a Full Client Picture (FCP) interview (guidance interview delivered by Careers Service) or an employability interview. These are all delivered in parallel to the weekly interviews with New Deal Personal Advisers;

- the district target is for all clients to leave the Gateway at eight weeks (as opposed to 16 weeks). It is a mandatory local requirement to send all 25-40 year olds to Gateway to Work training at the fifth week (for two weeks);

- *"the Gateway is basically four weeks long, although this is not necessarily explicit, but everyone knows it"*;

- *"you have to start planning the IAP as early as possible in the Gateway, so that you can secure the right provision";*

- Gateway provision is operated through a managing agent and is known as the Gateway Access Unit. The unit acts as a communication centre, taking queries and referrals. Delivery may then be provided by the managing agent or sub-contracted to other providers.

3.19 The above examples indicate that in some cases the local structures to the Gateway are planned and explicit, whereas in other cases they are less formal.

3.20 Some problems are identified by operational staff in connection with the local arrangements. For example, where clients are referred to external providers for advice and guidance, such as the FCP interview, some NDPAs feel that they have the necessary skills to undertake this work in-house. A further example is that where there is a blanket policy to send clients on Gateway to Work provision, not all clients benefit from elements within that provision, such as bowling and other sport or outdoor related activities. Where such provision involves joint delivery with NDYP clients this problem is further compounded.

Operation

Weekly meetings

3.21 The national design for Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus specifies that weekly meetings should be held with clients to foster a stronger relationship between the Adviser and client. In all case study areas, weekly meetings are now taking place as a matter of course. This appears to be one of the first re-engineered elements of the programme to be implemented consistently soon after April 2001.

3.22 Advisers report that this change has helped improve the quality of the relationship with the client. In some case study areas, Advisers claim that they had achieved this strength of relationship prior to April 2001, this includes both pilot and non-pilot case study areas. Interviews with Senior Advisers and Adviser Managers indicate that they feel some Advisers are better than others at achieving a strong relationship which can have an impact on the success of that client's outcome.

3.23 Some examples of variations and enhancements to the relationship developed through the weekly meetings of the Gateway include the following:

- the regularity of meetings may change throughout the Gateway period, for example at certain points two meetings may be held per week where this is seen as beneficial. This was only identified as happening in one case study area;

- in one case study area a bullet point summary of discussions between the Adviser and client is provided to the client at the end of each meeting. This is seen as helping to reinforce the importance of the meeting and the discussions taking place with the client. In addition, it acts as a reminder of agreed actions to the client;

- in a number of case study areas, Advisers provide back to work calculations at various points in the Gateway. This is highly valued by the client as it helps reassure them that any decisions they make are informed by a view of their financial situation.

Case conferencing

3.24 Case conferencing is another key element introduced as part of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus. Case conferencing takes place in all case study areas, although in some areas it is patchy or less formal. In some areas, Senior Advisers hold weekly meetings where all caseload cases are discussed with individual Advisers. In others they just focus on those cases that have reached one month or three months as indicated in the national model. However there are some areas where only the difficult cases are being discussed.

3.25 In most areas the case conferencing appears to be conducted on a one-to-one basis between a senior Adviser and Adviser. There are some areas where more than one NDPA, for example all the NDPAs in an office, undertake the case conferencing with a Senior Adviser. The benefit of this approach is that any given Adviser is more likely to hear about a wider range of cases and therefore develop their experience. In one area where most case conferences are being led by a Team Leader they are perceived as not having the skills and experience to advise NDPAs. In some of the smaller Jobcentres Business Managers may also be involved.

3.26 In a few case study areas, training providers are included in the case conferencing meeting. This appears less formalised and most dependent on the strength of relationship between Adviser staff and the training provider staff. In one of these areas it was explained that:

"Providers are brought in if necessary for the difficult cases".

3.27 There is almost unanimous agreement among Adviser staff that case conferencing is valuable. The following comments highlight the range of views expressed by Advisers and senior staff:

- *case conferencing works well and stops clients falling through the net"*;
- *"case conferencing helps to keep Adviser Managers and Business Managers in the loop"*;
- *"it is reassuring to know that I can have a discussion about some of the more difficult cases. This has definitely helped my professional development"*.

3.28 In most case study areas the caseloads of the Senior Advisers are subject to case conferencing with their Adviser Managers or Business Managers. Even though they are more experienced, the view was generally expressed that case conferencing is valuable through providing an opportunity to reflect and discuss preliminary decisions about the course of action to be taken.

Client Progress Record

3.29 During the course of the fieldwork, the Client Progress Record (CPR) was introduced. This built on the previous Client Progress Kit (CPK). Consequently interviews drew on the experiences of both the CPK and the CPR, depending on the timing of the interview compared to the CPR introduction.

3.30 Prior to the updating, the CPK was used to a very limited extent. There were various derogatory comments such as *"it would not be missed"* and indications that it was being used in a perfunctory manner *"we used it, put it in a drawer and never returned to it"*. There is a unanimous view that both the CPK and CPR have been helpful in the development of less experienced staff. In one area the view was expressed that the questionnaire element in the CPR was the most useful part of the document.

3.31 Overall it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the use of both the CPK and the CPR has been patchy and effectiveness limited. Those interviews undertaken since the introduction of the CPR do, however, indicate much more positive attitudes.

3.32 The extent to which the CPR is achieving its screening objective for basic skills is limited, particularly in light of the earlier evidence relating to local operations of the Gateway. For example, where all clients are submitted for basic skills independent assessments, the CPR is clearly playing no part in identifying those who require the assessment.

Basic skills

3.33 Basic skills has emerged as a key issue to the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus generally and to the Gateway in particular.

3.34 Many case study areas experience problems in achieving attendance at basic skills independent assessments. In one area, it is estimated that approximately 50 per cent of clients referred do not attend the basic skills assessment. This has further consequences in that without evidence of basic skills needs from the independent assessment, clients are not eligible for some forms of basic skills provision.

3.35 The failure of clients to attend can be attributed to their lack of motivation, but also to the way in which it was introduced to them by their Adviser. It is regarded by Advisers as requiring a high degree of skill, confidence and use of language to motivate a client to attend a basic skills independent assessment. Some units of delivery get around this problem by making it a mandatory element of local Gateway and compelling all clients to attend. In one area, where all clients are not sent on the basic skills independent assessment as a matter of course, an Adviser explained that individuals needing the basic skills assessment are *"sold the assessment as a New Deal 25 plus mandatory requirement to encourage their attendance"*. In another area basic skills independent assessment sessions are held in all local towns so that people do not have to travel far, this has had an impact in terms of increased numbers of people attending.

3.36 Some processing problems have been experienced in one case study area where clients were receiving two basic skills independent assessments. This happened as a result of the Adviser sending the client on an assessment, followed by the provider doing the same due to a lack of information being passed on.

3.37 Following the independent assessment, there are some concerns about the level and tailoring of basic skills provision to the needs of clients. For example, in one case study it was felt that basic skills provision was not being covered in enough depth for some clients or being tailored to the needs of others. This was believed to be a particular problem where clients had competent social and other skills, but patches of weakness in terms of basic skills. In another case study area, it was believed that part-time basic skills provision would be more beneficial to some clients to provide a slower pace and less intensive course; also making space for other types of employability provision in parallel. A provider in this area explained their understanding that: " the requirement to contract for 30 hour blocks, which is an unfeasibly long study week for basic skills students, undoubtedly has an impact on the effectiveness of provision".

3.38 Some providers raised concerns about the effectiveness of basic skills provision. In particular, this relates to individuals who may have been on the programme a number of times and attended a range of basic skills provision. In such cases it is believed that clients may 'plateau' in their learning, thus limiting the effectiveness of further basic skills provision.

3.39 There is evidence in one case study area that while courses are led by tutors with experience from other forms of basic skills provision they have not been specifically trained for ES purposes and have limited understanding of the client group.

Gateway provision

3.40 A number of views were expressed by Adviser staff relating to Gateway provision. These include:

- mixing Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus clients with NDYP clients. One Adviser expressed this as: "I feel there are dangers associated with mixing the client groups in terms of the extent to which the clients engage with the provision and the overall effectiveness of the provision". Providers explained that this was often necessary due to low numbers and the need to achieve a degree of critical mass on programmes such as Gateway to Work. Some providers also conceded that this was driven by business motives;

- a number of ES staff, including from DPQMT, expressed the view that provision has not been specifically developed for the New Deal 25 plus client group, rather contracts have been set up with providers already delivering on the NDYP programme;

- in two case study areas the length of some Gateway provision had to be reduced from four or six weeks down to two weeks. This was explained by providers as *"an Employment Service requirement linked to benefit payments"*. According to Advisers, there are concerns that the shorter length of courses in the Gateway may be limiting the likelihood of some individuals gaining employment. In one area it was explained that:

  - *"the original intention was that the gateway would be for job preparation and two, four, six or eight week sectoral training, and the IAP provision would be almost exclusively for work placements related to the sectoral training. The sectoral routeway would therefore 'seamlessly' span both Gateway and IAP. In practice the Gateway has not been used as the core training period, it is being used for assessment and job preparation. Gateway provision is accessed, mostly for relatively job ready clients. This is two weeks job focused training, which normally incorporates elements of job preparation. If the client is job ready, the rest of the gateway period is used for job search activities. If the client has more intensive training or employability needs, they will be put on a sectoral IAP, which tends to be a mix of training and work placement.".*

- in one case study area a Gateway to Work Plus programme has been designed for clients who are not job ready. This is regarded as more intensive than the standard Gateway to Work and covers group and one-to-one sessions, compelling clients to get up five mornings a week and introducing ex-clients who give presentations on their experiences;

- in one case study area Gateway provision is enhanced, utilising external funding. This relates to the provision of mentoring delivered by the local Careers Service using European Social Fund monies.

Moving clients onto the IAP early

3.41 The practice of moving clients onto the IAP early is evidenced by the local Gateway designs described previously. However, it is clear that even in those case study areas where local designs do not limit the length of the Gateway, there are different approaches taken to different groups of clients. For those who are relatively job ready, the Gateway provision is seen as an effective 'refresher' for clients. The aim for these clients is to get them into a job within the Gateway period. On the whole, due to low levels of unemployment, all stakeholders believe relatively job ready clients should get a job within the Gateway.

Different uses of the Gateway period

3.42 For clients who have further distance to travel towards job readiness, the Gateway period is seen as an important time for assessment of needs and issues, but not necessarily as an effective way of moving these clients into jobs. Advisers are unsure of how to sell the Gateway to these clients; the courses are seen to be too short to be effective to address the number of issues which clients may be experiencing. In many cases this group of clients are moved into IAP very quickly, thus not really utilising the full Gateway period or provision.

3.43 The full Gateway period of 16 weeks is widely regarded as a maximum or in the words of an Adviser, as a *"brick wall"*. However, early statistics indicated a significant number of Gateway overstayers. Some of this is due to the way information is recorded by local offices. Gateway overstayers are strongly discouraged.

3.44 Advisers are supported by a number of locally developed tools:

- a simple Gateway provision tool which links a long list of barriers to work to different types of provision and is designed to help Advisers select the correct mix of provision;
- a fast track assessment tool which helps the Adviser understand the abilities of the client.

Performance

3.45 Elements of the Gateway such as weekly meetings and case conferencing are regarded to have developed over the implementation period of Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus to a point of general effectiveness. The Gateway is regarded as having a number of benefits. Firstly, it has the benefit of weeding out job ready clients and those not prepared to engage with the programme, for example, those in the informal economy who become legitimately employed. Secondly, it optimises the relationship between Adviser and client and lastly, to a lesser extent, it has the benefit of enabling staff and clients to select the appropriate available provision.

3.46 Advisers are still developing the skills and confidence to optimise their relationships with clients and, in particular, to utilise the provision in the best possible way.

3.47 For those clients that need to progress to the IAP, the Gateway period is seen by some Advisers as not being effective preparation for the IAP. Suggested reasons for this lack of effectiveness are that some provision is not in-depth enough and that job search activity may not be appropriate for some clients, as summarised by one Adviser: "*In reality we have people coming round for the second and third time, because they have done the pilot. These people are progressing a bit each time, but are not ready to enter the labour market*".

3.48 This view is balanced by the perspectives of other Advisers who are more positive. In two case study areas the link between the Gateway and IAP is seen as a smooth transition. These areas operate sectoral routeways and in one area an employer routeway. In these cases, the Gateway provision is seen as effective preparation for the further elements of delivery to be provided in the IAP.

Intensive Activity Period and Follow-through

3.49 The IAP is a key element of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus which enables further support to be provided to those clients who have not found work through the Gateway. This objective/stage of the programme is analysed under three headings:

- IAP model;
- operation;
- effectiveness.

IAP Model

3.50 The IAP model in most case study areas is made up of a range of the elements described in the national model, namely modular, routeway, combination approach and sectoral routeway. The following briefly describe an overview of the models operating in each of the case study areas:

- case study 1: this is a modular model with one lead provider delivering a large proportion of provision directly or through sub-contracting;

- case study 2: this is a modular routeway combination;

- case study 3: two providers operate sectoral routeways and a third provider operates a modular approach;

- case study 4: a routeways approach across a large number of sectors including one employer routeway;

- case study 5: a routeways approach;

- case study 6: a modular routeway combination.

3.51 In the case of routeway provision, each routeway broadly consists of sector training, employability 'modules' (depending on provider) and work placement or tasters for those who are 'ready'. Within the sectoral routeway, there is also occupational focused training. For example in the health and care sectoral routeway, someone can access a beauty and therapy course or a care course etc. Although the provision was initially hoped to be identical to Gateway job/sectoral short courses, this is not quite the case.

3.52 Sectors where routeway approaches are operating include:

- Security;
- Hospitality;
- Retail/customer service;
- Health/public service and Care;
- Business Admin & IT;
- Construction;
- Warehouse;
- Call centre;
- Management/executive.

3.53 The above range of approaches highlights most of the conceivable combinations that could be undertaken to deliver Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus. Discussions with Employment Service and provider staff indicated a high level of confusion between the meanings of the two words routeway and modular. Even when these basic definitions were resolved, there were a range of conflicting views across individual case study areas as to which approach was supposed to be operating. This understanding is not critical to operational staff, provided they understand the operational arrangements within their area, however, improved understanding might contribute to a greater appreciation of the reasons for the model selected for a given area.

Planning and contracting

3.54 Issues of planning and contracting were raised by senior staff within some case study areas. The first point was raised across a number of case studies and relates to the limited number of providers available to deliver the required provision. This has led to a reliance on a small number of providers and a feeling that a lack of 'new blood' may be limiting quality. In addition, there is a frustration in particular for the more rural case study areas that types of provision cannot be easily made available on an even geographical basis.

3.55 The second issue raised in connection with contracting relates to formula funding. This was only raised by one case study area operating the purely modular approach. The feeling is that modular funding requires the Employment Service to purchase provision in weekly units. This is explained as being different to the daily unit approach adopted during the pilot. The frustration is that formula funding limits the flexibility to run modular courses in parallel and requires longer periods of time to purchase short, but expensive provision.

Operation

Client assessment

3.56 The point where clients move to their first IAP provider is critical in the overall process. Providers generally undertake their own assessment, which is not a contractually agreed element of provision and start an induction process. A number or reasons are cited for providers undertaking their own assessment. These include:

- information such as action plans are often not passed across to the training provider in time or at all;
- there are some doubts among providers about the ability of Advisers to make the correct assessment of needs of the client;
- providers feel this is important to enable them to tailor provision to the specific needs of individual clients.

Action plans

3.57 Mixed views are expressed regarding the importance of action planning conducted during the Gateway period in preparation for the IAP. Advisers in a number of case study areas feel they are of rather limited value. However, other Advisers suggest they are valuable for transferring information between Advisers and with the training provider. In addition, some Advisers suggest that the action plans help with pre-interview preparation in the dialogue with clients. Provider views are that often action plans are not passed across in time to be effective. However, where they are, they feel they are useful documents which support the communication process between Advisers and providers.

Selecting Provision

3.58 The national model for Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus indicates that it is the role of the Personal Adviser through dialogue with the client and the training provider to decide on the appropriate provision during the IAP. In all case study areas, Employment Service staff consistently explain that the decision was taken by the Personal Adviser. However, the extent of influence of the training provider differs across case studies and often plays a very significant role. A large number of Advisers feel they are ill-informed about the range and nature of IAP provision. In many cases this leads Advisers to be dependent on training providers to help inform the decision making process.

3.59 The extent of the relationship between Advisers and training providers varies across the different types of IAP model. For some Advisers in the modular IAP models, the degree of influence on choice of IAP provision is limited by their understanding of the range of provision available. Some steps have been taken to address this, with the production in one case study area of a full list of provision available linked to the barriers which that provision can address. In this particular case study area, training providers have a strong presence within the Jobcentres and are able to give direct and immediate advice to Advisers while they are in discussion with the client. In fact, in one case study area, the training provider conducts interviews with the clients prior to referral to assess their suitability for routeway provision. However, this suggests an element of selectivity on the part of the provider. ES staff are aware of this practice.

Labour Market System (LMS)

3.60 In some case study areas there is also criticism that LMS is not up to date with details of all available types of provision. This leads to a lack of complete information and also the need for paper records to be kept in parallel to computer data. In another case study area operating the modular IAP, a provider directory has been set up with key contacts and information for all Employment Service staff.

Modular provision

3.61 A further limitation on the selection of flexible provision by Advisers relates to timescales and availability of certain courses. Piecing together more than one module without the administrative difficulties of managing a gap of more than one week between modules is a major challenge. While senior staff indicate that this should not be a problem, Advisers indicate that they find this very difficult and that it often has an impact on their selection of provision. In this case study area operating modular delivery, senior staff feel that the problem can be overcome by Advisers working closely with providers to ensure that modules fit smoothly together.

Routeways provision

3.62 In the routeways approach, the general view is that there is less responsibility on the Adviser to know the details of emphasis within that routeway but only to identify the correct routeway for the client. Generally providers feel that Advisers are selecting the correct routeways for individual clients. The routeways approach gives the provider more flexibility to work at the right pace and to tailor the provision to the needs of the client.

Sectoral routeways

3.63 Stakeholders indicate a different set of issues with reference to sectoral routeways. Firstly, the sectoral routeways must be carefully linked to labour market needs within the local area. Where a large range of sectors are covered, including some more niche sectors, a labour market can change within a period of six months and any mismatch may influence job opportunities. Movement between sectoral routeways can often be more problematic than is first envisaged, especially where an individual needs to transfer to another provider. In some cases this has been a major source of tension and additional work. For some of the sectoral routeways, overlaps and duplication has been identified with employer induction courses provided on the work placements. Providers felt this leads to some frustration for the client, because they are repeating certain elements of provider training.

IAP Provision

3.64 A number of further issues have been identified in relation to the different types of provision available on the IAP. These include:

- **Client volumes**. In the early stages of the programme, in one particular case study area, one provider was not able to cope with a large volume of referrals. At one stage this led to clients queuing up to be registered with the provider. However, this has now been resolved through dialogue between the Employment Service and the training provider to ensure that the flow of clients is limited to an agreed rate. In most case study areas there are major capacity issues which are the converse of this. Many providers claim that the low level of referrals has limited their ability to tailor and be flexible about the provision delivered. In one or two cases, providers have indicated that this has had business viability impacts. However, for most providers the effects of the underpinning payments and their wider portfolio of provision to the Employment Service and other organisations has minimised any serious viability impact;

- **Gaps in provision**. In some case study areas, gaps in provision are identified. However, these are generally isolated and acknowledged within the case study areas. This is explained by two main reasons. Firstly, although the provision is often generally available in major towns and urban areas, it is not available in isolated, rural locations. Solutions such as dedicated transport organised by the provider can resolve this problem in some, but not all, cases. Secondly, in certain specialist areas of provision, there is a shortage of tutors and therefore general provision available. These areas include English as a second language (ESOL) and work with asylum seekers. In one case study area a lack of local provision has been dealt with by utilising cross boundary provision from other providers further a field;

- **Expensive courses** can cause problems related to the contractual funding process. For example, in one case study area the arrangements with the training provider in respect of an expensive driving course is that a cancellation fee is generated against early leavers. Consequently, Advisers tend to be reluctant to send clients unless they are 100 per cent confident that the client will complete. The overall effect is likely to be that some clients may not be gaining the full range of opportunity of provision. In another example, a couple of case study areas have identified issues connected with the formula funding approach. Expensive but relatively short courses mean that to enable the provider to recoup the cost of the course, the client must stay with them for a longer period of time than the actual period of training. This additional time is filled with job search and other employability provision, although there are some concerns that in some cases this represents padding out rather than necessary and effective provision provided to the client;

- **Provider flexibility**. There are varying degrees of flexibility evident from some FE based suppliers. In one case study area a college noted that some of their working cultures and practices, for example working hours, holidays, and curriculum base, did not naturally lead them to offer flexible, individualised working. Conversely, an FE provider in another case study area operates a flexible IT training centre which offers provision 12 hours a day;

- **Views on provision**. There are different opinions regarding certain types of provision, illustrated by the following quote from an ES interviewee referring to a provider: "*in principal only those with basic skills issues are supposed to go to BET, but they [the provider] want to put all those with employability training issues (attitude, aspiration problems) in BET as well, on the basis that there is no point putting them down the sectoral route until they are ready*".

- **Specialist one-off provision** is not being accessed in many case study areas. This is due to the complexities, bureaucracy and long timescales associated with gaining clearance for such provision. In one case study area, the decision has more or less been taken at a senior level and is not an option that can be considered. In other case study areas there are indications that Advisers are not aware of the possibility of this type of provision. Examples of one-off training courses that staff have provided or wanted to provide include:

  - CORGI for gas fitting;
  - NEBOSH for health and safety.

- **Specialist provision**. There are threats to the viability of some types of specialist provision, for example, services provided to those clients with mental health needs. In this particular case study area, the view is that ordinarily the provision would not be available at the prices currently being paid. The only reason that it is available is that it was developed during the pilot programme and a strong relationship has existed between the Employment Service and the provider. The provider indicated that they are now receiving a quarter of the price they were formerly getting. The overall impact of this has been to reduce some of the added value and some of the flexibilities available to the provider to achieve positive outcomes for the client;

- **Work experience and work placement** have proved to be an effective element of provision, where it is well organised and good employer contacts exist. In one case study area, the Employment Service district themselves manage the work experience provision. This has some added benefits of internal synergy and efficiencies within the Employment Service. It is described in the words of one Adviser as "*it is almost like a work trial that will get extended – it allows the client to prove their worth and a lot of clients have done that. The Adviser just rings the team and lets them know that they have a client who is looking for work experience, outline the possible companies that the client has identified and the team will do the rest".* The key to successful work placement provision is believed to be a good portfolio of employer contacts and the skill to sell, but not oversell, the idea to an employer. In some cases where training providers operate elements of work placement provision, there are frustrations that their level of employer contact could be greater. Further issues relating to work experience include:

  - timesheets: individuals are encouraged to complete, although often the employer does this;

  - health and safety checks: often have the side effect of identifying specific needs which can be fed back to the Personal Adviser such as the need for steel toe-capped boots in certain working environments.

- **Access to external funding**, such as ESF and SRB, and external provision, such as information, advice and guidance, is used by some providers to enhance and add flexibility to their provision. These are generally larger providers, with extensive portfolios of activity. One successful example is where a young woman retained her job through a serious phase of depression through the provision of counselling support;

- '**Lost' client**. There are a small number of cases where clients are reported as getting 'lost' in the system. This appears to happen in the transition from Gateway to IAP and also between IAP and Follow-through. This is generally a function of movement between providers, but is also believed to be an example of early teething problems which are being reduced as a result of case conferencing and client visits;

- **Self employment** is regarded as a good option for those clients who have a clear focus. There are some issues regarding self employment relating to accreditation and the fact that the NVQ 3 in owner manager training has been suspended;

- **Combining Provision**. Some provision is being combined with other programmes such as New Deal for Young People.

Adviser Client Contact

3.65 The extent of contact between the Adviser and the client while on the IAP is limited. The national design of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus indicates that contact should be via one or two face-to-face interviews, combined with telephone contact. Only a few Advisers in two case study areas are undertaking any face-to-face contact. However, some degree of telephone contact is much more common. This is explained primarily by limited availability of Adviser time, but also a lack of desire on the part of Advisers to visit providers and employers. Where time was an issue, Advisers explained that it was difficult to prioritise client visits above other aspects of caseload work and other administrative responsibilities. Where the reason is a reluctance to visit, senior staff explained that some Advisers feel uncomfortable engaging in dialogue with employers and feel unsure how they will deal with issues raised by clients at training provider locations.

3.66 ES managers recognise client visits as a development area and are committed to enabling this to happen, so that NDPAs can ensure control over the ND25+ programme. In one case study area a visit form has been designed by the DPQMT for Adviser visits, and such visits are going to be the subject of a forthcoming Adviser training session.

3.67 In one case study area, the DPQMT undertake this client contact during the IAP instead of the Adviser. This was adopted as a result of successful work during the pilot. A number of benefits are identified from this approach. Firstly, the quality team are utilising their time at provider premises, while undertaking their quality role. An added benefit is that the more regular attendance at individual providers enhances the relationship and understanding with that provider.

3.68 Secondly, particularly for larger providers or employers, it is seen as more efficient for one person to visit four clients than for four separate Advisers to arrange four separate visits to one location. The only potential downside of this approach is the inconsistency of relationship that the client has with the Adviser. This is recognised in this case study area and they take a number of precautions to try and avoid this, such as making the client aware of the process and introducing the quality manager to the client as early as possible. Internally the relationship between the quality managers and the Advisers is built on a good understanding and regular contact. Thus quality managers provide immediate reports to Advisers on their visits to their clients.

3.69 In some cases, the view of Advisers is that providers undertake this monitoring role and let them know of any problems. This occurs where a client is undertaking work experience or work placement with an employer organised through the training provider. There are clear dangers with this approach that the relationship between the client and Adviser is weakened and if any problems exist between the client and the provider, the client may feel unable to express their feelings or views.

DPQMT Role

3.70 The newly introduced role of the DPQMT is widely regarded as being helpful in identifying and resolving problems. Senior Employment Service staff feel that the dialogue they have achieved and issues they have been able to identify have been beneficial to the effective contract management and overall delivery of the programme.

3.71 Less positive issues regarding the DPQMT role were raised by a small number of individuals in two case study areas. These include:

- there is a feeling that the role and the relationship with training providers is still developing in two case study areas. This clearly contrasts with the other case study areas where the role is seen as having developed quite quickly;

- there are some concerns expressed by providers that some DPQMT staff may not have the full skills to undertake their role. They indicated that some DPQMT staff are not well informed about quality mechanisms relating to training providers and the details about the provision they undertake;

- in one case study area, the relationship between the DPQMT and the training providers does not seem to have developed positively. Providers complained of being "monitored and inspected to death". This may be linked to the above point and relate to the skills of the DPQMT in managing their role and relationship with providers sensitively.

3.72 In one case study area a range of measures have been undertaken to ensure the optimal impact of the DPQMT role. These include:

- a DPQMT resource pack was produced for all offices to ensure they understood the role;

- DPQMT visits to providers and clients are driven by monitoring sheets which document the visit and enable any issues to be communicated with relevant staff internally;

- any problems identified in connection with particular clients during a visit are documented in an 'issues log' pro forma. This is used to inform the appropriate Personal Adviser, supported by verbal feedback from the DPQMT.

3.73 In the case study area where the DPQMT staff visit clients in place of Adviser visits, the Advisers were generally positive about this process. One particular Adviser said *"we picked up a wide range of issues, such as training not being delivered correctly and people not attending provision"*. There were, however, one or two Advisers who felt that although time constraints might limit their ability to undertake the face-to-face meetings, they would prefer to carry these out themselves to ensure continuity of contact with clients. However the majority of Advisers felt that the communication mechanisms worked well and that they were able to maintain continuity through telephone contact.

Length of the IAP

3.74 The length of the IAP is generally being adhered to, with extensions happening on a selective basis. In the case study area where the purely modular route is operational, it was indicated that the standard 13 week period is quite often exceeded but only by one or two weeks. The main reason for this is the difficulty mentioned earlier relating to linking modules together efficiently. Initially, these gaps were of one or two weeks, but they created major administrative problems relating to benefit payments. Subsequently Advisers went out of their way to avoid such gaps. The IAP has been extended for some clients, although the effects of this are not evident yet. This tends to happen to those who have changed their mind about which sector they want training in, and for those who have not been ready for a work placement until late on in the IAP.

3.75 There is a strong view amongst some Employment Service staff and training providers that for the harder to help client groups, even the full 26 week IAP is not long enough. The belief is that for some deep seated problems, a longer period of support is necessary to reach a point of employability.

Employer contact

3.76 Employer contact, to facilitate client placements and job outcomes, is indicated by senior Employment Service staff as a weakness in their Personal Adviser's skills. The main reason attributed to this weakness is lack of confidence amongst Advisers. One Senior Adviser suggested that *"a major culture change will be required if Advisers are to develop greater marketing skills with employers"*. A number of offices have addressed this problem through the use of specialist staff, for example:

- a recruitment consultant was used in some offices in one case study area to develop opportunities and sell clients to local businesses. The role evolved out of a partnership with the former Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) where the role supported employer contact on behalf of both organisations. Since April 2001, after the TEC ceased to exist the ES continued with the role in some Jobcentres. Managers were given the choice of additional NDPA resource or continuation with the recruitment consultant role. Some smaller offices felt they could not justify the recruitment consultant role but larger offices have retained it;

- the Local Account Manager (LAM) role has been focused on increasing opportunities for job placements in another case study area.

Effectiveness

3.77 There are two views of the effectiveness of the IAP. One that the IAP is valuable and effective and the other that it is not long enough. The former, more positive view is characterised by the following quote from one Adviser:

“I think that the IAP is one of the best parts of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus, because it gets the client to do something. If the provision is well designed, you are looking at moving your client along their job goals, rather than just saying go on the IAP and put the client somewhere for a few weeks….. the IAP actually engages the client to do something”.

3.78 This is balanced by the less positive view that the IAP is not long enough and that although it moves the client towards employability, in some cases it is not able to achieve this. This view is characterised by the following quote:

“There is an issue about the suitability of the programme for clients with multiple needs and there is almost an expectation about when they finish the programme they will be back through the system again”.

3.79 This view is expressed by ES staff even though there are options to extend IAP provision and to include IAP type provision as part of Follow-through. At this early stage of the programme only small numbers of clients had progressed to Follow-through, therefore, this issue will require further exploration in light of experience.

3.80 The low numbers coming on to the programme have not helped training providers to deliver effective provision, although the underpinning money has helped to alleviate any business viability issues. However, some providers are wondering whether they will choose to bid for future contracts. Client groups which are identified as being particularly hard to help with the provision available in the IAP include those with deep seated basic skills needs and those who have been unemployed for more than five years.

3.81 Views of Employment Service staff indicate that the quality of training provision is generally adequate. However, there is a feeling that the extent to which an individual receives tailored support can depend upon which provider they are with. This is because some providers are much more attentive and committed to the needs of the individuals. An example of a provider going the extra mile to support a successful outcome is where part of the bonus payment to the provider, from the Employment Service, is shared with the client on achievement of a positive outcome. Some providers, through their experience and wider portfolio of provision, are able to provide additional, externally funded support to clients, for example, in one case study area mentoring is funded through an ESF programme. There is some concern by ES staff that a small number of providers misunderstood the balance between training and job entry. In one particular case study area, a concern was expressed that a particular training provider's choices were motivated by their own viability and the need to undertake expensive courses.

3.82 The numbers of individuals progressing to Follow-through is very small. During the period of fieldwork, some Personal Advisers had not experienced any clients going into Follow-through. Therefore Advisers were not able to describe very little other than their general understanding of the national programme approach to Follow-through.

Adviser Discretion Fund and Employer Subsidy

Adviser Discretion Fund

3.83 There is a unanimous, positive view of the Adviser Discretion Fund as a flexible tool to assist the generation of positive outcomes. While there have been some bedding in issues, it is widely regarded as a successful element of the re-engineering by all Employment Service staff and training providers. Employers were not aware of it, except indirectly by recognising the benefits of some of the items purchased using the ADF.

3.84 In all case study areas which have not operated a pilot, the Advisers have taken time to learn how to use ADF effectively. The barriers to effective use of ADF have been more cultural than administrative. The following quote from a senior manager illustrates a view held across most case study areas:

"It took Advisers a few months to feel confident with the flexibility of ADF as some expected to be reprimanded if they used it for something 'different' and were used to saving money………in fact many acted as if the money was coming from their own bank accounts!"

3.85 ADF has been useful in empowering Advisers and re-enforcing the importance of a programme tailored to the individuals need. Advisers feel that ADF has helped clients to see that the Employment Service are trying to help them and it can help to reinforce the relationship between client and Adviser.

3.86 The use of ADF appears to fall into two broad categories. The first relates to preparation and support for interviews to help achieve a job. For example, haircuts and appropriate clothing. The second relates to getting people into work and sustaining the job, for example paying for food if clients have to work a week in hand. Initially the focus tended to be on the first of these two methods, but as Advisers have become more confident and understood the potential of ADF, the second method is becoming equally important.

3.87 Advisers reported the following range of items being purchased with the ADF:

- computer equipment;
- driving lessons/driving test;
- contribution to car insurance;
- car MOT;
- one-off courses;
- rent during work experience;
- food vouchers;
- shoes and clothes;
- bicycles;
- mobile phones;
- chainsaw;
- week in hand payments;
- bus passes;
- childcare;
- ladders;
- HGV training course;
- insurance for minicab;
- alarm clock.

3.88 These examples raise a number of issues:

- food vouchers were mentioned in two out of six case study areas. In one area an arrangement had been made with the Spar food chain. The benefits were seen as limiting clients ability to spend the vouchers on alcohol or lottery tickets. In another area district staff and Senior Advisers worked to develop local agreements with employers to accept ADF vouchers. However, there was some confusion as to whose responsibility it was to ensure that local agreements could be extended to other branches of the same store in other parts of the district. In neither of these areas did anyone raise any of the negative issues associated with other government voucher schemes;

- the case study area which purchased a chainsaw for one client encountered some difficulties when the chainsaw was returned to them after the client had dropped out of the employer placement. The difficulty related to storage and disposal;

- in a few areas, the ADF is being used to purchase forms of training and certification. This is outside of the rules governing the use of ADF. In one area they recognised this and terminated the use of ADF for such purposes;

- in one case study area, ADF is regarded as being particularly effective if the client also contributes to the item being purchased. This would be a small nominal fee which is believed to help focus the client's investment in the item and the process;

- in some case study areas, training providers are more involved in identifying client needs. In one area the DPQMT has worked with providers to raise awareness of the fund. An example of the benefits of this are in a case where the provider identified a disabled client's needs for modified equipment.

3.89 Some issues were raised by Advisers in connection with the administration of the ADF. The first relates to the purchasing of items, this is an issue where clients do not have the means to undertake the purchase and claim back expenditure. In one area they talked about Advisers going shopping with the client so that they could make the payment on behalf of the client. In one case study area arrangements had been made with some retailers to invoice the Employment Service for purchases made. In other areas concerns were expressed about payment delays from South Wales which involved administrative time in follow up and were particularly difficult for clients who paid themselves.

ADF effectiveness

3.90 In terms of effectiveness, the key benefit of using ADF identified by Employment Service staff is that it helps to remove some of the simple barriers to gaining or sustaining work.

Employer subsidy

3.91 The employer subsidy is regarded as an important element of the programme.

3.92 Even though it is not used by all employers and is not identified as a critical or motivating factor by some of those that use it, it is responsible for a number of successful outcomes and can facilitate a continued, positive relationship with the Employment Service.

3.93 Personal Advisers generally see the employer subsidy as an important part of the package offered to employers in order to make the client attractive to them. They make it clear that they do not offer it in all cases to employers.

3.94 There is a feeling in some case study areas that more could be done to use the employer subsidy as an element of the marketing to employers. There is a widely agreed weakness in Advisers' skills and confidence relating to marketing and dialogue with employers. In some case study areas, staff such as the Local Account Manager and marketing officers are encouraged to make reference to the Employer Subsidy when talking to employers.

3.95 Interviews with ES staff revealed that clients appear to be receiving the subsidy voucher in line with the national design of the programme. They tend to regard the subsidy voucher in two distinctly opposite ways. The following two examples illustrate these extremes. Firstly, some clients see the employer voucher as a marketing opportunity to promote themselves to employers to achieve an interview or during an interview to achieve a job. In another example, the subsidy voucher is seen as a negative which reinforces the artificial perception of a job. This is characterised in the following quote: *"So that means I have to bribe employers to take me on?"*

3.96 When talking to employers the extent to which the employer subsidy was an influencing factor on their decision to take somebody on varied and was somewhat dependent on the nature of their business. Some employers were more concerned by the need to get the right person for the job, whereas others were motivated in differing degrees by social responsibility and an opportunity for low cost labour. The following quotes provide a spectrum of the views expressed by employers in one particular case study area:

"Money rings bells in management heads, only we would have to be able to give something in return, otherwise we would be wasting each others' time"

"The company, like any other, is looking to reduce costs"

"[the employer subsidy] ……….wasn't an essential factor, but a big, big attraction. We wouldn't have taken on the person without that incentive"

"Give me an incentive…….. wouldn't take anybody on without a financial incentive"

"It's not about money….. just want someone with the right personality and attitude towards the job"

3.97 There is some limited anecdotal evidence to suggest that the employer incentive is more important to smaller employers. In one example given by an Adviser a large local supermarket took on a number of New Deal 25 plus clients and refused the subsidy on the grounds that it represented an administrative cost.

3.98 In terms of the administration of the employer subsidy, one case highlights the importance of monitoring. During a routine DPQMT monitoring visit to a client it was identified that the client was no longer with the employer, though the employer had continued to claim the employer subsidy. Concerns relating to this issue were raised in two case study areas but were considered to be the exception rather than the norm.

3.99 In summary, the employer subsidy appears to work effectively and is used selectively by Advisers.

ES District Operational Arrangements

3.100 In this section a number of aspects of district operations relating to the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus are articulated.

Local management information systems

3.101 Most of the case study areas have developed some form of local management information system to facilitate management of the programme. This is distinct from the national arrangements for management information and is focused on the need for timely detailed information, as described by one ES manager: "we did this rather than wait two months for data from the main system". ES staff expressed frustrations during the early period of the programme when local systems were not in place. There was overwhelming agreement in the previous pilot areas that the local and national approaches to management information were considerably better than the PIPES system previously operating within pilot areas.

3.102 These local management information systems are based around simple spreadsheets. A common characteristic is that they provide Adviser specific information which supports the line management and Adviser development processes.

Networking and development arrangement

3.103 A range of regular networking and development events are taking place across most of the case study areas. These generally involve all Advisers, Senior Advisers, Adviser managers, business managers, quality management team and senior district staff. Events tend to be programme specific and enable communication of priorities and changes to the programme. In some case study areas these events go further and cover continuous development of the skills and knowledge of Advisers. In one case study area, sessions are led by Senior Advisers which focus on different aspects of the programme. They are also planning to introduce role-play facilitated by the senior Advisers to further develop the skills of Adviser staff. Advisers expressed positive views of these events, citing opportunities to reflect on working practices, understand new ways of doing things and share specific examples with colleagues.

3.104 In other case study areas, more ad hoc training specific sessions have been held with all Adviser staff. These have been led by senior staff and have focused on areas such as effective use of the client progress record.

NDPA 'Issues log'

3.105 In one case study area an NDPA 'issues log' is maintained by NDPAs as they encounter queries. As responses and solutions are developed they are added as an entry to the log prior to dissemination to all staff. This process ensures that learning is collective and enables senior staff to 'peer review' solutions.

Caseload Points System

3.106 A 'caseload points system' is operated in one case study area. It enables a comparable measure between NDPAs in order to distribute loads evenly. The system allocates points as follows:

- Gateway client – 1.5 points per week (ppw);
- IAP client – 2ppw;
- Basic skills client – 1.5ppw;
- Follow-through client – 1.5ppw.

3.107 Each Adviser is deemed to have a capacity of 54 points per week.

DPQMT role

3.108 There are some different uses of the DPQMT role within the case study areas. The main role relates to the monitoring of provision within training providers. However, this has been embedded at differing rates and with differing levels of success. Where the role has taken longer to become established, or where the relationship with providers appears less positive, the main factor highlighted by senior staff appears to be the skills and experience of staff performing that role. In one case study area the role has been extended to include the face-to-face meetings with clients while on training provision.

Strategic partnership arrangements

3.109 Differing levels of strategic partnership arrangements exist across the case study areas. In two case study areas, partnership arrangements have developed based on the New Deal for Young People partnership organisations. This is not part of the New Deal 25 plus national design. The major benefit relates to marketing the programme, both strategically to partner organisations who may promote the programme further or directly to the partner organisations as potential employers.

3.110 In one of these case study areas, the range of organisations on the partnership group include:

- TUC;
- Housing Association;
- County Council;
- Youth Service;
- Police;
- bus companies (two);
- employers (the Water Board).

Link Adviser role

3.111 In one case study area the role of link Adviser is used. This person is an experienced Adviser, working across the Jobcentres in the district. Their role involves a number of activities including:

- managing relationship between clients, providers and Advisers;

- supporting individual clients, for example with back to work calculations;
- monitoring the progress of certain clients;
- monitoring the results of the IAP process.

Employer networks

3.112 In another case study area, work with employer networks has helped to market the programme to particular sectors of society. For example, through regular attendance at a black and ethnic minority led business network. In another area, involvement with community groups has helped to develop opportunities for disabled clients and clients who are seeking asylum status.

4 Perceptions of Stakeholders

4.1 In this section a range of views and issues highlighted by the range of stakeholders interviewed are presented. The three groups include Employment Service staff, training providers and employers.

4.2 Views on the key changes which have resulted in the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus were expressed, particularly by Employment Service staff and training providers and, to a lesser extent, employers. A very clear understanding exists that the focus of the programme is on job outcomes. Furthermore there is clear understanding that the programme is more client centred and involves a new approach to working for Personal Advisers.

4.3 Other views expressed by slightly fewer stakeholders include increased flexibility, a more focused use of provision to support movement towards employability.

4.4 The IAP is cited by many stakeholders as an important attribute of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme. One Adviser expressed this by saying *"IAP has made the programme much more serious to the client"*. The mandatory nature of the programme, together with an enhanced sanctions regime, is regarded as a key element of the re-engineered programme.

4.5 Apart from those ES staff who feel that some of the changes have not gone far enough, such as making it mandatory for those over 50 and extending the length and types of provision on the IAP, the only other negative views of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus related to those who had experience of the pilot programme. In these cases Advisers and providers feel the re-engineered programme is less flexible, less client centred, more target driven and more time limited. Examples of these perceived limitations include:

- less early entry categories;
- inability to "operate parallel provision and part time provision";
- ability to "more or less use any provision anywhere";
- "pilot targets were not so high";
- greater flexibility in length of provision.

Employment Service Staff

4.6 Four broad areas were consistently raised across the case study areas. These cover:

- relationship with client;
- training;
- relationship with employers and providers
- workloads.

4.7 The majority of Advisers feel that the relationship with the client has improved as a result of the re-engineering. The regular meetings, combined with the support of case conferencing, are seen as beneficial to the client. One Adviser identified a clear indicator of this improved relationship by saying *"more clients are now popping in to just speak to a NDPA"*. Advisers believe that the changes to the programme have led to some improvements in the attitudes of clients, although they are very keen to stress that the client group appears to be increasingly harder to help.

4.8 Some NDPAs report feeling unqualified to deal with and refer some of the harder to help clients, not being trained to assess people with mental or physical health problems or with disabilities. They can befriend and advise, but this is not going to get people into jobs.

4.9 Many Advisers feel that the initial training was late and inadequate. This led to some Advisers feeling that they were 'learning by doing', rather than working in an informed manner. Advisers found the walkthroughs the most useful part of the initial training and felt that it was particularly effective where it involved a whole office approach.

4.10 Having articulated the weaknesses in initial training, many Advisers, six months into the programme, are now content with the level of training support and development which has been provided. One Adviser explained that in their unit of delivery, some specific time had been set aside to work in small groups of two to three, with the Employment Service providing workbooks. These sessions were supported by the Senior Advisers and Personal Advisers felt that this gave them time and space to understand aspects of the programme. However, in other case study areas, the training books are less well regarded and not perceived as helpful.

4.11 While there are many experienced and competent Advisers, a significant weakness raised across all case study areas by Advisers themselves, their managers, training providers and employers was the Adviser relationship with employers and providers. There are differing explanations for this ranging from a lack of confidence and skills through to Advisers' discomfort at stepping outside of the Jobcentre to engage with employers and providers. This is believed to have an impact on the ability of the Adviser to sell clients to employers and to approach employers for job opportunities. In one case study area this has been overcome through Adviser managers setting Adviser specific projects to target particular employers and then monitoring the progress of the Adviser.

4.12 In some case study areas, senior staff feel that if Advisers engaged with providers they could improve the extent of tailoring of provision to clients needs; this is particularly the case for the modular design. Generally DPQMT staff appear happy with their roles, though some feel "that they have not got the teeth to address poor provision". This was summed up by one DPQMT member of staff as "we are not trained quality inspectors".

4.13 Staff believe a culture change is needed in terms of the Adviser role. This reluctance to move out of the Jobcentre partly explains the low level of client face-to-face contact being seen during the IAP. However, time is also a key factor here.

4.14 Workloads were raised by Adviser staff on a number of occasions. Caseloads have dropped from some very high levels at the beginning of the programme, as high as 50-60 clients. These are now running at levels of between 25 and 35 in most areas. This is regarded as a reasonable and workable caseload. Advisers feel that there is a daunting amount of information for them to learn as part of the Re-Engineered New Deal 25 plus programme. There is clear evidence that the Senior Adviser role (and also Link Adviser role) is helping to support Personal Advisers, particularly those who are less experienced. Such evidence has come from Senior Advisers themselves and also Personal Advisers. In areas where case conferencing is well organised, this helps to provide a structured dialogue for sharing experience. The fact that Senior Advisers still retain a caseload is seen as helpful to 'keep their hand in' and to demonstrate their competence to Personal Advisers.

4.15 A small number of Advisers feel that pressures of time limit their effectiveness and job satisfaction. In particular this is raised as a reason for the limited contact with clients while on the IAP. In one case study area, some Advisers feel that their full range of skills are not being utilised due to the requirement to the use external advice and guidance provision which they feel competent to deliver themselves in-house.

Providers

4.16 Almost all providers commented that numbers of clients were extremely low in the beginning. However, very few indicated that this had any critical bearing on their business viability, except that this was inconvenient and made planning and resourcing difficult.

4.17 In terms of implementation of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus, one provider suggested there was a lack of direction. The feeling was that the programme was brought in quickly and that ES staff were still developing and understanding the programme themselves. In most case study areas bedding in problems have been experienced. There were a few reported inappropriate referrals, but amongst those providers who are marketing themselves to the NDPAs, referrals have generally been appropriate and are improving in numbers. Providers occasionally ‘return’ clients who are inappropriate. One provider suggested that some other providers were being a bit selective to meet their targets, but it is not clear to what extent this is occurring.

4.18 In most case study areas, links between Employment Service staff and providers have developed to a point where they are starting to work effectively together. This is illustrated by the regular contact described and also the presence in some areas of provider staff within the Jobcentres. However, there is a distinct concern amongst providers that Advisers do not fully understand some forms of provision.

4.19 In one area an innovative approach to communication between Advisers and the lead provider was implemented. This involved the use of a central telephone number that all Advisers could ring to contact the training provider. However, the provider found this was unworkable due to the high volume of calls and the difficulty of resourcing the call centre and routing calls through to the appropriate individual. In dialogue with the Employment Service, they abandoned this approach and reverted to placing staff within Jobcentre offices at regular intervals. In some areas there is a feeling that there is further development needed of the links between the provider and the Employment Service. For example, some providers do not feel they have one single main point of contact. This is also the area where the DPQMT role is felt to be not fully developed and this may partly explain this situation.

4.20 In a number of areas networking events have been held where all providers are brought together to discuss approaches to the programme. This is found to be very helpful, especially where sub-contracting arrangements exist between providers and it also enables Employment Service staff to convey observations and experiences in the interests of improving the service to the client.

4.21 Overall, providers expressed a positive view of their role in the programme. This is illustrated by the following quote:

"We welcome the opportunity to be involved and to influence aspects of the programme"

4.22 However, there are some concerns and frustrations about flexibility and quality. This was illustrated by one provider in a previous pilot area, *"there is a constant erosion of quality and tightening of rules, which is limiting the extent to which we can provide added value"*.

Employers

4.23 Employers are not always aware that clients who they employ are on the New Deal 25 plus programme. This generally applies to unsubsidised jobs but was also common for subsidised jobs. In such cases their understanding is that they recruited the individual from 'the Employment Service' or 'the Jobcentre'. This situation may in part be attributed to the focus by ES staff on solving employers needs rather than talking about specific programmes combined with oversight by the employers.

4.24 Of the few employers that could articulate involvement in the New Deal 25 plus programme covering the period before and after April 2001 there was no awareness of 're-engineering' or associated changes. There were however positive observations relating to the impacts of elements that have been introduced as part of the re-engineering such as the ADF. For example, the provision of a carpet fitters knife that the company would not have been able to provide for the client. Employer attitudes to the provision that clients received during the Gateway period and IAP were focused on the desire for employability skills such as timekeeping and a positive attitude rather than job specific skills, which they felt they could provide themselves.

4.25 Attitudes to the client group ranges from the supportive and understanding to those that re-enforced the view of unemployment as a stigma. The following quotes illustrate this range of views:

- *"clients under ND25 plus will never be job ready as they have mostly been unemployed for too long. They've spent too much time doing their own thing and sitting in front of the TV which means they are not used to regular work and taking instructions from others"*;
- *"some problems with appearance but I bought [the client] work clothing. Found a difference after two months because [the client] is now working and has money in their pocket. [The client] has been more or less reliable and honest. I plan to keep [the client] on"*;
- *"individual was quite apprehensive at first but there was a marked improvement in his confidence and attitude by end of placement"*;
- *"we've had a few problems such as being late, bumped a bus and appearance is a problem. [The client] is not suitable for corporate market but ok for school run, students etc" [employer is coach company]*;
- *"we were asked by ES to take on a young girl for chamber maid work but it involved monitoring her, supervising and just wasn't viable to keep her on"*.

4.26 Employers generally understand the nature of the client group and so are accommodating of minor difficulties. There are however a minority who feel the clients are not prepared for work or that the Employment Service is not being selective enough by sending them 'difficult' clients.

4.27 For some employers the experience of employing or providing a placement has changed their views of the long term unemployed. They now feel that for a suitable vacancy they would be prepared to consider using the New Deal 25 plus programme as a recruitment mechanism.

4.28 Employer motivations for providing a placement or recruiting a client often involve a combination of the following:

- a desire for low cost labour, sometimes coupled with an understanding that close support and development may be required, but more often not. Where this understanding does not exist frustrations develop;

- to resolve a recruitment need (either for a permanent position or for a regular placement). For example, an employer had been advertising unsuccessfully for a carpet fitter when a member of staff from the Employment Service responded to the advert to ask whether a client would be interviewed. The company agreed although on interviewing the client recognised some skills limitations. The use of ADF to purchase specialist equipment and the employer subsidy convinced them to provide a placement that turned into a job offer and a positive outcome;

- altruism and community responsibility, which are generally combined with one or two of the above motives. For example a care home that has a large grounds is not financially able to employ a permanent gardener but is interested in providing job placement. They feel that a two way relationship exists where they gain labour at a subsidised cost, accepting there may be limits to productivity. In return the ES and the client gain an opportunity for work experience and confidence building.

4.29 A major issue raised by nearly all employers is the level of ES contact and marketing. This relates to a number of stages of the employer involvement process:

- marketing to identify placements and recruitment needs;

- contact with the employer during placement or work experience period;

- follow-up and general contact outside of the focus on individual clients.

4.30 Many employers that are involved in the programme requested more of these three elements.

4.31 Placements were identified by a number of routes according to employers, including:

- ES or clients responding to adverts in local press;
- ES long term relationships (this tends to apply to the larger employers who recruit regularly);
- employers approaching ES to submit a job vacancy;
- one-off marketing visits or telephone calls by ES staff;
- training provider contacts with employers.

4.32 The balance across these methods is strongly biased to the ES or client responding to adverts and to the employer contacting the ES. Only a few of the employers contacted described approaches from training providers and many requested more proactive contact from ES staff.

4.33 Views concerning contact and support were varied. Most of the employers felt that the contact they had had with the ES when initially being introduced to the programme had been good. Most had been visited by a representative from the Employment Service who had explained about the programme, given them some literature to read and had explained the processes required, form filling etc.

4.34 However, once the client had been recruited, contact with the NDPA was largely minimal if anything. Employers knew who to contact if they had a problem. Only two of the employers interviewed had had contact with the ES to check progress. Most employers receiving the subsidy had anticipated more monitoring as they were in receipt of government money and were surprised when this didn't happen.

4.35 There are two frequently mentioned issues raised by employers. Firstly, many wanted more contact with the NDPA. Secondly, many wanted more information and marketing literature concerning what was available. This is summarised in the words of one employer: "*We are humble employers sitting here not knowing. No one is communicating with us and telling us what is available*."

4.36 Overall, employer experiences of the programme are positive and understanding of difficulties that might occur. Many employers with no previous experience of the client group express the view that involvement has changed their view of the long term unemployed. Furthermore, they would be happy to use the programme again for appropriate job vacancies.

4.37 Employers found the opportunity to 'try out' the client through work experience prior to placement a positive aspect of the programme. As one employer said: "it benefits the person themselves, as well as the employer, if the job is not for them". This observation was made by a care home manager who provided work experience for two care assistants. One had worked in the care sector over 20 years ago and was not able to adjust to the major changes which had taken place in the industry, compared to the other client who proved to be naturally gifted but required job specific training.

4.38 The employer subsidy was regarded with mixed views by employers. Approximately half of those interviewed that received it said that they would probably have provided the placement without it. However, the other half said that it was a critical factor in their decision to participate in the programme.

5 Innovation and Good Practice

5.1 In this section the elements of innovation and good practice identified throughout the study are assembled together. All are mentioned within the previous section of the report and therefore not all are explained in depth. The elements of innovation and good practice are structured under the following headings:

- ES District Model;
- ES District Management;
- Training provider Activities.

ES District Model

Good Practice

5.2 A number of case study areas have fostered the development of **specialist provision**, subject areas include; debt counselling, mentoring, and provision for those with mental health problems. However, some concerns were raised regarding the ability to afford some forms of specialist provision.

5.3 Management of the **work experience** process internally within the ES District has a number of benefits such as internal control and communication, although, it is dependent on the existence of a dedicated (i.e. focused) and appropriately skilled internal staff resource.

5.4 A logical development of the sectoral routeway with a larger employer is the **'employer routeway'**. In one case study area this has been successfully achieved with a major supermarket chain. The attraction to the employer is the opportunity to influence the nature of provision and the access to future labour. The benefits to clients and ES are experience of a real working environment with the potential of a job outcome.

5.5 In a number of case study areas the practice of **training provider staff attending jobcentres** on a regular basis helps to support Personal Advisers with information concerning types of provision as well as helping to further facilitate the relationship between NDPA and provider. In addition, the provider can meet potential clients to answer questions.

Innovations

5.6 In one case study area the development of the **Full Client Picture (FCP) interview**, contracted out to a local Career Service, provides the Personal Adviser with an independent, professional assessment of their client. This process provides efficiencies for the ES management of the client and can raise issues not previously identified by the Personal Adviser. It is also a document that can usefully be passed on to the Training provider in the IAP to reduce their level of investment in client assessment.

5.7 The outsourcing of the Gateway process to a managing agent in the form of the **Gateway Access Unit**, has been implemented in one case study area. It consists of a communication centre taking queries and referrals, initial assessment and provision either directly or via subcontracts to other providers. While the NDPA formally fulfils their role as main contact and ultimate decision-maker, the provider lends their professional expertise to recommend a way forward.

5.8 In one case study area an innovative approach to communication between the lead provider and the ES Adviser staff involved a **central provider telephone number**. The aim was to manage communication and referrals between the key staff of the lead provider and their subcontractors. However, a combination of call volumes and logistical difficulties of finding the right person led to a conclusion between both the provider and ES that it was not working. They reverted back to the former approach of having training provider staff regularly attending jobcentres.

ES District Management

Good Practice

5.9 A variety of approaches have been undertaken to improve the level of **knowledge by Personal Advisers of training provision**. This includes NDPA awareness of who the providers are, their contact details as well as the types of provision available and what this involves. Examples of approaches adopted across the case study areas include documents summarising the range of provision and a training provider directory supplied to all staff. Building on this, some areas have gone further by arranging a **development event for Personal Advisers and Training provider staff** in an attempt to increase networking and the Personal Advisers' level of understanding of provision. This is regarded as helpful by all those involved, and according to senior ES staff, has helped to improve the 'mixing and matching' of provision to achieve the most appropriate provision for the client. In other areas where an established network of training providers did not previously exist the ES have convened a **regular network meeting just involving providers**. This has been helpful, especially where subcontracting exists, to discuss approaches to managing clients and relationships between ES and the Training providers.

5.10 The DPQMT role is still developing in some areas. Where it is more established, effective **systems are in place to share issues identified in monitoring visits** with other ES staff. In one case, this is undertaken using a pro forma to 'log' problems. Such issues are discussed with the Training provider as part of the DPQMT's role, but through the sharing of this information other ES staff feel more involved in the development of provision. This dialogue between DPQMT staff and Personal Advisers can also help to feed back client specific information. DPQMT staff have also been focused on **building relationships with Training providers** in a number of case study areas. The philosophy behind this is that if they are to achieve effective monitoring and improvements in quality then a positive relationship must prevail.

5.11 In nearly all areas some form of **local Management Information system** has been developed to speed up the flow and depth of intelligence. The benefits of such systems are demonstrated by the frustrations expressed by staff in the early days before development. These systems do not replace the normal ES Management Information Systems. Systems are generally based on spreadsheets and provide specific information relating to Jobcentres and Personal Advisers. There is a feeling that management decision-making would have been severely hampered without these systems.

5.12 The recently introduced role of **Senior Adviser** was commented on in a positive way across all case study areas. The major value has been associated with case conferencing, allowing a dialogue to take place that supports learning and improves the level of service to clients. In particular, Personal Advisers identified support with 'difficult cases' and the Decision Making and Appeals process as particularly helpful.

5.13 **Networking and training events** for Personal Advisers are common across the case study areas with differing degrees of depth and regularity. Personal Advisers feel that these are valuable for their understanding and as an opportunity to ask questions and discuss general practices. In one case study area Senior Advisers are leading role play sessions with Personal Advisers to support their development.

5.14 Some areas are using **older Personal Advisers to work with clients in the over 50 age group**. This can only be achieved in larger offices and it would be wrong to apply this as a hard and fast rule as a number of young Personal Advisers said they experience no problems working with this group. Where this approach is employed Personal Advisers say that the older group responds better to someone perceived to be of a similar peer group. They are also able to demonstrate empathy and understand some of the barriers facing this client group.

5.15 In one case study area Personal Advisers were given a specific project involving the **development of a dialogue with a particular employer** or group of employers. Treating the activity as a specific project is regarded by senior staff as having more impact than treating it as a general task. This is a good way of focusing attention on an area of activity generally regarded as a weakness amongst Adviser staff and, in management terms, provides a specific goal against which progress can be measured. It was seen as particularly useful as a development process for more experienced Advisers.

5.16 Recognition of the benefit of **using the Adviser Discretion Fund after the interview to secure sustainable employment** as well as for interview preparation and gaining the job is considered to have been an important learning point in a number of case study areas. The use of ADF developed slowly and initially was mainly used for interviews but is increasingly being used at the later stages.

5.17 In one case study area the **training 'workbooks' are utilised** to support staff development. In this example Senior Advisers lead internal sessions focusing on different areas of the workbooks.

Innovations

5.18 In one case study area the **DPQMT role has been adapted to include the client visits** that would normally be undertaken by Personal Advisers. A structured visit report is completed and provided to the Personal Adviser as soon as possible. Staff identify the benefits as efficiency, particularly for larger providers where a number of Personal Advisers would need to visit. They feel that this does not hamper the relationship between the Personal Adviser and client, although some Personal Advisers would prefer to maintain their contact. This does overcome a major problem experienced across many other case study areas of low levels of face-to-face visits with clients while on IAP.

5.19 In order to support Personal Advisers one case study area has produced a **tool to develop skills in matching provision to client needs**. It consists of a list of different barriers which clients may face, a link to the CPR scores and for each barrier possible areas of provision during the Gateway period.

5.20 One case study area has developed the **Link Adviser role**. The role covers the management of relationships between clients, providers and Personal Advisers, and specific support for individual clients. Specific support might include, for example, return to work calculations, tracking progress and recording results from IAP processes. Varying degrees of marketing resource appear to exist across the case study areas. In one area the **Local Account Manager (LAM)** is regarded as facilitating dialogue with employers that can lead to successful placements and jobs. In another case study area some Jobcentres have introduced a **Recruitment Consultant role** to support work with employers to identify placements. These are generally people with business communication skills and commercial experience. They are regarded by senior ES staff as more confident and effective at talking to businesses than Personal Advisers who do not necessarily have the training, experience or confidence.

5.21 Management of Personal Adviser caseloads is supported in one case study area by the use of a **points system**. This allocates a differing number of points to clients at different stages of the programme. The overall effect of this is to recognise which clients at certain stages, for example IAP, require a more intensive approach.

5.22 To support the effective use of the Adviser Discretion Fund one case study area has agreed an **invoicing system with a small number of local retailers**. This overcomes the difficulties associated with gaining receipts and accompanying clients while purchasing items. **Vouchers accepted by local retailers** are used in two case study areas for administering the ADF. In one case study area they are specifically using food vouchers linked to the Spar chain. This is believed to discourage spending on lottery tickets or alcohol. In another area a wider range of retailers are involved, although problems have developed in terms of who at the ES is responsible for managing these arrangements with retailers.

Training providers

5.23 A number of elements of good practice and innovation involving Training providers have been outlined above. However, the following areas relate to actions taken specifically by Training providers.

Good Practice

5.24 In one case study area the Training provider has drawn up a set of **standards outlining working arrangements with ES staff**. This was undertaken to support understanding between the two organisations and is regarded as helpful by those involved.

5.25 In some cases **Training providers are prepared to 'go the extra mile'** to achieve a successful outcome for the client. One example is a Training provider who encourages the client to achieve a sustainable job by offering the client part of their job placement fee received from the ES.

5.26 To effectively engage the client one **provider has reviewed its format and delivery of provision** together with the ES. Jobsearch provision was believed to be becoming routine for some clients who had attended many similar sessions.

Innovations

5.27 In one case study area a large national training provider has developed a **toolkit to support decision-making by the Personal Adviser**. The toolkit describes different types of barriers and the provision, which can address them. This was developed in response to concerns that not all Personal Advisers understood all aspects of training provision available.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The implementation of the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme can be described generically across the case study areas in terms of three broad phases. The initial phase which was the development of the programme, around the time of April 2001, involved significant confusion and delays to contracting and operation, although weekly meetings between NDPAs and clients were being undertaken in all case study areas more or less from the outset.

6.2 The second phase between June and December 2001 has been characterised by recovery from delays and the development of local designs and approaches to the programme. During this period referrals to providers have been low and ES staff have been learning to implement elements such as case conferencing and ADF. Relationships between ES and providers started to develop with more dialogue between providers and NDPAs, DPQMT and senior staff.

6.3 The third phase from the New Year forward has seen the programme start to operate as intended. Overall, statistics are on profile although starts to the IAP are still lower than planning assumptions. Relationships between providers are resulting in positive action and new ideas.

6.4 Overall the evidence indicates that following some initial teething problems the Re-engineered New Deal 25 plus programme is considered by all stakeholders, in the case study areas, to be a positive development. Most aspects of the national design are working effectively or are in the process of being implemented. In addition, a range of innovation and good practice has been identified across the six case study areas in terms of; ES models of operation, ES management and working practices, and provider activities. These might usefully be shared with stakeholders in other units of delivery across the country.

6.5 However, against this positive picture the extent to which the programme can operationally deliver its aims such as tailored provision and job outcomes is dependent on further developments taking place.

6.6 Firstly, some NDPAs require more understanding of provision and improved skills, confidence and resource (time) to develop dialogues with employers and providers. This message came across from all stakeholder groups in the case study areas, including NDPAs themselves. There are three key areas where this has an impact:

- face-to-face meetings between NDPAs and clients are not taking place in all case study areas;

- levels of employer contact are reportedly low, both in terms of generating leads and selling clients to employers. This second point refers to the level of service offered to employers as ‘customers’ of the programme. In some cases this is the responsibility of the provider;

- direct relationships between NDPAs and providers often depend on the skill and experience of the NDPA. For those less experienced the lack of dialogue limits the opportunity for effective communication and continuous improvement. Lack of real understanding about what different types of provision entail impacts on the quality of decisions made for the client and ultimately on the client’s likelihood of success. In some case study areas there is a high reliance on provider input to make decisions about the right course of action for clients.

6.7 Secondly, ES must continue to develop positive relationships and viable contracts with providers. Across the case study areas there were a range of different relationships between the ES and providers. In many cases these were built on previous and existing working relationships developed through the operation of programmes such as Work Based Learning for Adults and NDYP. However, the New Deal 25 plus programme is different to these other programmes and many ES New Deal 25 plus staff have not had such close relationships with clients before. Mutual respect and trust are the most important aspects of effective contracts and although in some areas this has led to positive ideas and developments, in many this has not yet been fully established.

6.8 Viability of contracts is clearly important to the success of the programme. Some issues that will need to be explored to ensure viability include:

- prices for specialist, often more expensive, provision. For example, mental health provision. Failure to do this may limit tailoring of provision to some client groups;

- ensuring closer match between planned and actual referrals;

- raised expectations among providers generated by underpinning money made available in the first year of operation. Although this was specified as a one off measure, it may be a shock to smaller providers if referrals next year are not in line with plans;

- balancing the numbers of providers each unit of delivery contracts with. In one case study area operating a sectoral routeways approach the experience has been that the initial portfolio of routeways has been too broad with some experiencing very low numbers. There is clearly a balance to be struck here between tailoring to client needs and the local labour market and the efficient operation of the programme.

6.9 Finally, monitoring in order that local operations continue to improve and develop. In most case study areas there were certain aspects of the programme that are identified as requiring further attention to ensure effective operation. These require management will and expertise to develop staff and processes.

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APPENDIX A: TOPIC GUIDES

York Consulting

Evaluation of Re-Engineered New Deal 25+

Employment Service Staff Topic Guide: Strategic

(District Programme Quality Management Team; Contract Managers)

The overall purpose of the interviews will be:

- To understand how ND 25 plus is operating in each area
- To establish changes made at the local level and the extent to which these fit with the national policy
- Investigate the extent to which NDPAs are adapting to the enhanced role
- How are managers/District Programme Quality Management Team (DPQMT) ensuring the delivery of a more complex programme
- Generate examples of what works well and what does not
- Identify good practice and innovative approaches

Background

8 What is your range of involvement in New Deal 25 plus?

a) How long have you been involved in this work?

9 What do you see as the priorities of ND 25 plus?

a) What have been the direct effects of the reengineered New Deal 25 plus?

b) Which are the most/least beneficial?

c) Can you describe any negative/positive side effects?

10 What are the key influences in the local labour market?

11 How does the UoD compare with other areas? Why might it have bee selected as an innovative case study?

Operation

12 How would you describe the key barriers facing the client group?

a) Which group is hardest to help?

13 In what ways have you been able to tailor provision to client needs?

14 Have you used ad hoc provision to address individual needs?

1) What impact has the enhanced New Deal 25 plus had on the Advisory role?

Performance

15 How effective is New Deal 25 plus at moving people into employment/towards employability?

16 Is there evidence of improved programme performance?

1) What areas influence performance to the greatest extent?

17 How is provision meeting labour market needs?

- a) Are there any gaps?

Overall

18 What barriers exist to this UoD achieving its targets?

19 Are there any additional examples of innovation/good practice in the operation of ND 25 plus?

Future developments

20 Are there plans for further changes to:

- a) Funding or contracting?
- b) Specific elements of New Deal 25 plus?
- c) Provision in the UoD?

21 In what areas would you like to make further improvements?

York Consulting

Evaluation of Re-Engineered New Deal 25+

Employment Service Staff Topic Guide: Management

(District Managers; Business Managers)

The overall purpose of the interviews will be:

- To understand how ND 25 plus is operating in each area
- To establish changes made at the local level and the extent to which these fit with the national policy
- Investigate the extent to which NDPAs are adapting to the enhanced role
- How are managers/District Programme Quality Management Team (DPQMT) ensuring the delivery of a more complex programme
- Generate examples of what works well and what does not
- Identify good practice and innovative approaches

Background

22 What is your range of involvement in New Deal 25 plus?

a) How long have you been involved in this work?

23 What do you see as the priorities of ND 25 plus?

a) What have been the direct effects of the reengineered New Deal 25 plus?

b) Which are the most/least beneficial?

c) Can you describe any negative/positive side effects?

24 What are the key influences in the local labour market?

Operation

25 How would you describe the key barriers facing the client group?

a) Which group is hardest to help?

26 What are the sizes of PA caseloads?

27 What do you see as the primary role of the Gateway?

a) How is the Client Progress Kit being used with clients? Is it proving to be effective?

b) In what ways have PAs been able to access specialist support such as careers guidance and mentoring

c) How much use is made of short term gateway provision?

28 Overall how effective is the Gateway period proving to be in terms of:

a) Moving people into work?

b) Moving people into IAP?

29 What form do case conferences take?

a) How often do they occur?

b) Who is involved?

c) Can you give any examples of how they have impacted on clients/PAs?

30 Which IAP delivery model(s) is being used (Routeways/Modular)? Why?

a) How effectively is the Routeways/Modular approach working? What are the main benefits/difficulties?

b) Is the action plan being met by provision?

31 How are relationships developing between clients and PAs (in their new more intensive role)?

a) What works well / challenges have been encountered?

b) What role are PAs playing in the development of the Action Plan?

c) What role are PAs playing in the development of the IAP?

d) Are PAs confident and effective in the process of identifying barriers to employment and shaping an appropriate IAP?

e) In what ways has the relationship been maintained/developed while the client is on provision?

f) Is the contact between client and PA face-to-face or by telephone during IAP? If a combination of both, what sort of mix?

g) Where does this contact take place? (jobcentre, provider premises, employer premises, elsewhere)

32 How do NDPAS monitor clients whilst on the IAP?

a) How many placement visits take place and by whom?

33 How effective is the IAP in enabling all individuals to increase employability, motivation and confidence?

a) In what cases and on what basis has the IAP been extended beyond 13 weeks? What effect has this had?

34 In what ways have you been able to tailor provision to client needs?

35 Have you used ad hoc provision to address individual needs?

36 How is client progress against their Action Plan monitored and reviewed?

1) Has the threat of sanctions had any impact? Is this positive or negative?
   a) How can it help someone to find work?
2) What impact has the enhanced New Deal 25 plus had on the Advisory role?
3) What has been the extent and value of walk throughs and conferences?
   a) What training have you received (days and content)?
   b) Has the training for implementation of New Deal 25 plus given to PAs been adequate? If not, what gaps exist? How effective have the training workbooks been?

Performance

37 How effective is New Deal 25 plus at moving people into employment/towards employability?

38 Is there evidence of improved programme performance?

1) What areas influence performance to the greatest extent?

Provision (fit to need)

39 What are your views on the provision available to clients?

   a) Is this provision adequate to meet individual need? – are there any major gaps?
   b) If gaps exist, has anything been done to address this?
   c) Have providers been able to respond to the required provision?

40 Are planning assumptions proving to be correct?

   a) If not what action are you taking to address this?

41 How have providers responded to the new approach?

   a) In what ways have the changes impacted on working relationships between ES staff and providers?

42 Have providers delivered the expected number of job entries?

   a) If not what action have you taken?

43 How is provision meeting labour market needs?

   a) Are there any gaps?

Employers

44 In what ways have employers' been engaged in the enhanced New Deal 25 plus? (e.g. developing provision to meet LM need)

45 What have been employers' responses to the enhanced New Deal 25 plus?

46 Have employers raised any specific issues/concerns?

47 How many employers have accessed the employer subsidy?

48 To what extent has this facilitated successful outcomes for clients?

Overall

49 What barriers exist to this UoD achieving its targets?

50 Are there any additional examples of innovation/good practice in the operation of ND 25 plus?

Future developments

51 Are there plans for further changes to:

a) Funding or contracting?

b) Specific elements of New Deal 25 plus?

c) Provision in the UoD?

52 In what areas would you like to make further improvements?

York Consulting

Evaluation of Re-Engineered New Deal 25+

Employer Topic Guide

The overall purpose of the interviews will be to:

- Explore employer involvement in making decisions about provision and skills/training needs locally (will only apply to those employers with a strategic link/partnership with the Employment Service)
- Extent to which provision meets local needs
- Issues relating to adequacy of support when taking ND 25 plus placements

Background

1) Identify general company background:
   a) Size (employees/turnover)
   b) Nature of work (industry)
2) How long have you been engaged with New Deal 25 plus?
3) Have you been involved with previous/other government training programmes?
4) What is the nature of your involvement?
5) What changes have you observed recently?
6) What do you see as the main aims of the New Deal 25 plus programme?

Operation

7) In what ways have you been involved? (please describe experiences):
   a) Placement
   b) Work experience
   c) Recruited staff through New Deal
   d) Fed into local partnership arrangements i.e. developing provision
8) Who else from your organisation has been involved in the above stages?

9) What types of contact have you had with:
   a) The training provider?
   b) The ES Personal Adviser?
10) How well prepared was the New Deal 25 plus individual for the world of work?
11) How would you describe the overall level of support you have received while employing New Deal 25 plus individuals?
   a) From which organisations has this come?
12) Is the employer subsidy a critical factor in your involvement in New Deal 25 plus? – if yes, how does this help? / if no why?

Overall

13) How did the job readiness of the individual compare with your expectations?
14) To what extent have you been satisfied with the service from:
   a) the Employment Service?
   b) the training providers(s)?
   c) the New Deal individual?
15) Are there any areas for improvement?
16) Is there anything else you would like us to take back to the Employment Service in connection with New Deal 25 plus?

York Consulting

Evaluation of Re-Engineered New Deal 25+

Employment Service Staff Topic Guide: Operational

(New Deal Co-ordinators; NDPA Managers; NDPAs)

The overall purpose of the interviews will be:

- To understand how ND 25 plus is operating in each area
- To establish changes made at the local level and the extent to which these fit with the national policy
- Investigate the extent to which NDPAs are adapting to the enhanced role
- How are managers/District Programme Quality Management Team (DPQMT) ensuring the delivery of a more complex programme
- Generate examples of what works well and what does not
- Identify good practice and innovative approaches

Background

53 What is your range of involvement in New Deal 25 plus?

a) How long have you been involved in this work?

54 What do you see as the priorities of ND 25 plus?

a) What have been the direct effects of the reengineered New Deal 25 plus?

b) Which are the most/least beneficial?

c) Can you describe any negative/positive side effects?

55 What are the key influences in the local labour market?

Operation

56 How would you describe the key barriers facing the client group?

a) Which group is hardest to help?

57 What are the sizes of PA caseloads?

58 What impact has mandating clients, not previously on New Deal, had on

relationships between the advisor and the client for:

a) the New Deal programme?

b) the Intensive Activity Period?

59 What do you see as the primary role of the Gateway?

a) How is the Client Progress Kit being used with clients? Is it proving to be effective?

b) In what ways have PAs been able to access specialist support such as careers guidance and mentoring

c) How much use is made of short term gateway provision?

60 Overall how effective is the Gateway period proving to be in terms of:

a) Moving people into work?

b) Moving people into IAP?

61 What form do case conferences take?

a) How often do they occur?

b) Who is involved?

c) Can you give any examples of how they have impacted on clients/PAs?

62 How are relationships developing between clients and PAs (in their new more intensive role)?

a) What works well / challenges have been encountered?

b) What role are PAs playing in the development of the Action Plan?

c) What role are PAs playing in the development of the IAP?

d) Are PAs confident and effective in the process of identifying barriers to employment and shaping an appropriate IAP?

e) In what ways has the relationship been maintained/developed while the client is on provision?

f) Is the contact between client and PA face-to-face or by telephone during IAP? If a combination of both, what sort of mix?

g) Where does this contact take place? (jobcentre, provider premises, employer premises, elsewhere)

63 How do NDPAS monitor clients whilst on the IAP?

a) How many placement visits take place and by whom?

64 How effective is the IAP in enabling all individuals to increase employability, motivation and confidence?

a) In what cases and on what basis has the IAP been extended beyond 13 weeks? What effect has this had?

65 In what ways have you been able to tailor provision to client needs?

66 Have you used ad hoc provision to address individual needs?

67 How is client progress against their Action Plan monitored and reviewed?

1) Has the threat of sanctions had any impact? Is this positive or negative?
   a) How can it help someone to find work?
2) To what extent has the Adviser Discretion Fund been accessed?
   a) Have they used it? if so what for? how easy/difficult was it to use?
   b) How effective was it - any example of impacts or outcomes?
   c) How does it compare to earlier funding arrangements?
3) What impact has the enhanced New Deal 25 plus had on the Advisory role?
4) What has been the extent and value of walk throughs and conferences?
   a) What training have you received (days and content)?
   b) Has the training for implementation of New Deal 25 plus given to PAs been adequate? If not, what gaps exist? How effective have the training workbooks been?
5) How effectively is the Routeways/Modular approach working? What are the main benefits/difficulties?
   i) Is the action plan being met by provision?

Performance

68 How effective is New Deal 25 plus at moving people into employment/towards employability?

69 Is there evidence of improved programme performance?

1) What areas influence performance to the greatest extent?

Provision (fit to need)

70 What are your views on the provision available to clients?

   a) Is this provision adequate to meet individual need? – are there any major gaps?
   b) If gaps exist, has anything been done to address this?
2) In what ways have the changes impacted on working relationships between ES staff and providers?

71 Have providers delivered the expected number of job entries?

   a) If not what action have you taken?

Employers

72 In what ways have employers' been engaged in the enhanced New Deal 25 plus? (e.g. developing provision to meet LM need)

73 What have been employers' responses to the enhanced New Deal 25 plus?

74 Have employers raised any specific issues/concerns?

75 How many employers have accessed the employer subsidy?

76 To what extent has this facilitated successful outcomes for clients?

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Evaluation of Re-Engineered New Deal 25+

Provider Topic Guide

The overall purpose of the interview with providers is to ascertain the impact on the providers of the changes to the New Deal 25 plus programme.

Background

1) What is the range of provision your organisation is involved in generally?
2) What specific elements of New Deal 25 plus provision is your organisation providing in this UoD?
3) What is the status of your organisation? (private; public; voluntary)
4) What is your experience of working with:
   a) the Employment Service?
   b) the client group?
   c) other New Deal programmes?
5) Describe the priorities of the New Deal 25 plus programme

Planning/contracting

6) What have been the size of your contracts for New Deal 25 plus?
7) Is your provision part of a Routeway or Modular delivery mode?
   a) What are the benefits/shortfalls of this approach?
8) Have the ES been clear about what provision they require for different clients?
9) How successful/viable have these contracts been?
   a) Are you happy with the targets? E.g. for job outcomes
10) Do you expect to bid for/deliver this type of provision in the future?

Relationships / communication

11) How has the relationship with the following developed:
    a) with the Employment Service, if Modular/Routeway provider?
    b) with the Routeway provider, if subcontracted provider?
    c) Other providers of New Deal 25 plus?
12) How has the introduction of the District Programme Quality Management Team impacted on your work?
    a) Who is your primary contact?
    b) Are you able to make appropriate levels of contact as needed?
13) Can you give any examples of how you have been working jointly with advisors during the course of the programme?
14) Are clients clear about their relationship with yourselves and their Personal Adviser?
15) In your opinion has the role of the PA changed?
    a) How has this impacted on the client and yourself?

Delivery

16) If you previously delivered New Deal 25 plus provision, has there been a change in client attitudes/perceptions? In what ways?
17) What do you do when you first accept a referral?
18) Have the timescales for delivery been appropriate?
19) How involved have you been in developing the IAP for the client? Please describe
20) Have you needed to supplement overall Routeway provision with specialist or one-off additional provision? Please describe
21) How do you work with clients to identify work placements and job opportunities?
22) How have you been able to progress people effectively towards employment?
23) How is support to clients managed? How have you dealt with problems?
24) Are there important differences in working with the ND 50 Plus client group?
25) What measures have you taken to ensure your provision is:
    a) Flexible
    b) Innovative
    c) Tailored

Impact

26) In what ways have the changes to New Deal 25 plus enabled clients to receive tailored provision?

27) Are clients better prepared and supported through the enhanced New Deal 25 plus?

28) Overall which changes to the programme have had a positive/negative effect?

29) What aspects would you cite as good practice/development areas?

30) Have the changes had any implications for employer perceptions?