

**New Deal 50 plus: regional
marketing evaluation**

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Disclaimer

The views in this report are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Work and Pensions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter and section		Page number
	Acknowledgements	
	Abbreviations and acronyms	
	Executive summary	
1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background to New Deal 50 plus	1
1.2	Background to the research	1
1.3	Aims of the research	2
1.4	Research methodology	3
1.5	Research sample	4
1.6	Recruitment and fieldwork	5
1.7	Marketing materials reviewed	6
1.8	Report outline	6
2	Background of New Deal 50 plus clients	8
2.1	Employment history : different client types	8
2.2	Potential for future employment	8
2.3	Other people's attitudes to over 50s	9
2.4	Opinion and experience of New Deal 50 plus	10
3	New Deal 50 plus awareness and publicity	12
3.1	Sources of awareness	12
3.2	Recall and recognition of New Deal 50 plus publicity	15
3.3	Perceived need for New Deal 50 plus publicity	15
4	Review of the regional marketing material	19
4.1	Responses to New Deal 50 plus posters	19
4.1.1	Bus ads : Region A	19
4.1.2	Promotional card : Region B	20
4.1.3	Railway station poster : Region B	21
4.2	Responses to New Deal 50 plus leaflets	22
4.2.1	Leaflets and fliers : Region A	22
4.2.2	National leaflet	24
4.3	Responses to New Deal 50 plus radio ads	25
4.3.1	Radio ads : Region C	25
4.3.2	Radio ad : Region D	26
4.4	Responses to New Deal 50 plus press ads	26
4.4.1	Press ad : Region D	26

4.4.2	Press ad : Region C	27
4.4.3	Press ad : Region B	28
4.5	Responses to New Deal 50 plus direct mail	29
4.5.1	Birthday cards : Region C and Region A	29
4.5.2	Direct mail : Region D	30
4.6	Responses to New Deal 50 plus magazine advertorial : Region B	31
4.7	Responses to national New Deal 50 plus booklet	32
5	Conclusions	34
6	Learning for the future	35
	Appendix 1 : discussion guide	
	Appendix 2 : stimulus material	
	Index	

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BA	Benefits Agency
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ES	Employment Service
IS	Income Support
IB	Incapacity Benefit
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
NDPA	New Deal Personal Adviser
Non-JSA claimants	New Deal 50 plus clients in receipt of IS, IB or SDA
PA	Personal Adviser
SDA	Severe Disablement Allowance

Executive summary

New Deal 50 plus is a labour market initiative aimed at getting people aged 50 and over, and who have been claiming work related benefits for six months or more, back into paid employment.

New Deal 50 plus provides advice and guidance to all eligible clients who are looking for work. It offers jobseekers a tax-free Employment Credit of £60 per week for up to a year for those going into full-time work (£40 for part-time work), and an in-work Training Grant of up to £750 (increased to £1,500 from 1 July 2002) providing their annual total income is no more than £15,000. These are also available for those entering self-employment.

The programme is available to people who have been claiming Jobseekers' Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit or a combination, for six months or more. Credits-only recipients, partners, and those receiving Invalid Care Allowance or Bereavement Allowances may also be eligible. All eligible JSA clients should be told about the programme by Jobcentre staff when they have been unemployed for six months, and a mailshot sent automatically to non-JSA clients.

In order to increase the take-up of the programme, and specifically the take-up amongst non-JSA claimants, the Employment Service (now Jobcentre Plus) empowered the regions to undertake local marketing campaigns. These began in October 2001, and have included a range of different activities (e.g. radio advertising, ads on the outside of buses, direct mail, local press advertising).

Qualitative research was commissioned in February 2002 to evaluate the regional marketing programme. The research aimed to provide a national overview of how the marketing campaigns had worked, and feedback to aid the development of future activity.

Research design

A qualitative methodology was used in order to enable a hands-on review of the regional marketing materials during the research process. It was tailored to the availability of suitable respondents. A mix of depth interviews and mini group discussions was carried out in four ES regions which had used a range of different marketing approaches.

The respondents were JSA and non-JSA benefit claimants who had joined the programme during the period October 2001 to January 2002. The sample included both unemployed people and those who were working and claiming the Employment Credit. The fieldwork was carried out by BMRB Qualitative during March 2002.

Awareness and involvement in New Deal 50 plus

Most respondents had found out about the New Deal 50 plus programme via word of mouth. They had been told by Jobcentre staff, or by a range of other people including friends, training agency personnel, and future employers.

Sources of awareness tended to vary by area; in some locations it would appear that potential users of the programme were as likely (if not more likely) to hear of the programme from friends and personal contacts than from Jobcentre staff.

Jobcentre clients were surprised that they were not automatically informed of the programme, and that when they asked for details, staff often took a while to provide the necessary information.

Respondent understanding of, and involvement in, the programme tended to reflect the different ways that they had found out about it. For example, those who had been told by their future employer or employment agency adviser, prior to starting work, only knew about the Employment Credit, and in some cases, the Training Grant. They did not know that help and support would have been available from a Personal Adviser had they joined the programme earlier.

There was negligible recall or recognition of the recent marketing and advertising activity. Respondents felt that the easiest way of ensuring that Jobcentre clients know of New Deal 50 plus was for them to be told about it by Jobcentre staff.

They also suggested a range of methods that could be used to make people more aware of the programme. They felt that local radio, local newspaper advertising, posters in community venues, and direct mail were all suitable ways of communicating to those aged over 50.

There was agreement that the message most likely to get the attention of a potential programme user, and motivate them to request more information, was the fact that people going back to work may qualify for an additional payment of £40 or £60 a week.

Feedback on the regional marketing materials

Respondent comments on the marketing materials were consistent across the different examples and different media used in the four regions.

Respondent feedback confirmed that it was necessary for the target audience to be 'flagged' up front. In other words, the ad or marketing activity needed to make it clear that it was addressing people aged over 50 in order to attract and hold their attention. The poster and press ads were often criticised for not making it clear how the programme would benefit someone joining it. It was generally felt that the wage top-up, the main benefit of the programme, should be explicit.

More generally, the respondents preferred the ads or leaflets that took a simple and straightforward information-based approach. Those using a more complicated creative idea were often off-putting as respondents were unable to identify with the people or circumstances being featured.

The preferred method of requesting further information was via the Jobcentre. The inclusion of a phone number was felt to be useful for those who did not regularly visit their local Jobcentre. A website address or teletext reference was not felt to be helpful; few respondents had access to, or used these communication channels.

The programme name (New Deal 50 plus) was essential information and needed to be included so that the enquirer knew what to ask for as and when they requested more information. At the same time, it was noted that this name will not mean anything to someone unfamiliar with the programme. This has implications for how it is used in the advertising and marketing activity (i.e. the name will not catch and hold the reader's attention on its own in a headline).

Respondents felt that radio, bus and newspaper ads were appropriate for the target audience. Posters and leaflets in community venues were also felt to be a good idea. Posters at railway stations and advertorial in retirement magazines were felt to be less so.

Learning for the future

It is recommended that:

- (1) the delivery of information about the programme is reviewed further, to ensure consistency, and action is taken to ensure a pro-active approach and better informed staff;
- (2) the communication strategy for, and execution of, the regional marketing and advertising activity is also reviewed. A number of guidelines are suggested in the report to aid this process. They include recommended communication priorities (e.g. flag who the ad is addressing up front, lead with the most motivating benefit) and more general guidelines on the creative approach and terminology used, the role of imagery, and the need for an easy way to access more information (specifically, via the Jobcentre).

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to New Deal 50 plus

New Deal 50 plus is a labour market initiative aimed at getting people aged 50 and over, and who have been claiming work related benefits for six months or more, back into paid employment. The programme is available to people who have been claiming Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA), Income Support (IS), Incapacity Benefit (IB) or a combination, for six months or more. Credits only recipients, partners and those receiving Invalid Care Allowance or Bereavement Allowances may also be eligible. The programme provides access to one-to-one advice and guidance on finding work through a New Deal Personal Adviser (NDPA), a tax-free wage top-up (Employment Credit), and a Training Grant for those in receipt of the Employment Credit.

Jobcentre guidelines require staff to inform suitable clients of the programme once they have been unemployed for six months. Some offices are proactive and also contact clients who have been on other benefits as soon as they become eligible. There is also a mailshot every quarter to non-JSA clients who are eligible for the programme (aged 50 plus and unemployed for six months).

The Institute for Employment Studies carried out a programme of evaluation for New Deal 50 plus beginning in Spring 2000. Eight reports have been published to date. The delivery of the programme was reviewed in Pathfinder areas soon after its introduction, using qualitative research to explore the views of Employment Service (ES) and Benefits Agency (BA) staff, and then nationally. Qualitative research with New Deal 50 plus clients was carried out alongside the initial staff research, and continued in 2001 using longitudinal studies to assess longer term client outcomes.

Quantitative surveys were carried out among clients in late 2000 and early 2001 in order to provide quantitative data on their experiences on the programme. In addition to the individual reports for each study, a summary report has also been published¹.

1.2 Background to the research

Since its introduction, most of the clients who have joined the New Deal 50 plus programme have been JSA claimants rather than those in receipt of IS, IB or SDA.

¹ *Evaluation of the New Deal 50 plus: Summary Report* by John Atkinson, Institute for Employment Studies, ESR103, December 2001.

This was believed to reflect that fact that, until recently when Jobcentre Plus was introduced, non-JSA clients typically had limited access to Jobcentres, and therefore fewer opportunities to see or be given information about the New Deal 50 plus programme. In order to help redress the balance, the Employment Service empowered the regions to undertake local marketing campaigns to increase the take-up of the programme, both generally as well as specifically amongst non-JSA claimants (i.e. those receiving IS, IB or SDA, and dependent partners of people on these benefits).

The nine ES regions² have undertaken a wide range of marketing activities. These have included 'above the line' activities such as radio and press advertising, as well as a wide variety of 'below the line' initiatives such as community displays, media articles, direct mail, flyers, posters and attendance at Job Fairs. The promotional activities began mid 2001 and continued through the early part of 2002.

Each region was required to evaluate the success of the marketing in their area. In addition, a quantitative evaluation of administrative data was undertaken by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to assess the overall increase in take-up of the programme. This included monitoring of initial interviews and the take-up of the related Employment Credit at national level.

Qualitative research was commissioned from BMRB International as part of the national evaluation. It was required to provide an overview of how the marketing campaigns had worked; regional comparisons were not required. The Employment Service was particularly interested in how the marketing activity had been received by non-JSA claimants, women and ethnic minorities. The non-JSA claimants were of particular interest as the Employment Service had no regular contact with them so there was no intervention by Jobcentre staff to tell them about the New Deal 50 plus programme in person.

It was also important that the research complement and add to the learning from the other elements of the evaluation programme. In addition, the findings of the research were needed to provide feedback that would aid the development of future marketing activity.

1.3 Aims of the research

The key objective was to examine the effectiveness of marketing strategies across the regions. A number of specific questions were also posed in the research brief:

- how did clients hear about New Deal 50 plus?

² The research was carried out before the introduction of Jobcentre Plus which changed the number of regions to eleven.

- how effective have the marketing strategies been?
- which of the marketing strategies work?

Following the commissioning of the study, a number of areas to be explored in detail were agreed. These included the following intermediate factors which determine or influence the effectiveness of marketing and advertising campaigns:

- the appropriateness of the communication channel to the target audience. (i.e. given their lifestyle, which are the most appropriate media for communicating with the New Deal 50 plus target audience? Do they pick up leaflets? Do they see bus-side ads? Do they listen to the radio?);
- the impact of the marketing activity (i.e. how noticeable is it? Which communication channel or campaign is most likely to get the attention of the target audience?);
- the relevance of the marketing activity (i.e. is the message being communicated relevant to the target audience?);
- the perceived usefulness of the message (i.e. is it telling the target audience something useful? Does it bring people closer to finding out about or joining the New Deal 50 plus programme?);
- the appropriateness of the copy style to the target audience (i.e. is the language used appropriate?);
- type of response required and ease of response. (i.e. how can reader or listener follow up the message? What does the marketing activity suggest that they do next? How easy is it for them to access the New Deal 50 plus programme this way?)

1.4 Research methodology

This research adopted a qualitative methodology. Qualitative methods, such as group discussions and in-depth interviews, are ideal for exploring communication issues. They are particularly suitable for evaluating advertising and marketing campaigns using a range of approaches as they enable a hands-on review of the different types of campaign material, and a discussion of the relative strengths and weaknesses of each communication channel used.

The methodology for the research was tailored to the availability of clients meeting the sample specification who could be contacted by telephone. Telephone recruitment is the standard approach for recruiting jobseekers and benefit claimants for this sort of research. The number of potential respondents with phone numbers was relatively low, especially when viewed across possible group discussion catchment areas. (Our experience has shown that there is a distance beyond which respondents will not travel to attend a group discussion or interview). This required that a mix of mini group discussions and depth interviews be used. (Mini group discussions are smaller than standard sized groups and therefore easier to recruit.)

The mini group discussions carried out for this research consisted of five or six individuals, and lasted for around 90 minutes. The depth interviews were an hour in duration.

As there was no need for regional comparisons, the research was carried in a small number of areas specifically chosen so that a range of different media and communication channels could be reviewed. The areas were also chosen to enable mini group discussions to be carried out, wherever possible.

The research structure by location was as follows:

- Region A 4 depth interviews
- Region B 1 mini group and 2 depth interviews
- Region C 4 depth interviews
- Region D 1 mini group and 2 depth interviews

This approach enabled BMRB Qualitative to explore the issues and opinions necessary to meet the research objectives set for this study. A detailed understanding of respondent views would not have been so readily accessible using other research methods. It should be noted that this research did not aim to produce statistics, or measure the extent of views and opinions; rather it aimed to explore the views and experiences of respondents with regard to New Deal 50 plus and its regional marketing campaigns.

1.5 Research sample

The sample consisted of those who had joined the New Deal 50 plus programme during the initial period of the marketing activity. This maximised the chance that they had seen, heard and responded to the marketing activity in their region.

The only other recruitment criteria related to the benefits that they were or had recently been receiving as the Employment Service was particularly interested in non-JSA claimants (i.e. those claiming IS, IB, and SDA, and dependent partners of people on these benefits). A review of the New Deal 50 plus client database revealed that far more JSA claimants joined the programme during October 2001 – January 2002 than non-JSA claimants. Recruitment quotas were therefore set to deliver a mix of JSA and non-JSA respondents, as follows:

- mini groups: two or three respondents to be non-JSA claimants, and three or four respondents to be JSA claimants
- depth interviews: all interviewees to be non-JSA claimants

These quotas ensured that at least half of the respondents in each region were non-JSA claimants. Women and ethnic minorities were also key target audience groups for the ES marketing activity.

As the initial review of the database suggested that there were very few such clients on the database, recruitment quotas were not set for these sub-sample groups. However the recruiters working on the project were made aware of their priority status, and asked to contact any such clients on the list supplied for recruitment in their area before moving onto other potential respondents. The number of client records used for recruitment in each area were as follows:

Region A	86 records supplied 4 people contacted in order to arrange 4 interviews
Region B	96 records supplied 24 people contacted to arrange mini group (of 7 people) and 2 interviews
Region C	109 records supplied 27 people contacted to arrange 4 interviews
Region D	101 records supplied 29 people contacted to arrange mini group (of 7 people) and 2 interviews

The sample recruited for the project consisted of the following:

- 25 people in total
- 16 men and 9 women
- 13 employed and 12 unemployed people
- 14 receiving the New Deal 50 plus Employment Credit
- 4 currently receiving incapacity or disability benefits

The recruited sample also included a few who had received some form of incapacity or disability benefit in the past. Health problems reported by respondents included both on-going conditions (e.g. hernia, bad back) and short-term, more recent complaints (e.g. depression, illness, heart by-pass operation). The sample also included several lone parents (male and female), a mother of a disabled daughter, and a carer of an elderly, ill mother.

1.6 Recruitment and fieldwork

Recruitment was undertaken using extracts from the ES database of New Deal 50 plus clients who joined the programme during October 2001 – January 2002. Prior to the start of recruitment, BMRB Qualitative had telephone numbers added to the database (where they were available), and a letter was sent to all potential respondents telling them about the research. They were given the opportunity to request not to be involved, and details of those 'opting out' were deleted from the recruitment lists prior to the start of recruitment.

The fieldwork was conducted by two researchers from BMRB Qualitative (Christine Garland and Sarah Bond) who each visited two of the four locations covered by the study. The fieldwork was carried out between 20 and 27 March 2002.

1.7 Marketing materials reviewed

The research involved a hands-on review of regional marketing materials in the appropriate areas. For example, the respondents in Region B looked at, and commented on, a number of elements of the marketing campaign that had been developed and run in their region.

The stimulus material used for the research consisted of original materials (e.g. leaflets, fliers) and A4 colour photocopies copies of final art work (e.g. posters, promotional card). Radio ads were reviewed either by listening to the ad played from an audio cassette, or in one instance, by reviewing the scripts for the ad. (It should be noted that this latter approach is not recommended as a script cannot give a completely accurate idea of how a radio ad will sound.)

The materials reviewed during the research were as follows:

- Region A: birthday card, bus ads (inside and back), Job Fair leaflets
- Region B: press ad, railway station poster, promotional card, magazine article / advertorial, leaflet
- Region C: birthday card, 2 press ads, radio ad
- Region D: direct mail, radio ad, press ad

The order in which the materials were reviewed was rotated across groups and depth interviews. This was to avoid any order effects. (During research, responses to communication materials are typically influenced by the order in which they are introduced to respondents. Therefore, if an item is shown first in one group discussion or depth interview, it will be shown last in another.) Where time allowed, the respondents also reviewed and commented on the introductory New Deal 50 plus booklet produced by ES Head Office and distributed nationally.

1.8 Report outline

Following this introductory section, **Chapter two** gives some background on the employment history of the research respondents, their potential for future employment, and their experiences of the New Deal 50 plus programme. **Chapter three** covers sources of awareness of New Deal 50 plus, and respondent recall of marketing or advertising activity for the programme. It also details their views on the need to publicise New Deal 50 plus.

Chapter four reports respondent feedback on the regional marketing materials used as stimulus material in the research. The conclusions of the project are summarised in **Chapter five**. This is followed by learning for the future in **Chapter six**.

The discussion guide for the research, and copies of the stimulus materials used are included in the appendices to this report.

2 Background to New Deal 50 plus clients

2.1 Employment history: different client types

The employment history of respondents varied considerably across the sample. It was often linked to the economic history of the local area which differed between the four research locations visited. It also reflected the education and demographics of individual respondents. To provide an idea of the circumstances of the respondents included in this study, three specific types of New Deal 50 plus client are described below.

A number of the respondents were skilled and had considerable experience of working in a single industry. They had usually undertaken training as part of their job and had technical rather than academic qualifications. Several had achieved positions of responsibility (e.g. supervisor or manager level). They had been made redundant following the down-sizing or closure of their company, usually in response to global trends or an economic downturn.

A minority of respondents were unskilled and had worked in a number of industry sectors, without any significant form of career progression. Most had had relatively little training, and were without technical or academic qualifications. They reported that the employment situation had become more competitive, and that employers were hiring fewer people, usually due to less favourable economic circumstances in their area.

The sample included a significant proportion of people whose employment had been interrupted by health or family problems. For example, respondents had left employment as a result of a hernia, depression following bereavement, and stress. Health problems of family members had also led a few respondents to stop working.

Similarly, lone parents had stopped work in order to look after young children. In these cases, the resulting break from work was often quite long (e.g. several years) and had limited their opportunity for developing skills and gaining experience.

2.2 Potential for future employment

The research feedback suggests that two factors determine an individual's potential for, and likely success in, finding employment. The first of these is their past experience and the skills they have to offer as a result. The second is the number and range of employment opportunities open to them in the area in which they live.

The skilled respondents reported that, on becoming unemployed, they had often been quite surprised to find that their experience and expertise were no longer relevant to the local labour market. They discovered that there were few jobs being advertised in the area for people with their background and skills, and this was likely to be the case for the foreseeable future.

This prompted many to re-evaluate their circumstances and employment opportunities. They realised that if they wanted to return to employment in the future, they might have to take a lower paid or lower status job in a new field. They often had to accept that they might not have the opportunity to use their experience and skills within the workplace again. For some, this led to depression and a loss of confidence. This situation was not helped by the fact that many of the office jobs available in their area required skills that factory based employees did not have (e.g. computer skills).

A number of research respondents reported their success in transferring or developing their skills, which had enabled them to move into a new type of work. For example, an engineering manager had become a trainer. An experienced account clerk had returned to employment as an office manager following a long illness. Several of those who had made a career change, or taken a lower status job, were keen to develop skills appropriate to their new environment in order to progress further (i.e. get promotion and higher pay).

2.3 Other people's attitudes to over 50s

All respondents were aware that their age was a barrier to their future employment. They identified two reasons. Practically, it is harder to learn new skills and adapt to a new environment when you are older. The second barrier is psychological: it is hard to accept that your past experience and abilities are less relevant, or unwanted, when you are older. Respondents reported that this fact was not always recognised by the Jobcentre staff they came into contact with. Some felt that they could have been more sensitive or understanding.

"I felt invisible... I shouldn't be so stupid to want another job at my age"
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

"I was actually quite angry with the way I was treated, you know. It was like - I am giving you this job and you will take this job"
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

Respondents with health conditions reported that it was even harder to overcome the sense of rejection or depression when they became unemployed and could see no future opportunities in their area.

“I had a heart attack just after [the company closed], so I really thought I was on the scrap heap and I was incapable”

(Region B, male, employed)

Some respondents identified an additional factor which they felt reduced their chances of employment. They reported that some employers were wary of employing older people to work alongside younger staff. They anticipate tension or discomfort between the different age groups, and specifically when a young manager was in charge of employees older than he or she was.

2.4 Opinion and experience of New Deal 50 plus

Views on the programme varied with the level of involvement that respondents had had to date, and their current employment status. The most positive feedback came from those who had found a job and were working. In reporting their opinion of the programme, they spontaneously mentioned the **wage top-up** first.

“I think that’s a real, key thing”

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

“The payment sounded very, very interesting”

(Region B, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

“That’s the essence of the whole thing. It’s to tempt you to take something which you wouldn’t normally do, something that’s less money”

(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

Many of those currently working reported that the additional money available through the programme had made a considerable difference to their circumstances. They would not have considered applying for some jobs, or taken the job they were offered, without the wage top-up. The extra £40 or £60 meant that it was financially worthwhile for them to move into employment, rather than stay on JSA, IS or IB.

“I think really it was this that made it worthwhile”

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

“I really need a good wage for it to be worth my while to go to work”

(Region D, female, unemployed)

Some respondents liked the fact that the wage top-up was paid directly to them, rather than to their employer. The fact that the wage top-up lasted only for 12 months was not seen to be a major problem. Several pointed out that it gave them a year in which to gain experience so that, when the payments ended, they were in a better position to find a better paid job.

There was relatively little feedback on **the PA help and support** received while New Deal 50 plus clients were looking for employment. This reflected the fact that many had only found out about the programme when they were about to start work. Those who had experienced this part of the programme reported positively.

“She was so friendly, you know, like explained everything. I felt I’d known her for a long time”

(Region C, non-JSA, female, employed)

It should also be noted that a few unemployed respondents did not appear to know that such a service was available; they often were rather vague about the programme as a whole. Levels of awareness and involvement tended to vary by area and with Jobcentre. For example, the four clients interviewed in Region C reported very positively on the Jobcentres they used; the staff they had contact with were very pro-active and helpful. In the other areas, the Jobcentre staff would appear to be less pro-active when dealing with clients over 50 years old.

There was low awareness of the **Training Grant** that was available through the programme. Those who did know of its existence usually did not know how to access it. Specifically, they were unsure of whether they applied for the grant direct to the Jobcentre, or whether it had to be done through their employer.

“But what do I do? Do I go and get myself a computer course and then ring up and ask them to pay?”

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

It should be noted that, when reporting their experiences of the programme, most respondents referred to it as Fifty plus. They tended not to include New Deal in the name of the programme.

“I just say Fifty plus”

(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

They also did not talk about receiving an ‘Employment Credit’ as part of the programme. They referred to an extra payment, often mentioning the amount they received (£40 or £60). When asked if they received an Employment Credit, many were unsure as they were unfamiliar with the terminology.

3 New Deal 50 plus awareness and publicity

3.1 Sources of awareness

In looking for employment, the research respondents had contacted local agencies and used the usual sources of information. For example, they had visited the Jobcentre, looked in local papers, and checked out the local employment bureau. Word of mouth was also an important way of keeping in touch with new opportunities. A minority of respondents had also got involved with agencies in order to access additional advice or training. These included Business Link, Instant Muscle and the Gorbals Initiative.

Many of the respondents had come across the New Deal 50 plus programme during their job search activities. Some had been told by Jobcentre staff when signing on, or enquiring about a job or training opportunity. Others had found out from other sources. Some had found out from more than one source.

Sources other than the Jobcentre included friends who had been on the programme in the past (or knew someone who had been), advisers at employment agencies, or, in several cases, a new employer who informed them about the Employment Credit that was available to them.

“My partner had died and I took it quite badly, so it was really good to get back to work. It was actually a friend of mine told me about the Fifty plus thing”
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

“I found out most of it from this one friend who is quite up on things like that and who was insistent that you will be able to get it”
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

“She [Jobcentre staff] was taking my particulars, and things like that ... she says to me do you know about the New Deal Fifty plus ... that was when I first started signing on ... maybe about two years ago or something. As I say, I was on Working Links programme and they told me about it as well”
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

“I was the only guy on the bus and I got talking to the bus driver, and he said have you heard about the New Deal, you’ll qualify for the New Deal plus. I said I’ve never heard of it, he said, well, if you get down to the Jobcentre, you’ve got to go and ask them because they will not tell you about it, and he said, if you do 40 hours a week you get £60, and 30 hours a week, £40”
(Region B, JSA, male, employed)

“I went to that Training Agency and I got my job ... through the paper, and the blokes there told me about Fifty plus”
(Region B, JSA, male, employed)

The source of awareness tended to reflect the circumstances of the individual as well as their location. For example, most of the Region B respondents (JSA and non JSA) had found out about New Deal 50 plus from a source other than the Jobcentre. In Region D and Region B, those in touch with training or employment agencies often heard about the programme through them. The four interviewees in Region C reported positively on the advice they received from the Jobcentre.

(In reviewing how respondents found out about the programme, it should be remembered that until recently when Jobcentre Plus was introduced, non-JSA clients typically had limited access to Jobcentres and therefore would have fewer opportunities to see or be given information about the programme than JSA clients.)

Given the variation by area and the small number of respondents in the total sample, it is not possible to give an idea of the exact split between those who found out from the Jobcentre and those who found out from other sources. It is possible, however, to report that those who found out from a source other than the Jobcentre were often surprised that they had not been told by Jobcentre staff. It should also be noted that those told by Jobcentre staff did not necessarily have a better understanding of, or involvement in, the programme than those who had found out some other way.

Across the sample as a whole, the respondents' knowledge about the programme was varied. In some cases it was quite limited. Respondents were most likely to know about the extra money that they could claim when working. They were not all aware that the programme also provided extra advice and support from a Personal Adviser when they were looking for a job.

For example, those who had found out about the programme from friends or a new employer were usually told only about the extra money that they could claim when working. Therefore, they did not enquire about the programme until they were about to start a new job. As a result, they had not been told about, or used, the extra advice and support available from the programme's Personal Advisers.

"I thought people had to be in work first, and then, that's when you actually apply for it"

(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

Some respondents reported that it had not been easy to find out about, and join, New Deal 50 plus. Even when they had asked specifically for information about the programme, Jobcentre staff often had to check with a colleague, or they referred the respondent to someone else. This meant that many respondents had made several visits and / or phone calls before they found someone who could explain the programme to them, and tell them how they could join.

"It was quite difficult, I kept ringing round Jobcentres ... I rang up the social security for it, they said no, they said you had to get it from the Jobcentre. I kept ringing up Jobcentres and eventually I got an appointment with ... three separate Personal Advisers on three occasions"

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

"The lady, she said she didn't know whether I was qualified for that or not ... so she went and got another person to come over, and he said, how long have you been on incapacity benefit ... three years, and he says, well, you qualify for it ... And they just gave me a leaflet on it"

(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

"I actually went to the Jobcentre and made an appointment, to see if I could talk to somebody about Business Link or something like that ... I went back and ... he was very nice actually, he actually leaned over the desk and he said, why don't you tell me you want to join the Fifty plus. I want to join the Fifty plus, oh right, here are the forms, and that's how..."

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

"I went back down the Jobcentre and I said I would like to enquire about the New Deal plus, and they said, oh you've got to go upstairs, and I went upstairs and I had the interview, and I said I find it remarkable, I've been unemployed for nearly a year now, I found a job on my own and you've not informed me about the New Deal plus ... I said to this women, this is absolutely crazy, I fulfil all the criteria and I've had to find out myself and it was only a fluke ... she said, well, we're not allowed to advertise it"

(Region B, JSA, male, employed)

It should be noted that the Jobcentre procedures do require staff to tell suitable clients about the programme when they have been unemployed for six months. However, it is not compulsory for clients meeting the qualification criteria to join. The respondent feedback above would suggest that in at least two Jobcentres, the staff have interpreted the voluntary nature of the programme rather too literally; unless the client volunteered the information that they wanted to find out about, or join the programme, they did not tell them about it.

Respondents spontaneously reported their surprise that Jobcentre staff were not better informed. They felt that they should know about the different programmes available so that they can pass on details to clients as and when appropriate.

"I think they need educating as much as anybody else"

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

"I think that the problem is more fundamental ... it's the staff behind the counter. All they're interested in is just processing you through the system"

(Region B, JSA, male, employed)

3.2 Recall and recognition of New Deal 50 plus publicity

When reporting how they found out about the programme, the research respondents made negligible reference to any publicity materials. When prompted, there was little recall of any recent advertising or marketing initiatives. A few mentioned the TV advertising that had been run a little while ago. One or two recalled radio advertising. A few reported that they had seen, or been given, a leaflet or booklet about the programme. There was negligible recognition of the regional marketing materials when they were shown to respondents during the research.

3.3 Perceived need for New Deal 50 plus publicity

Although the respondents could not recall the campaigns in their area, they all agreed that the programme needed to be publicised. There was a general feeling that the best way of achieving this was for Jobcentre staff to automatically tell clients who were over 50 years old. They felt that there was no reason why this could not happen as all the client's details were held on computer, including date of birth. Some respondents suggested that the Jobcentre computer systems were programmed so that staff were prompted to inform clients as and when they reached their fiftieth birthday.

"Why don't you just target them and like have some sort of database where, when they go to sign on, because you've been unemployed for over 6 months, [they ask] do you know ..."

(Region B, male, employed)

The Jobcentre staff's role in informing clients was felt to be important. Some respondents noted that unless they were told about the programme, they would never be in a position to ask for details. Others felt that, even if the programme was advertised in Jobcentres, they still needed to be informed by the staff as posters and leaflets were not always noticed. Several admitted that it did not occur to them that there might be additional help available for them, so did not look at the advertising materials within the Jobcentre.

"I think it would have to be personally ... I know I've seen it or heard it advertised somewhere but I didn't really take a lot of notice. I didn't know what benefit it'd be to me"

(Region C, non-JSA, female, employed)

"The whole culture of going to sign on is that you sign on ... you don't look around"

(Region B, male, employed)

“There’s various posters ... there’s too much about all sorts of things ... there’s nothing that says ... this is for me”

(Region B, male, employed)

“There’s numerous leaflets and booklets about, but they just don’t bring it to your attention”

(Region B, male, employed)

“But if you don’t know, you can’t ask”

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

(It should be noted that prior to the research being carried out, guidelines required JSA clients to be informed about the programme by Jobcentre staff after they had been unemployed for six months. Clients are required to attend an initial interview with an adviser, where they will be told about New Deal 50 plus, given a leaflet containing further information, and offered the opportunity to join the programme. As previously mentioned, all eligible non-JSA clients (aged 50 plus and unemployed for six months) are sent a quarterly mailshot.

As regards the awareness of the programme among Jobcentre staff, regional co-ordinators are able to invite Head Office staff to visit regional offices and conduct workshops on New Deal 50 plus for new advisers, and question and answer sessions for experienced advisers.

In addition, a number of future changes are already planned: starting from July 2002, mailshots will be sent to all eligible clients (JSA and non-JSA) with details of the programme. Following the mailshot, details of those who have been sent the information will be distributed to Regional co-ordinators to cascade to local offices. This will enable those offices wishing to be more proactive to carry out any follow up action they might wish to take.)

As part of the research process, the respondents considered the use of additional publicity methods to tell clients about the programme. It should be noted that they were happy to suggest and consider other methods as long as these were in addition to the Jobcentre staff informing clients of the programme.

A number of advertising and marketing ideas were put forward. It was suggested that the Jobcentre write to clients with details of the programme once they reached fifty. Respondents thought that potential users would be more likely to read through the details if they received them at home; there is more time and fewer distractions. They could then ask further about the programme as and when they next visited the Jobcentre.

“I would send it to your home and in plain English”

(Region B, male, employed)

Respondents suggested that New Deal 50 plus was advertised on the television and / or radio. Posters and ads in local newspapers were also thought to be a good way of making people aware of the programme. Considering where the posters should be sited in order for them to be seen by people over 50 years old, a range of options were put forward, including ads in buses and trains.

"I think the radio is quite good actually because plenty of people listen to radio. It's very simple to work with the radio on"
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

"The underground is a good way of advertising, or buses"
(Region D, male)

Respondents also suggested that posters were put up in Post Offices, doctor's surgeries, supermarkets and pubs, as these were all places regularly visited by people over 50. Those who had visited employment agencies suggested that posters for the programme were put up on their premises as well.

In areas where factory closures or lay-offs had occurred in recent years, respondents felt that it would be useful to include details about New Deal 50 plus with the redundancy paperwork.

"Have you thought of the libraries?"
(Region B, non-JSA, male, unemployed)
"You go into the Post Office to cash your money so you would see the leaflets then"
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

Respondents were asked what the advertising and marketing material should say about the programme. Responses were consistent; they spontaneously suggested that it focus on the financial benefit of the programme.

"Over 50 and it is money"
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

"The benefit of it ... because I am on minimum wage, getting that £60 a week me"
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

"It pays your rent and Council tax"
(Region B, male, employed)

"To know that you're getting that much extra on top of your wages"
(Region C, non-JSA, female, employed)

It should be noted that many of the respondents were either not aware that the programme also offered advice and support from a NDPA, or had found out about it too late to benefit from it. Those that had received this type of help suggested that this was also mentioned within the advertising and publicity material.

4 Review of the regional marketing material

Responses to the materials reviewed during the research are reported below. They are grouped by communication channel or media used.

It should be noted that each item was reviewed only by respondents living in the region in which it had been, or was being, used. There were also two items which had been produced by ES Head Office for national use: a introductory leaflet and a more detailed introductory booklet. The leaflet was included with the material supplied by the Region B region and was therefore reviewed by the Region B respondents. It was also seen and commented on by one or two interviewees in other areas. The introductory booklet was reviewed by a small number of interviewees across the sample, where time allowed.

Please note that unless otherwise stated, the ads were not recognised by the respondents. Copies or references of the ads reviewed in this report are included in Appendix 2.

4.1 Responses to New Deal 50 plus posters

4.1.1 Bus ads : Region A

Two bus ads were reviewed by respondents in Region A, one on the back of the bus and one that would be presented on an inside panel. They used the same image (a pleased looking older man) and headline (*Over 50 and past it... you must be joking*). At the bottom of the ad there was a phone number and an invitation to ring to more information. The inside panel ad featured a free (0800) phone number. The ad on the back of the bus included a local phone number. Copies of the ads are included in Appendix 2, pages 2 and 3.

Respondents thought that advertising on buses was a good idea; it meant that the ads could be seen by people using the buses, and those driving or walking through the local area.

“Great idea”

(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

The headline of the ads was felt to be both eye catching and relevant as it made it clear that the ad was for people over 50. The image was also thought to be appropriate; the person featured looked over 50 years. However, the ad made no mention of the benefits available to those over 50. Specifically, there was no mention of the extra money available as a wage top-up. There was therefore no motivating reason for the reader to want to follow it up.

“It just says New Deal so you don’t know there’s any sort of money”
(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

“It doesn’t say call at the Jobcentre”
(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

The ad only gave a phone number as the source of further information. Respondents felt that it would have been more useful for it to have mentioned that they could also ask for details at their local Jobcentre. Many regularly visited their Jobcentre so could have done so.

In the absence of this information, people could only respond to the ad if they had been able to remember or write down the phone number from the passing bus. Finally, the ads did not include the programme’s name (i.e. New Deal 50 plus). This added a further barrier; it is harder to ring up to ask for information if you do not know what exactly you are asking about.

“It doesn’t give much information, does it?”
(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

“You can’t remember that [local phone number] if you are walking along”
(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

Overall, the limited amount of information given on the ads would appear to reduce the likelihood of the ad being followed up. However, the use of buses as a way of advertising New Deal 50 plus was endorsed.

4.1.2 Promotional card : Region B

Small scale colour copies of the promotional card were reviewed in Region B. It had three elements: an image of a smiling man reading a letter, a headline (*If you are aged 50 or over and start work you may be eligible for a wage top-up of between £40 and £60 per week*) and a single line of text (*Visit your local jobcentre for more details*) just above the New Deal ‘branding stripe’ along the bottom of the card. A copy of the promotional card is included in Appendix 2, page 4.

Respondents thought that it was a very clear and motivating introduction to the programme. It told the person looking at the ad who it was for (people aged 50 and over) and what the potential benefit of the service being advertised was (a £40 or £60 wage top-up). It also told you what to do next to get more information.

“Everybody... understand that”
(Region B, non JSA, male, unemployed)

"It tells you the money and it's clear"
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

"I think what this is - is for you to have it in your head, so instead of somebody furtively saying ask about 50 Plus or a bus driver says ... you actually ask"
(Region B, JSA, male, employed)

There was a single criticism: the promotional card did not tell the reader what the programme was called (i.e. New Deal 50 plus). It would have been useful for this to have been included so that the enquirer could ask for it by name at the Jobcentre. However, this was not felt to be a major flaw as the promotional card told potential programme users enough about it for them to want to find out more, and to be able to describe the programme to a Jobcentre adviser.

The design of the card was felt to enhance the communication of the headline. The image complemented the written message, and the simple, uncluttered layout was easy to read. Respondents felt that it would be noticed and read if placed on a noticeboard in a Post Office, doctor's surgery, library or in a similar public space.

"You're ... in a queue and you read everything in sight, don't you?"
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

4.1.3 Railway station poster : Region B

An A4 copy of the *Welcome to XXXX* poster was reviewed by the Region B respondents. Half of the poster consisted of a map of the area and railway related information. The other half featured an ad for New Deal 50 plus. There was a headline (*"I used to see young people in the dole queue and think, what chance do I have?"*) and a black and white photo showing an older woman. Additional, smaller sized text at the bottom of the ad stated that New Deal could help people over 50 get back to work, and mentioned 'up to £60 on top of your weekly wage'. A phone number, teletext reference and website address were included for further information. There was also what looked like a tear-off coupon for requesting more information at the bottom of the poster. A copy of the poster is included in Appendix 2, page 5.

Opinions were divided as to the suitability of a railway station for an ad about New Deal 50 plus. Some felt that it might be a good idea as it would be passed by considerable numbers of people each day. Others thought that these passers-by would not be looking for, or want to stop to look at, a poster about an Employment Service programme.

"Does anyone stand and read anything at the station?"
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

Responses to the ad were fairly muted, and generally less than enthusiastic. The mention of 'dole' in the headline suggested that the ad was something to do with unemployment. It did not flag up anything about the New Deal 50 plus programme. It also did not give the reader anything to encourage them to read on.

"It would still leave me with all the questions that I had about it .. the dole queue, I think do you have to be signing on"

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

"It looks like she's just having a chat instead of doing any work at all"

(Region B, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

The text at the bottom of the poster was felt to provide some idea of what was being advertised, and how to find out more about it. However, respondents were confused by the tear-off coupon and queried if the ad they were reviewing was indeed a poster. Coupons are familiar in magazine or newspaper ads, but not on posters.

Respondents also pointed out that they were unlikely to use two of the three suggested means of requesting further information; they did not use teletext, and most did not have Internet access. The ad did not suggest that they ask at their Jobcentre which was felt to be the easiest way of finding out more, and the option that they would most likely follow up.

"Tele text? I never think about it"

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

"When you're at a station, do you have a pen and paper? [to write down the phone number]"

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

4.2 Responses to New Deal 50 plus leaflets

4.2.1 Leaflets and fliers : Region A

A number of leaflets were reviewed by respondents in Region A. They included a flier for use in the local area. This was A5 in size with text on one side. There was a headline: *Are you over 50 year old?* This was followed by a list of the qualifying criteria for New Deal 50 plus, and the offer of *one to one advice and possible financial help when you find a job*. The local Jobcentre phone number and a helpline number were included at the bottom of the flier. Copies of the flier is included in Appendix 2, page 6.

The other leaflets had been produced for use at a Job Fair and existed in several versions. They all followed the same design: a single sheet of paper with a green, purple and orange coloured background and text divided into three sections. The first section consisted of the headline *Life begins at 50*. This was followed by details of the qualifying criteria and programme benefits.

The leaflets varied in size; both A4 and A5 versions were included in the research. They also differed slightly in content; some concluded with the suggestion that the reader found out more about New Deal 50 plus at their local Jobcentre. Others gave a person's name and phone number. Copies are included in Appendix 2, pages 7 and 8.

The **local flier** did not impress respondents (Appendix 2, page 6). While it was clear who it was addressing (people over 50), the potential benefits being offered were unclear and unmotivating. Specifically, there was no mention of the £40 or £60 a week wage top-up available to clients on the programme.

"It doesn't say why ... it doesn't say you could get up to £60 a week ... which is basically the essence of the whole thing"
(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

The design and the production quality of the flier was also criticised; it was felt to look like junk mail and this did not create a positive image for, or positive expectations of, the programme.

"Very drab"
(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

"This looks more like something that you'd get through the door and throw straight in the bin"
(Region A, JSA, male, unemployed)

The **Job Fair fliers / leaflets** generated a more positive response (Appendix 2, pages 7 and 8). It was clear from the headline who they were addressing. The benefits of the programme were clear: respondents focused in on the offer of £60 a week. They also felt that it would be easy to follow up and find out more by asking at the Jobcentre or by ringing the person mentioned on the leaflet.

"... got the actual detail of the money – that's attractive"
(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

[headline] *"grabs your eye"*
(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

There was a general feeling that giving someone's name and / or a direct phone number makes the process of finding more information easier. It suggests that the person answering the phone will be used to receiving such calls, and will be willing and able to provide the requested information.

4.2.2 National leaflet

The national leaflet for the programme was included with the Region B marketing materials. It was therefore reviewed in detail by the Region B respondents. It was also shown to, and commented on by one or two respondents in other areas. The feedback was consistently positive. A copy is included in Appendix 2, pages 9 and 10.

The name of the leaflet made it obvious that it was an *Introduction to New Deal 50 plus*. The content was felt to be clear and comprehensive. Respondents thought that the 'question and answer' approach was accessible and easy to follow. They also liked the fact that the programme benefits were given early on in the text, with the details of the wage top-up up front (before the details of the other benefits).

"Helpful. Very informative ... I like the way you've done it, how do I find out more, you look at every page ... yes, I like that, they ...should be given to you as soon as you've signed on"

(Region B, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

"This seems to have most things in it, doesn't it. This does seem to have everything that I said wasn't in the other ones, when I think about it"

(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

"Easy to understand ... gives you the beef of it in the first few paragraphs"

(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

"It tells you everything ... it explains straight away here ... what you can expect to get"

(Region C, non-JSA, female, employed)

Respondents commented positively on the detailed list of qualifying criteria; they thought that this would help the reader work out if they would be able to join the programme, and so if it was worthwhile taking further action. The photographic images used in the leaflet were felt to be appropriate; they showed older people (men and women) in workplace scenarios.

It was also clear what readers would need to do next if they were interested: ring or visit the Jobcentre. It should be noted that although the leaflet also gave a website address as an alternative way of finding out more, most respondents did not have access to the Internet.

4.3 Responses to New Deal 50 plus radio ads

4.3.1 Radio ads : Region C

The interviewees in Region C reviewed two radio ads that were played to them from an audio cassette tape, and two more in script form. Scripts for all four ads are included in Appendix 2 of this report, pages 11 - 14.

The two ads on tape differed only in the gender of the actor reading the script. The ad called *50 plus (male)* used a male voice; *50 plus (female)* used a woman's voice. Respondents found both ads confusing. They did not understand who they were talking to, or what they was trying to get the listener to do. They were both written in the first person plural, with the speaker sounding as if he or she was speaking on behalf of older people in the workplace. Several thought that the ads were trying to tell employers that such people were worth hiring. They did not include anything about the benefits of the New Deal 50 plus programme to older people looking for employment.

"Is that supposed to be for me looking for a job, or for people that are going to employ people who are over 50?"

(Region C, non-JSA, female, employed)

"It's telling employers not to be – what's the new word nowadays? [ageist]"

(Region C, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

The two ads reviewed in two scripts took a different approach. The ad called *My mother* featured a son talking about how his mother had returned to work. The ad called *My dad* was similar, but with a story about a father.

Both scenarios were found to be initially intriguing. However towards the end of each, they were felt to become rather unrealistic and less appealing.

"Quite good ... for a start, 55, thinking you can get into work at 55 and then actually getting a job ... I don't believe that she'd be his boss"

(Region C, non-JSA, female, employed)

Respondents thought that they were trying to introducing a note of humour; in their opinion it was not successful. They also noted that the ads did not include any details of the benefits of the programme for people like them; specifically, they did not mention the wage top-up.

"It hasn't explained enough about how anybody gets him a job"

(Region C, non-JSA, female, employed)

4.3.2 Radio ad : Region D

A single radio ad on audio tape (called *Fifty somethings*) was reviewed by the Region D respondents. It started with a list of names of people who had become famous for what they achieved after they were 50. The list included Beethoven, Alfred Hitchcock and Alex Ferguson. It was followed by details of the New Deal 50 plus programme. A scripts for all the ad is included in Appendix 2, page 15.

Respondents had no problem understanding the ad, but many felt that the most of it was not really relevant to them. They did not identify with any of the people mentioned. Some also pointed out that the people featured had achieved their success after many years of hard work in their particular field. This was not the case in their lives.

"We're no writing music"
(Region D, JSA, female, unemployed)

"We are everyday working class people who are looking for a wee bit extra"
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

"I think it was a wee bit patronising"
(Region D, male, JSA)

The ad was thought to be trying to be clever. In doing so, it would appear that it missed an opportunity to involve the listener. Some respondents felt that the lack of relevance meant that many people would not listen to the end. They would therefore miss the part of the ad which was felt to be relevant. Respondents highlighted the details of the extra payment to those on the programme (up to £3,000 a year and £60 a week) as the most motivating part of the ad.

"Some people can have a tax free payment of £3,000 a year"
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

4.4 Responses to New Deal 50 plus press ads

4.4.1 Press ad : Region D

The Region D press ad featured an image of a man alongside the headline *Wanted: People who've Been there Seen it Done it*. There was additional, smaller text suggesting that people over 50 who wanted to get back to work contact their Jobcentre and ask about the New Deal 50 plus support package. The New Deal website address was also given as a source of further information. The background of the ad was orange (New Deal branding colour). The ad is included in Appendix 2, page 16.

Respondents thought that the image and headline were eye catching and made it clear that the ad was addressing people over 50.

“I think it would draw your attention and you'd read it”
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

“I think because of the colour as well, it would stand out. I think it would catch your eye and you would kind of read it”
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

The subject of the ad was not immediately clear from the headline. When the more detailed text was read, respondents felt that it did not explain the benefits enough. For example, there was no mention of the £40 or £60 wage top-up. It did mention a 'support package', but did not explain what exactly this comprised of. Without an explanation, respondents felt that it would not be obvious to the reader whether this would be relevant or useful. There was some feeling that the ad would be more motivating if the programme benefits were made clearer, and were more up front in the ad.

“It's no telling you really what the New Deal actually gives you. It doesn't mention that you're getting extra money for doing your job, which to me would attract. If ... that advert said that you're going to get an extra £60 to top up your wages, more people would go”
(Region D, JSA, female, unemployed)

Respondents also stated that they would have preferred a phone number, rather than the website address, as an alternative way for accessing further details about the programme.

4.4.2 Press ad : Region C

The Region C respondents viewed two colour press ads. Each consisted of a headline (*New Deal 50 plus*) and a photographic image, followed by the same text and contact details. One image showed a smiling woman walking towards the camera; the other showed a smiling man reading a letter. Copies of the ads are included in Appendix 2, pages 17 and 18.

As with the radio ads played to these respondents, there was confusion about who these ads were addressing. The text was written in the first person plural and respondents were unsure who “we” was meant to be; the content suggested that it was people over 50. They were even less sure who the “you” mentioned in the ad was. There was also no identification with the people shown in the images. They looked too busy and successful to be people who were unemployed and looking for a job.

“There’s not a lot of information on it ... It’s says experienced, skilled ... I’m not ... I’d think, oh well, it’s only for people who are like that”
(Region C, non-JSA, female, employed)

While the ad concluded with the suggestion that the reader ring for more information about the benefits of New Deal 50 plus, the text did not include any details of the potential benefits of the programme for them (i.e. no mention of the wage top-up or NDPA support).

4.4.3 Press ad : Region B

The Region B mini group respondents and depth interviewees reviewed a small, colour press ad that had appeared in the local paper. The headline read *Lone parent looking for work?* Details of the New Deal 50 plus programme were included in the text of the ad, following information about help available for lone parents. A copy of the ad is included in Appendix 2, page 19.

At first glance, the ad looked as if it was solely for lone parents. Respondents reported that given its headline, they would not given it a second glance if they had come across it in their newspaper. They felt that if it the ad was meant to be advertising New Deal 50 plus, this needed to be clear up front. For example, they suggested that the programme name be included in the headline.

“The first thing that hits you is single parent”
(Region B, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

“First of all I thought, has she given me the right one? ... that New Deal Fifty plus, should be in ... as bigger writing as lone parent”
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

“I wouldn’t bother with that”
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

On reading the details about New Deal 50 plus included in the text of the ad, respondents reported that it did explain who it was for, and give information about what it delivered (a Personal Adviser, Employment Credit). However, there was some feeling that the list of programme details did not really make the benefits tangible.

For example, it stated that people on the programme got a Personal Adviser. It did not give any idea of how this adviser could or would help, or how he or she would differ from other Jobcentre advisers. More importantly, it did not explain what the term ‘Employment Credit’ meant. It was not obvious that this meant that the programme would provide an additional payment for those over 50 who took a job paying less than £15,000 per year.

“It says you get a Personal Adviser, but it doesn’t explain what that means”
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

“[it should say] you will get a Personal Adviser who will help you through the Employment Credit, Training Grants, back to work training”
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

“For example, this one, you might not even realise that you are going to get money”
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

4.5 Responses to New Deal 50 plus direct mail

4.5.1 Birthday cards : Region C and Region A

Responses to both birthday cards were similar although the cards themselves differed considerably. The Region A card had an illustration of a slice of birthday cake on the front cover and two copylines: *Happy Birthday* and *Have we got a great deal for you*. The text inside the card detailed the financial benefits of the programme and suggested that the reader contact their Jobcentre to request an interview. A copy of the card is included in Appendix 2, pages 20 and 21.

The Region C card consisted of an outer cover with the copyline *Congratulations* and images of smiling faces. The inner card carried the copyline *We would like to offer you Best Wishes on your Birthday!* The text inside and on the back explained New Deal 50 plus. This part of the card was heavily branded New Deal. A copy of the card is included in Appendix 2, pages 22 - 24.

Respondents were split over the idea of a fiftieth birthday card being used to inform JSA and benefit claimants about the New Deal 50 plus programme. Although the number of respondents was small (four in each area), it would appear that views split along gender lines.

The men felt that a birthday card from the Jobcentre was too much like ‘junk mail’, and not an appropriate way of giving them potential important and useful information. There was a feeling that the format was in danger of trivialising the message. The female interviewees had no problem with a birthday card being used this way.

“Brilliant ... a lot of people don’t know”
(Region A, non-JSA, female, unemployed)

“That’s quite good; that’s impact at the top”
(Region C, non-JSA, female, employed)

“Why waste all their money on that?”

(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

“Gimmicky ... slightly patronising”

(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

All the respondents reported favourably on the content of the cards. This was mainly because the extra payment aspect of the programme was communicated up front. The qualifying criteria for those wishing to join the programme was not felt to be obvious enough. Some respondents felt that it would have been useful for the text to mention that users have to have been unemployed for six months.

“It’s the money, that’s it for a lot of people, isn’t it? - to know that you’re getting something extra”

(Region C, non-JSA, female, employed)

It was clear how the reader could find out more about the programme, and the method suggested (via the Jobcentre) was felt to be appropriate and feasible. The inclusion of a phone number as well was felt to be useful; it enabled those not wanting to go into the Jobcentre to make direct contact with an appropriate ES person who could tell them what they wanted to know.

4.5.2 Direct mail : Region D

The direct mail reviewed in Region D consisted of two items within a bright orange envelope (New Deal branding colours). The first item was an A5 leaflet with the same front cover image and headline as in the press ad. The headline read *Wanted: People who’ve Been there Seen it Done it*. Copies of the two items are included in Appendix 2, pages 25 - 27.

Inside the leaflet, the text explained the programme, including how a PA could help a job seeker and details of the Employment Credit. It also included a space for the name of the relevant person at their Jobcentre. The second item in the envelope was a smaller card carrying the same image as the leaflet and two sentences of text suggesting that the reader visit their local Jobcentre, or log on to the New Deal website, to find out about the New Deal 50 plus programme.

The respondents thought the idea of using direct mail to inform potential New Deal 50 plus users about the programme was a good one. There was some feeling that they would have more time, and so be more likely, to read the leaflet in their home environment.

The leaflet front cover design and headline were felt to encourage reading of it. Respondents thought that recipients would be intrigued to find out what it was about, and so open the leaflet to find out more.

“If I see something over 50 I’m automatically going to read it because it concerns me”

(Region D, JSA, female, unemployed)

The content inside the leaflet was thought to be comprehensive and accessible. It communicated a lot of information in a way that was easy to read and understand. Respondents reported that it explained who the programme was for, and what help and support was available from the Personal Adviser. The practical details (e.g. advice on your CV, free use of photocopier and phone) made them appreciate the potential usefulness of the help on offer. (It should be noted that this was the only communication material researched that actually described what the PA could do practically for the Jobseeker.)

The possibility of receiving extra money when they started work was also explained, and it was clear how they could find out more about, or join, the programme. The inclusion of a specific person’s name in the leaflet was felt to be useful as it suggested that it would be easy to find out more.

“It’s quite good as well because it explains to you the money being tax free”

(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

“You get the name of the person and go and get the info then”

(Region D, male)

The second item in the envelope was not felt to add to their understanding of the programme, or to their likelihood to follow it up. Respondents did not understand why it was included.

“Waste of paper”

(Region D, male)

4.6 Responses to New Deal 50 plus magazine advertorial

The Region B respondents reviewed an article that had been run as a page of advertorial in the magazine *Retired & Living in XXXXX*. The article was split into two columns. The left hand side consisted of detailed text, using a ‘question and answer’ format.

The right hand consisted of a colourful orange column with larger text and a more bullet point approach. This column was headed by two questions: *Are you aged 50 or over and in receipt of benefit for six months or more? Are you looking for work and have a personal income of less than £15,000 a year?* The name of the programme (New Deal 50 plus) was included at the top of the page, above both columns. A copy is included in Appendix 2, page 28.

Respondents did not think that it was appropriate to put details of the New Deal 50 plus programme in a magazine for the retired. They felt that the programme was for people who wanted to continue working, whereas the magazine was for those had completed their working lives.

The two column approach was felt to be a helpful way of providing information about the programme. For example, the right hand side of the ad enabled the reader to get a fairly good idea of what it was about quickly and easily. If you wanted lots of detail, this was provided by the left hand side column. Respondents noted that both gave details of what to do next if readers wanted to join, or find out more.

“That basically tells you what there is, and this explains in more detail”
(Region B, male, employed)

“I will read the coloured areas. Yes, for six months you’re looking for work, yes. You could be - I like the way they put that - you could be entitled to - so it makes you carry on, yes, and they’ve put £60 in great big highlighted black ... yes... please contact your Jobcentre to make an appointment, yes, that is very nice, ten out of ten for that”
(Region B, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

It was clear from respondent comments that the two questions at the top of the right hand column were acting as the ‘hook’ into the ad. In other words, they caught the attention and interest of the reader and prompted them to read on.

On considering the name of the programme written across the top of the ad, it was noted that this would not mean anything unless the reader already knew of New Deal 50 plus. Therefore, while it was important that the name of the programme was included somewhere in the ad (so the reader knew what to ask for when they contacted the Jobcentre), it had no real meaning until it had been explained. It did not act as an effective ‘hook’ into the advertorial.

“You need something to grab your attention for people that don’t know anything about it”
(Region B, non-JSA, female, employed)

4.7 Responses to national New Deal 50 plus booklet

The introductory New Deal 50 plus booklet was reviewed in the mini groups and depth interviews when time allowed. There was some recognition among this small number of respondents; some remembered being given the booklet by a PA when they first found out about or joined the programme. A copy of the booklet front cover is included in Appendix 2, page 29.

“I thought it was quite good. Really good ... I got it through after I had applied for it, when I sent the form and applied for it”
(Region D, non-JSA, female, employed)

On reviewing the booklet, there was some feeling that if they hadn't already known what it was for, the content would not have been obvious from the front cover. The title of the booklet (*Putting yourself in the picture*) did not include the programme name. It also did not flag who the booklet was for (people over 50 wanting to find employment).

There was more positive feedback on the content and overall layout of the text inside the booklet. Respondents felt that it was written in a way that recognised their priorities and concerns, and used the language familiar to them. They also found the 'question and answer' approach accessible and easy to follow.

“Decent wage in the first paragraph is good ... package of support is excellent”
(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

Considering the booklet's design, several pointed out that it used large print which meant that it was easy to read. The bright colours also gave it a positive feel. However the images used inside the booklet did not add to, or enhance, the communication of the text. The disjointed style meant that the workplace scenarios featured in the photographs were missed. There was also no obvious reason for using such an approach; as a result, respondents were critical when asked their opinion of it. It should be noted that the image style did not detract from the respondent's opinion of the content, and the overall usefulness of the booklet.

“Silly pictures ... happy-go-lucky people smiling”
(Region A, non-JSA, male, unemployed)

5 Conclusions

The research objectives covered three key areas: sources of awareness for the New Deal 50 plus programme; the efficacy of the regional marketing campaigns; and an understanding of how the regional material is working.

The research findings indicate that most respondents had heard about New Deal 50 plus through Jobcentre staff and other people, rather than marketing or advertising activity. The range of people passing on information about the programme has resulted in varied levels of awareness and involvement. For example, many of the research respondents found out too late for them to take advantage of the NDPA support.

It would also appear that Jobcentre staff are not always identifying potential users of the programme and providing them with details as often as they could. In some cases, it appears that this is due to a lack of awareness or detailed understanding of the programme among staff members.

Given the inconsistent delivery of information to potential users of the New Deal 50 plus programme, local marketing and advertising activity could play a useful role. It could help make those people over 50 who are looking for employment aware of the programme's existence, and encourage them to find out more about it. In other words, there is a role for both 'push' and 'pull' communication approaches; that is, Jobcentre staff informing clients of New Deal 50 plus (the 'push'), and advertising and marketing activity prompting clients to ask for further details (the 'pull').

The research confirms that the current regional marketing activity is using appropriate communication channels for the target audience (people over 50 who are looking for employment). For example, local radio, local newspapers, posters and direct mail are all suitable ways of getting information over to those over 50.

However, the current marketing activity would appear to have had a relatively limited impact in the regions included in the study. Recall and recognition was limited. The hands-on review of the marketing material also suggested that some of the activity is likely to have a limited effect. More positively, the research feedback provided useful learning for the future.

6 Learning for the future

The research confirms the potential value of the New Deal 50 plus programme to older jobseekers. It also suggests that there is an opportunity to improve its delivery to potential users in two ways.

Firstly, there is a need for a wider review of how Jobcentre staff are passing on information about the programme to their clients. This method is potentially the most effective way of ensuring that information gets to relevant clients. It is also how Jobcentre clients expect to receive information about such programmes.

A change in the programme delivery is therefore recommended. Specifically, it is recommended that a more pro-active approach is introduced at Jobcentres so that staff automatically inform clients about the programme as soon as they qualify for it. Greater awareness and understanding of the programme among all Jobcentre staff would also help benefit claimants (not on JSA) who often do not know who to contact at the Jobcentre to get further details.

Secondly, there is an opportunity to strengthen the communication of the regional marketing and advertising activity for the programme. The research confirms that the current regional activity is using appropriate communication channels. For example, local radio, local newspapers, posters, and direct mail are all suitable ways of getting information over to those over 50. However, it is recommended that the communication strategy for, and execution of, this activity is reviewed. A number of guidelines are put forward to aid this process.

Overall, those developing marketing and advertising activity for the New Deal 50 plus programme should aim to keep it simple and remember the lifestyle and priorities of the target audience. Clever or complicated ideas run the risk of getting in the way of the desired message. Creative ideas that are not linked to the lives of potential programme users will find it much harder to generate the interest and involvement necessary for the viewer, reader or listener to feel motivated enough to follow up the ad.

It is recommended that the following communication priorities and creative guidelines are borne in mind when developing marketing and advertising activity for New Deal 50 plus:

- The end user (i.e. **who the programme is for**) needs to be flagged up front in an arresting and appropriate way, otherwise people over 50 will not stop to read on or listen further.

- The next communication priority is to get across **how the programme will benefit its users**. Given that the programme has a number of benefits, the advertising / marketing activity needs to focus on the benefit that will be most motivating to, and have most impact on, potential users. The research suggests that this is the fact that users of the programme may qualify for extra money (£40 - £60 a week) when they start work.
- More generally, DWP terminology needs to be avoided or clearly explained in order to ensure that the **programme benefits are made tangible**. For example, it is suggested that the advertising / marketing communication uses 'wage top-up' rather than 'Employment Credit' as the latter means little to many potential users of the programme. It is also suggested that, where possible, practical details about how the PA can help and support a jobseeker on the programme are provided. The statement that a Personal Adviser is included does not always give an accurate or motivating idea of how this could actually benefit the user.
- In deciding how to design and illustrate the advertising / marketing materials, it is recommended that imagery is used to **aid the understanding of, and identification with, the programme**. This can be achieved by using images of people who look over 50 in working scenarios that the reader or viewer can recognise and identify with.
- Given the objectives of the advertising / marketing activity, it is important to make it clear how the reader or listener can find out more about New Deal 50 plus. The research indicates that the option most likely to be followed up by potential users of the programme is the suggestion that they **go to or ring the local Jobcentre**. Where appropriate, it is suggested that a Jobcentre phone number is included. For local activity, it may also be feasible to include the name and direct phone number of the PA with responsibility for the programme.
- Finally, it is recommended that the **name of programme** (New Deal 50 plus) is included in the advertising / marketing activity so that it is clear what the enquirer needs to ask for as and when they contact the Jobcentre.

Appendix 1 : discussion guide

Project: FIFTY PLUS

Job No: 820

INTERVIEW AND DISCUSSION GUIDE : 2nd DRAFT

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

INTRODUCTIONS / WARM UP

Moderator introduction

Explanation of informal approach, MRS Code of Conduct and confidentiality, use of tape recorder etc.

Paired introductions of respondents

- name
- family details
- activities in a typical day

BACKGROUND ON BENEFIT / WORK HISTORY

Check that all respondent(s) joined New Deal 50 Plus programme in last few months.

Check current level of involvement (e.g. initial interview, caseloaded, Employment Credit, Training Grant, etc) but do **not** prompt at this point

Ask respondents to think back to prior to joining; check employment status (were they actively looking for work before they joined ND50 plus?).

Exploration of

- employment history
- benefit claim history (especially length of most recent claim)
 - check health and disability / invalidity issues
 - check caring/childcare responsibilities
- employment opportunities in the area
- changes over time

- facilities in area to help people find work
 - what? where? how useful?

Review of past job search activity

- what done?
- who involved?
- sources of information used?
- past experiences
- resulting expectations? (i.e. likely success in finding job)

Check awareness and usage of local media / communication channels

- what do they watch / listen to / read / look at?
 - do they pick up leaflets and similar as well as access the media?
- perceived usefulness of local media / communication channels when looking for employment
 - why / why not?
- variation by channel

Attitude to / feelings about process undertaken to find employment

- how positive / negative?

Check awareness of specific programmes to aid job search

- what programmes do they know about?
 - who are they for? how do they help?
 - who runs / funds them?
- perceived relevance and usefulness
- sources of awareness about programmes

FINDING OUT ABOUT / JOINING NEW DEAL 50 PLUS

Check source(s) of awareness of New Deal 50 Plus programme

- how did they hear about it?
 - word of mouth vs. communication / marketing activity?
- when did they first hear about it?
- single or multiple sources of awareness?
 - if so, how many?

- did they find out when actively looking for job search help / support OR at other time?
- if recommended to them, from / by whom?

Initial awareness / knowledge of New Deal 50 Plus

- what did initial source(s) of awareness tell them?
- what can they remember being told / hearing / reading?
 - e.g. recall of who it was for, how it could help?
 - was any of it new information?
 - if so what?
- level of resulting interest
 - why / why not?
- perceived usefulness / relevance to respondents

Decision-making process for joining New Deal 50 Plus programme

- what did they do / need to find out?
- why did they join?
 - was there something specific that decided them to join?
 - how / why did initial awareness of programme affect their decision to participate? what else affected their decision?
- when did they join and how long after first hearing?
 - i.e. did they join asap, some time after, etc?
- role of communication / marketing material

Review reasons for joining programme

- expected benefits

If not already covered, check process of joining New Deal 50 Plus

- what did they do once they had heard about it?
- where did they go? who did they see?
- how easy was it to join?

FEEDBACK ON NEW DEAL 50 PLUS TO DATE

Briefly explore experiences since joining

- e.g. initial interview, experience of Personal Advisers
 - level of contact? advice received? results to date?
- if not case-loaded, do they intend to join caseload?
- receipt of / views on Employment Credit

Check current level of knowledge about New Deal 50 Plus

- what have they found out since joining?
 - sources of new information

- awareness / opinion of Employment Credit
 - did they know about this before joining?
- awareness / opinion of Training Grant
 - did they know about this before joining?

Current opinion of New Deal 50 Plus programme

- has their understanding of the programme changed since joining?
 - have expectations of potential benefits changed?
- perceived relevance / usefulness of programme
- confidence in finding work through New Deal 50 Plus

NEW DEAL FIFTY PLUS COMMUNICATION

Check recall of any advertising / communication activity

- spontaneous comments

For each execution / campaign recalled, explore

- what media or channel?
- what was it about?
 - recall of imagery and content
- what did it say about New Deal 50 Plus?
- who was it talking to?
 - who is the target audience?
 - relevance to respondents
 - relevance to the target audience more generally
- what did it want the reader / listener to do?
- impact on them

Check if there is any awareness / perception of a campaign

- if so, what was campaign message and creative idea?

Review of possible communication channels that could be used to tell people about New Deal Fifty Plus

- what would be the best methods and why?
 - spontaneous comments
- identification and prioritisation of possible communication channels
 - pros and cons of each
 - covering: likely impact, suitability for message, and suitability for target audience
- need to use / benefits of using more than one channel
 - why / why not?

Review of what communication should be saying about New Deal Fifty Plus

- key message(s) / communication priorities
 - what?
 - why?
 - variation by audience?
 - variation by communication channel?
- need for multiple messages
 - why / why not?

DETAILED REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

Researcher to explain that feedback is wanted on ads / marketing material used in their area, which they may or may not have seen.

Presentation of stimulus material to be rotated across the groups

For each execution presented:

- spontaneous comments
- check recognition and recall
 - where / when seen or heard?
 - if not previously recalled, why not?
- suitability of communication channel
 - why / why not?
- communication out take
 - understanding / appeal of message
 - role of imagery
 - clarity of text
- branding (i.e. what is it about? who is it from?)
- who is it for / who is it talking to? (i.e. target audience)
- impact
 - i.e. how noticeable / eye-catching / memorable
- desired response of execution (i.e. what does it want the reader / listener to do?)
 - ease of responding
- fit with their knowledge / experience of the scheme
 - does ad give accurate impression of what New Deal 50 Plus is about?

- check opinion / relevance of execution
 - relevance to them (i.e. is it designed for respondents?)
 - how useful is the content to respondent(s)?
 - does it bring people 'nearer' to ND50 plus?
 - if not, why not? what changes are needed / could be helpful?
 - how appropriate is the copy style? is the language used appropriate to a ND50 plus audience?
 - how appropriate is the communication channel?
 - likelihood of responding if seen
- overall strengths and weaknesses
- how and why do particular elements work / don't work?

Repeat for each stimulus item

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Check whether activity / stimulus material reviewed is seen as forming a coherent campaign

- why / why not?

Compare and prioritise executions

- which are most relevant?
- which have most impact / most likely to be seen or heard?
- most likely to prompt response?

Considering all activity as a whole

- positive aspects
- negative aspects
- learning for future marketing campaigns
 - message, channel, branding etc.

SUMMARY

Researcher to summarise and check learning with respondent(s):

- source of awareness of New Deal Fifty Plus
- expectations on joining vs. experiences to date
- most suitable communication channels and messages for marketing activity
- recall and opinion of communication / marketing activity
- views on specific executions / stimulus items

Any other comments that respondents wish to make about New Deal Fifty Plus programme. Thank respondents and close.

Appendix 2 : stimulus material

New Deal 50 plus posters

- bus ad - Region A - 2 ads - Appendix 2
page 2, 3
- promotional card - Region B - page 4
- railway station poster - Region B - page 5

New Deal 50 plus leaflets

- local flier - Region A - page 6
- Job Fair A4 and A5 leaflet - Region A - page 7, 8
- national leaflet - reviewed in Region B - page 9, 10

New Deal 50 plus radio ads

- *50 + male and 50 + female* - Region C - 2 scripts - page 11, 12
- *My dad and My mother* - Region C - 2 scripts - page 13, 14
- *Fifty somethings* - Region D - 1 script - page 15

New Deal 50 plus press ads

- *Wanted: People who've Been there Seen it Done it.* - Region D - page 16
- *New Deal 50 plus* - Region C - 2 ads - page 17, 18
- *Lone parent* - Region B - page 19

New Deal 50 plus direct mail

- Birthday card - Region A - page 20, 21
- Birthday card - Region C - 2 parts - page 22 - 24
- Direct mail - Region D - 2 items - page 25 - 27

New Deal 50 plus magazine advertorial

- Magazine advertorial - Region B - page 28

New Deal 50 plus national booklet

- National booklet - page 29

Index

	Page number
Ageism / ageist attitudes	9, 25
Birthday cards	29, 30
Buses	17, 19, 20
Direct mail	2, 6, 29, 30, 34, 35
Doctor's surgery	17, 21
Employment Credit	1, 2, 5, 11, 12, 28, 29, 30, 36
Finding out about New Deal 50 plus	12, 13, 14, 15
Introductory booklet for New Deal 50 plus	6, 15, 16, 19, 32, 33
Knowledge about New Deal 50 plus	10, 11
Leaflets and fliers	14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24
Libraries	21
Magazine advertorial	31, 32
Newspaper advertising	17, 22, 28, 34, 35
Personal Advisers	1, 13, 14, 28, 29, 31, 36
Post Office	17, 21
Promotional card	6, 20, 21
Radio advertising	2, 3, 6, 15, 17, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35
Railway station poster	21, 22
Training Grant	1, 11, 29
Television advertising	17
Underground trains	17
Wage top-up	1, 10, 11, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 36