

## Summary

The New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) is the major employment programme available to people claiming incapacity benefits. It is a voluntary programme that aims to help people on incapacity benefits move into sustained employment. Around 65 Job Brokers, who are a mix of public, private, and voluntary sector organisations, deliver the programme. People wishing to participate in the programme must register with a Job Broker (and are referred to in the report as registrants).

The evaluation includes a **Survey of the Registrants**, which aims to obtain information on NDDP participant characteristics, their experiences of, and views on, the programme. The survey involves three cohorts, with the first two having two waves of interviewing and the third one wave. This report is of the first wave of the first cohort. The survey entailed face-to-face CAPI interviews with people who were registered between May and June 2002 as NDDP clients. The fieldwork was conducted between October and December 2002 (with a few interviews conducted in January 2003). Interviews were achieved with 3,014 respondents, which represented 67 per cent of the original sample.

Principal findings from the survey are:

- NDDP appears to have attracted people who, if not already in a job, wanted paid work. However, only a quarter had been looking for work prior to registration.
- There is little evidence that having multiple Job Brokers operating in an area lead to a choice of Job Brokers. Only 18 per cent of registrants contacted another Job Broker before registering.
- Generally, registrants were positive about how Job Brokers operated and the services they provided.
- Five months after registration a large majority of registrants expressed positive attitudes towards work. Indeed, nearly a third of registrants were in paid work and a further four in ten were looking for work. Most of the remaining registrants were expecting to work in the future, usually within a year.

- For respondents not yet in work the main factors that would allow them to take a job were if they: knew they could return to their original benefit if necessary (71 per cent), could decide how many hours to work (65 per cent), could work at home (57 per cent); and could take breaks when required to during the day (54 per cent).
- The main barriers preventing them from working were: there were not enough suitable job opportunities locally (63 per cent), other people's attitudes to their health condition or disability prevented them from working (47 per cent), and they could not work because of their health condition or disability (45 per cent).
- There is some evidence that hard to place groups, such as those with basic skills problems and older registrants, did sometimes receive extra support and help, but in other cases their relative distance from the labour market seems to have affected the type of service delivered and adversely affected their chances of obtaining employment.
- Those more likely to start work were: women; those living with a partner; those with a driving licence and access to a vehicle; those living in 'other' accommodation (often with a parent); clients who used the Jobcentre or a recruitment agency; and those having discussions with Job Brokers on how changes in health could affect their chances of working, the hours that they could work or how to present oneself at an interview.

## Executive Summary

### Who participates?

Registrants were a diverse group of people, and their key demographic and socio-economic characteristics were as follows:

- The majority of respondents were male (63 per cent) and aged under 50 years (67 per cent). Although a substantial minority (33 per cent) were aged 50 and over.
- Just under a half of respondents (44 per cent) were living with a partner and one in

five (21 per cent) was living with dependent children.

- Seventy seven per cent of respondents had a qualification of some type; about a third had attained NVQ Level 1 or 2, while around four in ten had reached Level 3 or above. However, nearly a fifth (18 per cent) of respondents reported having a problem with basic skills.
- Overall, NDDP has attracted people who wanted to do paid work but, in most but far from all cases, were not actively looking for jobs ahead of their registration.

## **Registrants' Health and Quality of Life**

- Ninety five per cent of registrants said they had an ongoing health condition or disability at the time of the survey interview.
- The most common main and secondary health conditions or disabilities were mental health conditions and problems with the neck or back.
- Most registrants (93 per cent) reported that their health condition or disability limited their ability to participate in activities, but only in 38 per cent of the cases was this limitation great. A half of the registrants self-assessed their condition or disability as limiting their ability to do paid work. Most respondents had experienced limitations on carrying out everyday activities or the ability to do paid work for some considerable time.
- Half of the registrants did not expect changes in their condition or disability, but one-third expected a positive change.

## **Registrants' work aspirations, barriers and bridges**

Key findings on the respondents' relationship to the labour market five months after registration are:

- One month before registration 88 per cent of registrants wanted to be or were in work, with 28 per cent actively looking for employment. Five months after registration nearly a third (31 per cent) of

registrants were in paid work; a further four in ten were looking for work. Most of the remaining registrants were expecting to work in the future, usually within a year of the interview. A large majority of registrants expressed positive attitudes towards work. Only six per cent of registrants had never worked.

- For respondents not yet in work the main factors that might enable them to work were: if they knew they could return to their original benefit if they needed to (71 per cent), if they could decide how many hours to work (65 per cent), if they could work at home (57 per cent) and if they were able to take breaks when they needed to during the day (54 per cent).
- The main factors that may be preventing them from working were: there were not enough suitable job opportunities locally (63 per cent), other people's attitudes to their health condition or disability prevented them from working (47 per cent), and they could not work because of their health condition or disability (45 per cent).
- The more respondents were affected by their health condition or disability, the more likely they were to see it as a barrier to work. Whereas a third (34 per cent) of those in good health said they could not work because of their disability, nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) of those in poor health identified this as a barrier.

## **Registration process**

- Job Brokers registered clients in two distinct ways. Forty one per cent of registrants had discussions with a member of the Job Broker staff before registering, while 59 per cent registered on the same day as their first discussion.
- There is limited evidence that having multiple Job Brokers operate in an area lead to a choice of Job Brokers. Only 18 per cent of registrants contacted another Job Broker before registering. The most common reason for registering with a particular May-June Job Broker was that it was the only one the respondents had heard of (42 per cent).

- Most registrants registered for NDDP at the Job Broker's office (52 per cent) and the registration process took an average of 43 minutes and the majority of registrants (83 per cent) felt the speed of the process was about right and 93 per cent found the process easy.
- At the time of the interview, 85 per cent of registrants were still registered with their May-June Job Broker, 13 per cent were no longer registered and two per cent did not know. Of those no longer registered with their May-June Job Broker, 20 per cent had registered with another Job Broker.

### **Services provided by Job Brokers and other organisations**

- Most registrants (88 per cent) had had further contact with their Job Broker since they registered, typically by telephone. The most common reasons why registrants were in contact with their Job Broker were: to discuss progress in relation to moving into work and finding a job (46 per cent); and to get help with looking for work and finding out about jobs (36 per cent).
- Most registrants had discussed with Job Brokers the type of work they might do (80 per cent), their previous work experience (73 per cent) and the hours they might work (70 per cent). Only half had discussed training and between a fifth and a third talked about specific types work options such as: Therapeutic or Permitted Work; voluntary work; work trials; or supported employment. Over half of registrants who had talked about finding work with their Job Broker, either during registration or during subsequent contacts (59 per cent). Slightly more respondents had talked to their Job Broker about their health condition or disability in relation to finding work (68 per cent).
- Half of all registrants reported that they had increased their efforts to move towards work since registering with a Job Broker. Overall, over a third of registrants (35 per cent) who reported increasing their efforts to look for work since registering appear to have done so as a result of contact with their Job Broker.

- One-quarter of the registrants reported that they had contacted another organisation since registering with their May-June Job Broker. Contacts were most often made with a Jobcentre. Interestingly, only 13 per cent had contacted another Job Broker.

### **Registrants' assessment of the Job Broker service**

- Generally, registrants were positive about how the job broking service was delivered and the services provided by their Job Broker. They were made to feel welcome by their Job Broker, who usually explained matters and listened well to their clients. Registrants considered that Job Brokers were very well informed about work-related issue, but less informed about health and benefit related issues.
- When registrants were asked how helpful were their Job Brokers in helping them to find work, 57 per cent said that their Job Brokers were very or fairly unhelpful and 44 per cent said that they were very or fairly helpful.
- When asked how helpful had been their contact with the Job Broker so far 55 per cent that it was very or fairly helpful, and 45 per cent that it was fairly or very unhelpful. Fifteen per cent said that there was insufficient or no help with looking for work; 13 per cent that there was little or no contact; and 11 per cent that the help was of no use.
- Involvement with a Job Broker can be expected to have a number of 'soft' outcomes for the registrants. Overall, 43 per cent of registrants agreed that involvement with their Job Brokers had helped them to be more confident in relation to employment and less worried about their financial situation or receipt of benefits. However, 26 per cent disagree and 31 per cent felt neutral about these issues.

### **Early outcomes for registrants**

- Around one-third of respondents had started paid work at some time between registration and their survey interview.

Those more likely to start work were: women; those living with a partner; those with a driving licence and access to a vehicle; those living in 'other' accommodation (often with a parent); clients who used the Jobcentre or a recruitment agency; and those having discussions with Job Brokers on how changes in health could affect their chances of working, the hours that they could work or how to present oneself at an interview. Those less likely to commence work had basic skills problems, an 'other' disability, and had discussed where to look for vacancies and the work they might do with a Job Brokers.

- Typically, registrants entered lower paying jobs in the less prestigious sectors of the labour market than those in which employees work nationally.
- It was estimated that between 58 per cent and 64 per cent of those in work would reach a 26 week sustainability threshold of continuous work. The evidence suggested that the longer people were in work, the less likely they were to leave their job. Factors associated with leaving work were: having a problem with your employer; having a mental health condition; and not liking the job because of a health condition. Whilst factors promoting job retention were: having a job that used a respondent's previous skills to a great extent; if they had a partner and no dependent children; and having a job people found intrinsically rewarding or valued the social opportunities it created.

## **Conclusions**

In summary, Job Brokers do appear to have helped some hard to place groups. However, there are a number of areas where they could provide additional support and help to specific client groups, for example, post-employment services to those with mental health conditions in order to improve job retention rates.