

DWP Welfare to Work and
Equality Group

Support to the newly unemployed

Equality impact assessment for support for the newly unemployed

Introduction

This new service will be aimed at Jobseekers who have recently become unemployed and have no recent experience of current jobsearch methods. It will provide support to get the knowledge, skills and confidence to successfully and quickly find and secure relevant jobs, using up to date job search techniques and recruitment channels. The service is a temporary response to the recession and is funded until March 2011.

Description of new service

This support will be aimed at Jobseekers who have recently become unemployed (mainly through redundancy) and have no recent experience of current jobsearch channels.

We assume these customers would be good prospects for quick entry to employment once they had information and advice about modern job search techniques, particularly use of IT based recruitment approaches and Jobcentre Plus self service channels. Some may also need to take stock of their transferable skills and how they match to jobs in the current labour market.

These customers will have differing levels of need, some will only need information on the latest jobsearch techniques and sources of information; others will need to be shown how to use modern jobsearch tools (e.g. internet jobsearch and recruitment sites) and develop electronic CVs.

This new service will include a combination of elements delivered by Jobcentre Plus and Contracted providers. Personal advisers will identify newly unemployed customers at the New Jobseeker Interview (NJI) and sort them into 3 broad groups:

- Those that understand modern jobsearch techniques and don't need any additional support – we expect the majority will fall into this category and will require no more than signposting to relevant sources of information.
- Those that would be able to help themselves once they have relevant information about modern jobsearch techniques through a 1 hour group information session.
- Those that would benefit from direct referral to a 1 day advice and coaching session.

We will also be identifying newly unemployed customers with a professionals/executive occupational background at the new jobseekers interview and sorting them into two groups:

- Those who understand modern jobsearch techniques and don't need any additional support – we expect the majority of all newly unemployed professionals will require no more than signposting to relevant sources of information.
- Those who need jobsearch support would be referred to separate contracted provision delivered by specialist organisations, including recruitment agencies.

What will be the outcome?

We expect that the outcome from this will be that a customer will be motivated and equipped to find their own job. The support offered by providers will vary depending on the customer's needs, but could consist of:

- **Initial reception.** This will include an introduction to the programme, shared understanding of the customer's position, acknowledgement of feelings and emotions surrounding recent job loss.
- **Personal stocktaking.** This will include consideration of the customer's constraints to employment and the value of their skills and experience.
- **Labour Market Intelligence.** This will involve understanding the labour market, exploring job goals, looking at the customer's skills and experience and exploring how these can be transferred to new jobs.
- **New Opportunities/Job Leads.** This will involve looking at:
 - Where and how to look for jobs including traditional and modern methods.
 - Finding and using relevant employment agencies, signposting to further sources of advice and guidance.
- **Analysing vacancies.** This will look at understanding what employers want and matching this to the customer's skills.
- **Employer Selection Techniques.** This will include understanding the various selection techniques used by employers including Assessment Centres, Psychometric testing (particularly for Professionals).
- **Job Application.** This will help provide the skills to customers:
 - To prepare an electronic CV.
 - To draft speculative letters.
 - To complete application forms including online applications.
- **Interviews and techniques.** This will involve preparation and sources of information on potential employers business and goals, how to prepare for interviews and perform successfully in an interview.
- **Action Planning.** This will involve a one to one session to plan next steps, review of activities and approach.

Who will benefit mainly from this proposal or change?

Jobseekers who have recently become unemployed, have no recent experience of current jobsearch channels and need support to acquire the knowledge, skills and confidence to successfully and quickly find and secure relevant jobs.

What information and/or data (evidence) has been obtained to impact assess this proposal or change?

Support for the newly unemployed will be made available from day one to any jobseekers for whom personal advisers think would benefit from refreshing their job searching skills. We do not routinely collect information on jobseeker's ability to search for jobs for themselves so we cannot say what their characteristics are likely to be for this equality impact assessment. The closest comparison group we are able to construct are those jobseekers who have not claimed JSA for the last 4 or more years. For obvious reasons, this excludes the majority of the 16 to 24 year old group so this category has been removed for a fairer comparison to typical jobseekers.

The table below shows the proportions by key characteristics from which information is available. Typically, this group of Jobseekers are more likely to be a white male aged 25 to 29 with a health condition than the average jobseeker.

	All JSA Claims (April 2007 to March 2008)	JSA Claims with 4 years or more since end of last claim (April 2007 to March 2008)
Age Group (comparing over 25's only)*		
25 to 29	22%	24%
30 to 49	56%	55%
50+	20%	19%
<i>*16 to 24 age group removed for fair comparison</i>		
Gender		
Female	30%	28%
Male	70%	71%
Health Condition		
No Health Condition	85%	85%
With Health Condition	14%	14%
Ethnicity		
White	78%	80%
Black or Black British	5%	3%
Asian or Asian British	5%	4%
Other or Chinese	1%	1%
Prefer not to say	7%	9%
Mixed	1%	1%

Notes: Sourced from the National Benefits Database & the Labour Market System. Figures are for comparison only and may contradict other published statistics.

Assuming this data presents an accurate reflection of numbers accessing this provision from different groups it does not mean that groups who make less use of this provision are adversely impacted by it. Our expectation is that personal advisers will match customers to the service that meets their type and level of need. Those who need more support than is on offer from the newly unemployed service will be referred to Programme Centres, European Social Fund provision and other services as appropriate. Personal advisers will be able to use a questionnaire to work through with customers which will give them some helpful background to assess how confident the customer is at looking for work. This will help them to establish the level of support required.

In terms of understanding the impact of this new service it is important that we monitor its impact and take corrective action if necessary. To achieve this DWP has commissioned an external research consortium to independently evaluate the support for newly unemployed customers. As part of the evaluation and monitoring the experience and impact of the policy on different customer groups will be addressed. Initial evaluation results will be available in autumn 2009.

Assessing for Impact

Overall this offer is an equal opportunity initiative designed to provide targeted help to those who need it.. As such no negative impact has been identified for any groups.

The programme has been designed to ensure that the only groups excluded are those who do not require this level and type of support. Those who need more intensive support will where possible be identified and offered access to other suitable provision and those who need no support will be signposted to self help channels.

There is no evidence available from current or previous services (that are sufficiently similar in nature to this) that would enable us to identify whether any groups would be treated differently by this policy. However we do not expect there to be a differential impact on any groups including men, women, ethnic minorities, disabled customers, from this support because it will be targeted at those who need it.

However, to fully understand the impact of this new service we will monitor its impact and take corrective action if necessary. To achieve this DWP has commissioned an external research consortium to independently evaluate the support for newly unemployed customers. As part of the evaluation and monitoring the experience and impact of the policy on different customer groups will be addressed. Initial evaluation results will be available in Autumn 2009.

Does the proposal or change have a positive impact on any group?

The targeted range of help and support will encourage increased employment chances for newly unemployed customers who require additional jobsearch support. Those customers will be from a variety of groups.

Conclusion

The conclusion reached is that the newly unemployed support will actively target help at newly unemployed customers who need this support. We do not expect there to be a differential impact from this support because it will be targeted at those who need it. However there is a lack of supporting evidence and as such monitoring and evaluation will be put into place and used to make sure there are no negative impact (and sufficient positive impacts). Where there are any negative impacts identified these will be addressed.

Name and contact details of the officer responsible for the assessment:

Julia Sweeney

Welfare to Work Directorate
2nd Floor Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NA

Telephone: 0207 449 7038.

Email: Julia.Sweeney1@dwp.gsi.gov.uk