

**Integrated,
Flexible Support**

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Based on the evidence set out in Chapter Two, this chapter outlines the key features of a new programme that we are proposing to replace the current Job Introduction Scheme, Work Preparation and WORKSTEP. The intention is to create an integrated support package that can be more easily tailored to meet the needs of our customers.

Introduction

1. This chapter focuses on our proposals to replace the current Job Introduction Scheme, Work Preparation and WORKSTEP (an outline of this existing provision is provided in Annex C part A).
2. We are proposing to combine this provision into a single integrated programme with three clear support functions offering a more integrated support package that can be more easily tailored to meet the needs of our customers. This would help ensure that:
 - the high levels of expertise and dedication frequently demonstrated by our Jobcentre Plus staff and external public, private and voluntary sector providers can be focused on meeting the needs of individual customers rather than making the current system work;
 - our customers, employers and external providers can more easily work together to support the common goal of ensuring that disabled people are able to achieve their full employment potential; and
 - we open up the number, scope and quality of jobs available and thereby improve the opportunities available to disabled people, and improve the ability of employers to utilise a significant proportion of the labour force that is often overlooked.

Proposed future programme

3. As highlighted in Chapter Two, we want to ensure that this support is reserved for those disabled people who are unlikely to receive sufficient support from our wider employment services. It will be available to customers irrespective of which benefit they claim.
4. We considered the possibility of establishing a fixed definition of who should go onto this provision, including the possibility of a 'points system' to establish a sufficient level of support requirement for each customer. However, we believe that such a system would be ineffective in determining suitability, particularly in relation to supported employment needs. Therefore we believe a more personalised system is required.

5. Chapter Four sets out proposals for Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) to establish suitability for this provision. DEAs would have the responsibility, in consultation with the customer, to identify an initial package of support covering one or a combination of the proposed programme's three main elements (as depicted in Figure 4: Main Support Elements, below):

Figure 4: Main Support Elements



6. Examples of how these arrangements would work include:
- a customer who required intensive support to prepare for and get a job and would most likely require some transitional supported employment would be signed-up for the first and second elements of support; and
 - a customer with a long-term deteriorating condition who required intensive support to prepare for and get a job and would require longer-term supported employment would be signed-up for the first and third elements of support. The customer would then have this package of supported employment delivered by a public, private or voluntary sector provider.
7. Crucially, each customer would experience the service as a single package not as a movement from one programme to another with the potential associated problems and delays outlined in Chapter Two.



8. We recognise that because circumstances can change we cannot expect to get every package right at the start. We would therefore need to build in flexibility for adjustments to be made. However the overall goal is for a much more consistent and concerted effort to be made to establish an individual's full support needs right from the start and for these to be provided in a better co-ordinated package.
9. The following sections outline what we would expect each element of support to deliver.

1 Work Entry

10. We would expect our providers to offer a range of services to help people enter paid employment. In assessing contract tenders we would look at the diversity of provision on offer and the extent to which it is able to cater for all disabled people.
11. Whilst a wide range of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) other employment services already offer some of this support, the difference here will be in the level of specialist disability understanding and the focus on resolving disability-related issues to help a customer find a job. Examples of such services may include:
 - vocational guidance and action planning, tailored help to identify job goals and barriers (disability-related or otherwise), and how to address them;
 - confidence building, personal and job skills support (through individual coaching or group work) and capacity building;
 - job search advice and job matching of individuals to identified vacancies;
 - job application support in handling the recruitment process, managing disclosure of health/disability information, CV and interview preparation and skills development, with advocacy to the employer if needed;
 - job retention skills, training and some job skills help through the use of work trials or voluntary placements;
 - working closely with employers to help them see beyond perceptions of a person's disability and help them focus on abilities and strengths; and
 - acting as a broker with an employer to explain the types of adjustment that would be appropriate and the wider support available for these customers from DWP and beyond. This includes analysing (with the individual) the support they need prior to it being put in place.

12. For all customers entering a job, we will expect our service providers to:

- check the individual has settled into their work place;
- ensure that their transport arrangements are working;
- ensure the individual is receiving appropriate benefits advice;
- put in place, with the help of the individual and their employer, an agreed support plan that indicates how the support they are able to give will change over time;
- help the employer to make independent adjustments for the individual and where appropriate offer advice to the employer and work colleagues; and
- be available for advice and support where, for example, an unexpected issue arises.


13. If we focus specialist services on those with more complex disability-related needs then, over time, the majority of customers for this provision are likely to require some form of more intensive supported employment. This is where our work entry support will link straight through to the supported employment elements.

Supported Employment

14. As noted in the previous chapter, our analysis of WORKSTEP and that of our independent evaluators suggests that the programme should be re-focused to better serve the needs of disabled people who can progress to sustained unsupported employment and that we improve the service for those likely to require longer-term support.

15. We therefore propose our future supported employment provision will have two main strands:

- **transitional supported employment** – with a clear focus on enabling customers to reach a point where they can work without ongoing support; and
- **longer-term supported employment** – with a clear focus on the ongoing development of customers through their career, where working without support is unlikely to be a realistic option.

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16. Under both types of support we would expect to see close working between the provider, the disabled person, their employer and in many cases, their co-workers.
 17. As noted previously, we do not want to rule out cash incentives being used with employers but the evidence tells us that a direct 'hands-on' support approach is effective. Where cash incentives are applied we therefore believe they should be both time-limited and clearly linked to an agreed support plan that demonstrates how the employee will be supported by the payment.
 18. Plans agreed between the employee, employer and our service provider should show how support will be organised and indicate how the employee will be supported to achieve their potential. Key types of support that we would envisage a provider delivering include:
 - taking on a job coach role, for example, to help a person with a learning disability adapt to new work tasks;
 - delivering disability awareness training to an employer and co-workers to help them understand how everyone can contribute to a successful workplace, for example, explaining how to overcome some of the communication and social issues that may arise from working with someone with a moderate to severe form of autism;
 - working with the employer and co-workers so that they become skilled in adapting tasks or training procedures to facilitate employing people with more significant disabilities; and
 - helping an individual with an aspect of their home life that is adversely affecting their ability to do their job.

2 Transitional Supported Employment


19. In terms of the ***transitional supported employment*** strand we propose that customers who are likely to be able to progress to unsupported employment are given a service that lasts up to two years. This support would require close working between the provider, the individual, their employer and, where appropriate, their co-workers.



20. We believe, from our evidence-base and discussions with providers that two years is sufficient time to enable all parties to maintain a strong focus on progression to independent working and that a clear distinction between this and long-term support will help participants focus on clear job goals.
21. As life circumstances, including impairments can change over time, some people are likely to start off receiving transitional support – because at the time unsupported employment looked an achievable goal – and end up requiring longer-term supported employment. In such circumstances we would expect the provider and/or customer to discuss their changing needs at the earliest possible opportunity with the Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Adviser so a change in the support package can be approved. A change could occur because it has become clear that the need for support is likely to be ongoing, or because the move to unsupported employment, whilst still achievable, is likely to take longer than two years.
22. We have recognised that one of the greatest barriers to people progressing to unsupported employment is the perception that once they have left the provision they will find it difficult to get back on again, should they need it. We therefore want to give people the confidence to fulfil their potential by ensuring they are aware they can return for support if they get into difficulties.

3 Longer-Term Supported Employment

23. The ***longer-term supported employment*** strand would focus on helping provide a stable working environment and helping the individual develop their career.
24. For some customers it will be clear that they are likely to need longer-term employment support from the outset. Where this is the case, we propose they move directly to the longer-term support strand so we do not build in unhelpful pressures on either the individual or their employer. In some cases, where the need is for a very specific type of support – sign language interpretation for instance – it may be more appropriate to provide that through Access to Work. We envisage that the Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Adviser will seek to identify, at the outset, the appropriate combination of services.

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25. We do not want to limit the prospects of anyone on this provision, so we feel it is important that alongside the goal of helping people maintain their employment and progress within their job, the aspiration of independent working is there for all. But for those needing longer-term support we would not expect this to be a primary focus.
26. As part of the longer-term service we propose to introduce regular checks to ensure that our customers are receiving a quality service and that the support they are continuing to receive remains appropriate (see Chapter Four). Close co-operation between the individual, the service provider and the employer is critical if customers are to be enabled to develop to their full employment potential.

Who will deliver the programme?

27. We plan to conduct an open competitive tender with the public, private and voluntary sectors for the delivery of this programme. We have not finalised the tendering process yet and want to feed in responses to this consultation before we do so. However, the key issues on which we would welcome your views – with reference to the impact on individual customers – are:
- the preferred size of each contract area; and
 - the preferred length of contracts.
28. Within this tender we would strongly encourage the use of sub-contractors to help ensure that our customers are offered a diverse service and that the expertise of some of our more successful smaller providers continues to be utilised. (Further details can be found in Annex B.)

Role of Supported Businesses

29. Following discussions with the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE) and Community union, we are considering giving some contractual protection to the approximately 3,000 supported business (e.g. factories and workshops) places that are currently in use within the WORKSTEP programme. This could, for example, take the form of guaranteeing a level of funding for each of the places over the course of the contract.

30. We are clear that if we do offer some protection to these businesses it is not necessarily because we are satisfied with the current overall performance. Whilst there have been significant improvements in the services offered in some of the businesses, progressions off WORKSTEP are generally low or non-existent.¹⁶ There is also little evidence that these businesses are taking on people with higher support needs than those who are being found mainstream jobs.
31. Rather, this protection would be in respect of their unique historical position, the position of their disabled employees and the particular difficulties they face in reforming in a short timeframe.
32. In examining how this could work we want to take forward discussions with the supported businesses and other providers, with BASE, the disabled people in those businesses and their union representatives. Key to these discussions would be an examination of how we could ensure that reforms on job outputs and quality standards are implemented during a transitional period leading up to a future round of competitive tendering towards the middle of the next decade.
33. WORKSTEP also has a Factory Support Grant with a budget of approximately £1m per year – the Factory Support Grant provides funding for supported businesses to, for example, buy new machinery or modernise the services they offer. We believe that in the future all our funding should be directed at individual customers and that DWP staff are not best placed to make judgements on what is/is not a sound business investment. In respect of this we would like to discontinue the Factory Support Grant with the money going to help more people onto the proposed new programme.
34. As an interim step, we believe it would help the existing supported businesses to modernise if we stipulated that any future requests for Factory Support Grant funding were focused on ways to modernise the businesses to produce greater numbers of progressions to unsupported employment and to produce a greater quality of service for people progressing within the support. This change could be introduced during the first half of 2008 and we would welcome your views on this.

¹⁶ Note, progression from supported to unsupported employment can take place *within* one of these businesses under current rules with the WORKSTEP customer moving off the support over time whilst remaining an employee of the same business.

Transitions to new arrangements

35. A vital consideration in merging these programmes is the transition of customers to the new provision. The relatively short duration of the Job Introduction Scheme and Work Preparation mean that existing customers would be able to finish their existing period of support. However, the vast majority of WORKSTEP customers would want to transfer across to the new provision and we would support them in this process.
36. In respect of this there would be an absolute requirement for providers of the new programme to take responsibility for supporting existing WORKSTEP customers. How this will be done will vary depending on whether the customer works in a supported business (see previous paragraphs on the position of supported businesses in future provision), directly for one of our current providers or, as in the majority of cases, works for an external employer. Current and future providers will need to work together to ensure the transition is successful.
37. Providers who are successful in attaining contracts for the new provision will first have to deliver on the immediate support needs of all existing customers and their employers. Following this they will be required to work closely with each individual to ensure they have an up-to-date development plan which should include, where appropriate to the individual, the support necessary for them to move into independently sustained employment.

Summary

38. In summary, we are proposing to combine WORKSTEP, Work Preparation and the Job Introduction Scheme into a single integrated programme with three clear support functions, offering a more integrated support package that can be more easily tailored to meet the needs of our customers.

Consultation Questions

No.	Question
3	Are there points of our overall proposal to replace the Job Introduction Scheme (JIS), Work Preparation and WORKSTEP with a single programme that you either strongly agree with or strongly disagree with?
4	For the Work Entry element of the proposed new programme – how could we best ensure that our providers focus their efforts on all their customers and not just those most likely to get a job?
5	For the Transitional Supported Employment element of the proposed new programme – is it right that we should introduce a greater focus on helping people progress off the provision and what safeguards and flexibilities would you like to see included?
6	For the Longer-Term Supported Employment element of the proposed new programme – how can we best ensure that providers work closely with employers and individual disabled people to help them develop in their job whilst on the provision?
7	What should we do to ensure that consistently high quality standards are delivered?
8	What else can we do to improve the way in which DWP's supported employment services for disabled people are delivered?
9	What role do you think supported businesses/factories should have in providing employment for disabled people?
10	If we go ahead with these reforms, do you believe we should offer some protection to supported businesses when we tender for the new programme? If so, what form should this protection take and how long should it last for?

No.	Question
11	We are proposing to initially transform the WORKSTEP Factory Support Grant (FSG) to focus on modernising services to deliver better progressions within and outside the programme. This would be instead of, for example, buying new factory equipment. Eventually we would like to spend this money directly on helping more individuals onto the proposed new programme. What are your views on this proposal?
12	We are considering holding an open competitive tender for contracts. For some of our current WORKSTEP customers this could mean their employment support transferring to another provider. What would we need to consider and what actions do you think we would need to take to help make any such transfers a success?
13	How do you think we could best ensure that we retain the skills of smaller and specialist providers in the proposed open competitive tender of this programme?
14	Are there other specific issues that we would need to consider in moving to a competitive tender for this provision?