

# Support for the very long-term unemployed

Equality impact assessment

Employment Group

November 2011

# Equality impact assessment for the support for the very long-term unemployed

## Introduction

1. The Department for Work and Pensions has conducted the following equality impact assessment for the Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed in line with current public sector equality duties.
2. This process will help to ensure that the Department has paid due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
  - advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and
  - foster good relations between people from different groups.
3. The equality impact assessment considers the impact of the Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed in terms of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnership (in terms of eliminating unlawful discrimination only).

## Background

4. The Government set out a commitment to "create a single welfare to work programme to help all unemployed people get back into work" which was met in June 2011 with the introduction of the Work Programme.
5. The Work Programme is the biggest single payment by results employment programme Great Britain has ever seen, providing personalised support to an expected 2.4 million claimants over the next seven years.
6. It is recognised that even with this substantially improved support offer, some Jobseeker's Allowance claimants may, from summer 2013, reach the end of their time on the programme and remain on benefits and looking for work.
7. These claimants will have been unemployed for a considerable period of time and may have significant and multiple barriers to work. As such they will require further intensive support to help them find employment.
8. To understand how best to support these very long-term Jobseeker's Allowance claimants, we will be running a small-scale trailblazer in four Jobcentre Plus

districts <sup>1</sup> from November 2011. This will test whether, with an increased level of support and opportunities to gain work experience, longer-term claimants have greater success in finding and staying in employment.

9. The evaluation will inform decisions ahead of potential national delivery from summer 2013.
10. Claimants who are selected to take part in the trailblazer will be required to participate in either:
  - **Community Action Programme** – a six month period of work experience complemented by provider-led jobsearch support. The Community Action Programme will equip jobseekers with a valuable period of work experience, enabling them to develop the disciplines and skills associated with sustained employment, capitalise on experience gained and maintain an employment focus through additional provider-led jobsearch support; or
  - **Ongoing Case Management** – a more intensive offer of flexible and personalised adviser based support, delivered by Jobcentre Plus through increased adviser interventions. This may include more frequent jobsearch reviews and compliance interventions, in addition to advisers having more capacity to ensure that claimants are able to access the wide range of support available through the Jobcentre Plus offer including, for example, the Flexible Support Fund.
11. A further group of claimants will continue to receive core support through the Jobcentre Plus. This will allow us to evaluate the impact of the key elements of support against a core.
12. Jobcentre Plus will identify around 16,000 claimants who are eligible to take part in the trailblazer. Taking account of likely off-flow levels, we ultimately expect 12,000 of these to be referred:
  - 4,000 to have access the Community Action Programme;
  - 4,000 will receive Ongoing Case Management; and
  - 4,000 will receive the Jobcentre Plus Offer (Control Group).
13. Claimants will be randomly allocated to one of the support options. The claimants national insurance number will be input to an Excel spreadsheet on the DWP intranet site and this will determine which group they will join. Once allocated, this cannot be changed.
14. This means that each group should contain a similar spread of claimants in terms of individual characteristics. Consequently when we compare the outcomes for each group, any differences found should be a result of interventions received rather than differences in claimant characteristics between the groups.

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<sup>1</sup>Derbyshire; Lincolnshire, Rutland & Nottinghamshire; East Anglia; and Leicestershire & Northamptonshire.

15. Participation in the programme will be mandatory and a claimant's benefits may be stopped if they fail to start or complete the programme without good cause.
16. A Claimant's participation in the programme will be considered in light of any easements or restrictions contained in their Jobseeker's Agreement. For example the length of time a claimant will be required to participate in the scheme each week will not exceed the number of hours that they have agreed to be available for work in their Jobseeker's Agreement.
17. As a result of the delivery of the Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed we expect to:
  - test and evaluate the Community Action Programme and Ongoing Case Management against the flexible support of the Jobcentre Plus offer;
  - compare and consider the impact on off-flow rates and employment outcomes from the key elements of the support; and
  - test elements of the delivery model and processes to inform the national rollout.

## Legislation

17. Whilst the trailblazer can be delivered within existing regulations, the Department presented the proposals to the Social Security Advisory Committee on 19 July 2011. The Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed trailblazer will not involve any changes to current legislation and will be delivered under the Jobseekers Allowance (Employment, Skills and Enterprise Scheme) Regulations 2011.
18. Community Action Programme providers will be bound by current equality legislation and through the terms of their contract to not unlawfully discriminate against participants in post-Work Programme support.

## Consultation and involvement

19. Early stakeholder engagement has taken place with:
  - a limited selection of providers to consider the commercial viability of the programme;
  - a small number of Jobcentre Plus advisers, covering Work Programme exit requirements; and
  - wider Departmental colleagues through awareness sessions.
20. We will undertake further consultation with appropriate stakeholders before making any decisions about national rollout in 2013.

# Impact of Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed

21. To look at the equality impacts of the Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed we have looked at the characteristics of those reaching two years or more on Jobseeker's Allowance in the target areas in the year to February 2011. These claimants have completed the Flexible New Deal, which is the claimant group from which participants will be selected.

## Age

22. In the target areas:
- people aged 18 to 24 represent 40% of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants, but only 14% of those whose claims reach two years of unemployment;
  - Jobseekers aged 25 and over are significantly more likely to have claims lasting more than two years than jobseekers aged 18 to 24;
  - the largest proportion of claimants who reach the end of two years on Jobseeker's Allowance without having moved into work are those aged 25 to 49;
  - claimants aged 50 years and over are significantly more likely to remain on Jobseeker's Allowance for a long period.

Figures for this are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: JSA durations by age<sup>2</sup>**

	<b>18-24</b>	<b>25-49</b>	<b>50+</b>
JSA on-flow	40%	46%	13%
Two years-plus JSA claimants	14%	60%	27%

23. Participants taking part in the trailblazer will be randomly allocated to the different elements; age, however, will not be a factor in the allocation process. The Department will monitor the characteristics, including age, of claimants referred to the support and will consider impacts on age in the evaluation.
24. No adverse impacts are expected on the basis of age. All jobseekers in the trailblazer areas meeting the eligibility for Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed will be referred to this support irrespective of their age, and the programme is expected to benefit claimants of all ages by helping them to find sustained employment thereby promoting greater equality of opportunity.

## Disability

25. No data is available for the target areas to assess whether the Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed will have an equality impact relating to disability. However, a higher proportion of longer term Jobseeker's Allowance claimants are disabled compared with new Jobseeker's Allowance claimants - 17% of new

<sup>2</sup> Source: Nomis, Claimant Count statistics, February 2011.

claimants in 2008/09 were disabled compared with 21% of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants reaching 6 months unemployment and 26% of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants reaching 12 months on Jobseeker's Allowance.<sup>3</sup>

26. Following the reassessment of Incapacity Benefit claimants between 2011 and 2013, we expect more claimants with health conditions and disabilities to move onto Jobseeker's Allowance over the next three years. This will have a consequent impact on the proportion of claimants on Jobseeker's Allowance with a disability.
27. Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed is expected to benefit disabled Jobseeker's Allowance claimants by helping them to find sustained employment, thereby promoting greater equality of opportunity.
28. Participants taking part in the trailblazer will be randomly allocated to the different elements; disability, however, will not be a factor in the allocation process. The Department will monitor the characteristics, including disability, of claimants participating in the trailblazer as part of the formal evaluation.
29. The support delivered through the Community Action Programme (CAP) will be flexible and personalised, addressing individuals' needs. CAP providers will be bound through the terms of their contract not to unlawfully discriminate on grounds of disability, and must comply with the Equality Act 2010.
30. The personalised and flexible support available from Jobcentre Plus will also ensure each individual's personal circumstances are taken into consideration
31. Therefore no adverse impacts are expected on the basis of disability status. All jobseekers in the trailblazer areas meeting the eligibility for Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed will be referred to this support irrespective of their disability status.

## Ethnicity

32. The table below shows that in the target areas Jobseeker's Allowance claimants from ethnic minorities are just as likely to be claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for two years or more as they were at the start of their claim. The Repeat Jobseeker's Allowance Spells report though found that ethnic minorities were more likely than average to have spent long periods on Jobseeker's Allowance and New Deal programmes.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2: JSA durations by ethnic background<sup>5</sup>**

	White	Ethnic Minority	Prefer not To Say	Unknown
JSA on-flow	79%	15%	5%	1%
Two years-plus JSA claimants	78%	15%	7%	1%

<sup>3</sup> Source: National Benefits Database. Cohort of new JSA claims in 2008/09.

<sup>4</sup> Carpenter, H. (2006) Repeat Jobseeker's Allowance spells DWP Research Report No 394

<sup>5</sup> Source: Nomis, Claimant Count statistics, February 2011.

33. Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed is expected to benefit long term Jobseeker's Allowance claimants by helping them find and sustain employment. Participants will be randomly allocated to key elements of the support, though the support will be made available to all claimants irrespective of ethnicity and ethnicity will not be a factor in the random allocation. The Department will monitor the characteristics, including ethnicity, of claimants participating in the trailblazer as part of the formal evaluation.
34. No adverse impacts are expected on the basis of ethnicity. All jobseekers in the trailblazer areas meeting the eligibility for Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed will be referred to this support irrespective of their ethnicity.

## Gender

35. Males are more likely to claim Jobseeker's Allowance and to reach longer unemployment durations than females. Around 62% of new Jobseeker's Allowance claimants in 2010/11 were male while 82% of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants reaching 2 years on Jobseeker's Allowance were male. A breakdown is shown in Table 3 below.
36. It is therefore likely that more men will participate in the trailblazer relative to the number of Jobseeker's Allowance new claims, as they are more likely to experience long-term unemployment.

**Table 3: JSA durations by gender<sup>6</sup>**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
JSA on-flow	66%	34%
JSA claimants two years threshold flow	82%	18%

37. Claimants will be referred via random allocation; the gender of the claimant will not be a factor in this allocation and claimants could be allocated to any of the elements of the support regardless of gender.
38. The Department will monitor and evaluate the characteristics, including gender, of claimants participating in the trailblazer as part of the formal evaluation of the programme.
39. No adverse impacts are expected on the basis of gender. All jobseekers in the trailblazer areas meeting the eligibility for Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed will be referred to this support irrespective of their gender.

## Sexual Orientation

40. The Department does not currently collect data on the sexual orientation of claimants. Claimants participating in the trailblazer will be selected for key elements of the support through random allocation; sexual orientation is not a factor in the allocation process and all claimants in the programme will be treated fairly and equally regardless of sexual orientation.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Nomis, Claimant Count statistics, February 2011

41. No adverse impacts are expected on the basis of sexual orientation. The personalised and flexible support available from Jobcentre Plus will also ensure each individual's personal circumstances are taken into consideration.

## **Gender Reassignment**

42. The Department does not currently collect data on claimants who have undergone gender reassignment. Claimants participating in the trailblazer will be selected for key elements of the support through random allocation; gender reassignment will not be a factor in the allocation, participants will be treated fairly and equally regardless of their gender.
43. No adverse impacts are expected against those who have undergone gender reassignment. The personalised and flexible support available from Jobcentre Plus will also ensure each individual's personal circumstances are taken into consideration

## **Religion or Belief**

44. The Department does not currently collect data on the religion or beliefs of claimants. Claimants participating in the trailblazer will be selected for key elements of the support through random allocation; religion, faith and belief are not factors in this allocation process and all claimants participating in programme will be treated fairly and equally regardless of their religion or belief.
45. Participating claimants will not be expected to undertake any activity which goes against their beliefs; allowances will be made to reflect religious holidays and practices.

## **Pregnancy or Maternity**

46. The Department does not currently collect data relating to pregnancy and maternity. However, it is not anticipated that pregnancy and maternity will affect claimants' eligibility or take-up because advisers and providers will offer support tailored to the individual.

## **Staff**

47. This has been considered and there is no impact on staff.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

48. The evaluation of the Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed will aim to address the following questions:
  - a) What effect does informing claimants ahead of referral about Community Action Programme or Ongoing Case Management have on the number leaving benefit?

- b) What impact does the Community Action Programme or Ongoing Case Management have on employment outcomes and the number of claimants leaving benefit compared with the Jobcentre Plus Offer?
  - c) What are the processes and delivery lessons that can be learnt via feedback from Community Action Programme providers and relevant Jobcentre Plus staff?
  - d) What is the claimant feedback on their experience and impact of participating in the Community Action Programme or receiving Ongoing Case Management or the Jobcentre Plus Offer?
49. The evaluation will consist of:
- analysis of benefits and employment data to measure the overall impacts of the three options;
  - measurement of the overall impact of the support options by comparing numbers leaving benefit and employment rates at monthly intervals after starting one of the options; and
  - qualitative research with Community Action Programme providers, Jobcentre Plus staff and claimants to gather feedback on their experience and views on the support.
50. The evaluation will inform decisions ahead of potential national delivery from summer 2013 as well as providing lessons learned on how best to deliver the policy.

## Conclusion

51. The Support for the Very Long-Term Unemployed is being introduced from late 2011 to a small number of claimants in a targeted area.
52. The trailblazer will offer additional intensive support to claimants who have been unemployed for a long time and require further support to address the barriers preventing them from obtaining and retaining sustainable employment.
53. The support is not being targeted at specific groups; claimants will be randomly allocated to the key elements of the programme. All aspects of support will potentially be available to any Jobseeker's Allowance claimant participating in the trailblazer.

## Next steps

54. The Department will monitor the impact of the support on different groups and revise the equality impact assessment if necessary.

55. Where any local flexibility is introduced the requirement for a local equality impact assessment must be considered.
56. The evaluation of the trailblazer will enable the Department to develop a better understanding of how best to support this group of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants and inform decisions ahead of potential national delivery from summer 2013.

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