

Research Summary

Lone Parents Work Focused Interviews: Final findings from administrative data

On 30 April 2001, Lone parent Work Focused Interviews (LPWFI), also formerly termed Personal Adviser Meetings, were introduced for all lone parents claiming Income Support.

Age of the youngest child and the length of claim were used to determine which customers were invited to attend the mandatory LPWFI in this first phase. Current claimants with youngest child 13-15 $\frac{3}{4}$ years and new/repeat claims with youngest child at least five years and three months were the first groups eligible for LPWFIs. The focus of the mandatory lone parent Work Focused Interview was to encourage lone parents to join NDLP and seek employment, although participation in NDLP remains voluntary. The aims of LPWFIs mirror those of NDLP, with the intention that they facilitate a move into paid employment by encouraging and supporting both job seeking and training that assist this.

This evaluation examines the evidence that LPWFIs achieved these aims. Linked administrative data on Income Support and New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) was used to assess the difference eligibility for LPWFIs made to the rate of exit from IS and the rate of entry to NDLP. To isolate the impact of LPWFIs, the IS exits and NDLP entries both before and after the introduction of LPWFIs were compared for each eligible group, and also for a non-eligible group. This method is known formally as difference in differences. Tests were made on the baseline period used and of the

comparison groups. Separate analyses were constructed for current claims and new/repeat claims.

The findings in this report are confined to the first phase of lone parent LPWFIs. Subsequent extensions to groups invited to LPWFIs, and Review meetings are to be evaluated separately. This final report revises early findings held in the interim report, and so supersedes it.

Key Findings:

- There was a strong, immediate increase in entry to NDLP for new/repeat claims of around 15 percentage points that raised NDLP entry for new/repeat claims from about five per cent entering within 3 months prior to introduction of the LPWFIs system, to more than 20 per cent afterwards.
- Descriptive analysis indicated that those stock claimants who were eligible for LPWFIs increased their entry rate to NDLP very substantially.
- No clear change to the rate of moving off Income Support for new/repeat claims was found that could be attributed to LPWFI.
- LPWFIs induced a one percent increase in IS claim terminations within 9-12 months for the stock of current claims, raising the exit rate from 10 in 1999, to 11 per cent.
- Differences were found in the LPWFI impact on exits from IS by the age of the youngest child. Stock claims with youngest child 15-15 $\frac{3}{4}$ were less likely to exit IS after the introduction of LPWFI. For August-October new/repeat claimants, those with youngest child aged 9 or 11 had small gains in IS exits due to LPWFI, however these were offset by no statistically significant gains for those eligible with children of other ages.