

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. It is delivered by around 65 Job Brokers, and many provide services in partnership with other organisations. People wishing to participate in the programme must register with a Job Broker.

This report presents the findings of a postal survey of Job Brokers, who deliver the New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) at local level. The survey is designed to gather information on Job Brokers and the services they deliver, and to provide a sampling frame of Job Brokers for a study of costs for the cost-benefit analysis element of the wider evaluation of NDDP.

Questionnaires were posted to Job Brokers during the Summer 2002. Replies were received from 76 Job Broker establishments; a response rate of 80 per cent. The relatively small sample size does limit the analysis that could be undertaken.

Key findings

- Job Brokers are a mix of public, private, and voluntary sector organisations, albeit most are from the voluntary sector.
- Job Brokers recognised that their clients' needs, attitudes and job readiness varied. However, most thought that most of their clients were job ready, or would be within six months. Not surprisingly, they said that the main reason why potential clients contacted them was to gain help with moving into employment.
- There was no standard model for delivering NDDP, as Job Brokers procedures and practices varied. Although some practices were more common than others, such as assessing the suitability of potential clients and registering them at the same meeting. In addition, the analysis tentatively suggests that some Job Broker practices did vary by type of organisation – whether private, public or voluntary sector – and by scale of operation, that is, there may be economies of scale.
- The Job Brokers delivered a relatively wide range of work-focused services to clients. Although monitoring systems especially for employers and the provision of in-work support services were less well developed.
- Overall, Job Brokers believed that there were job opportunities for disabled people. However, vacancies tended to be restricted to skilled non-manual, semi-skilled and unskilled positions, and employers were often cautious towards employing NDDP clients.

Summary of findings

- Most (49 per cent) of the Job Brokers were from the voluntary sector, a quarter (24 per cent) from the public sector and a fifth (21 per cent) from the private sector. Typically, they delivered NDDP services to two to five local authority areas. Over a half (53 per cent) of Job Brokers were registered charities.
- The qualifications of staff dealing directly with NDDP clients varied; although most staff did not have a degree or higher degree. The experience frontline staff had of other labour market programmes and of the client group also varied; with public and voluntary sector organisations having the most experienced staff.
- Various marketing methods were employed by Job Brokers. The most popular method and most cost effective was said to be distributing promotional literature at Jobcentres (66 per cent).

- The Job Brokers' perceptions of their client's needs, attitudes and job readiness varied. The overwhelming majority of Job Brokers (99 per cent) expected up to 75 per cent of their clients to be job ready within six months. Most Job Brokers thought that having a job was important to their clients. However, most Job Brokers also believed that their clients should not take any job on offer (for instance, 70 per cent disagreed that having any job is better than being unemployed). Notwithstanding some Job Brokers' views on clients not taking any job, most (79 per cent) said clients should be expected to take jobs paying less than they earned previously.
- Most Job Brokers thought clients contacted them for help with moving back to work, to establish whether they were able to return to work and to find a job tailored to their needs.
- Twenty seven per cent of Job Brokers preferred to arrange a pre-registration meeting to assess the suitability of the individual for NDDP, others preferred to assess people and register them at the same time (35 per cent), while the remainder said it 'depends'.
- Job Brokers allocated clients to staff in different ways, with most Job Brokers (37 per cent) allocating on the basis of the client's geographical location (that is, home address).
- Most Job Brokers (38 per cent) allocated between 21 and 40 cases to each member of staff.
- More than one type of venue could be used to hold meetings with clients. The most popular venues for (pre-)registration meetings were neutral venues (65 per cent) and whichever Job Broker branch was most convenient for clients (63 per cent).
- Job Brokers adopted a variety of procedures for clients to contact them after registration. Most Job Brokers (88 per cent) allowed clients to leave a message with an answering machine out of office hours. Eighty two per cent of Job Brokers visited clients at work or home during office hours.
- Job Brokers employed one or more methods to monitor the progress of clients. The most commonly used were to have regular telephone contact with clients (93 per cent) and to have regular review meetings with clients (86 per cent). The least frequently used method was to send a questionnaire to the client or employer (11 per cent). The most popular methods used by Job Brokers to monitor clients' levels of satisfaction with the service were asking clients for feedback during follow-up contacts (75 per cent) and inviting clients to record and return comments in literature distributed as part of the registration process (55 per cent). Thirteen per cent of Job Brokers had no formal system to monitor clients' satisfaction levels.
- Job Brokers adopted three main approaches to working with NDDP clients, namely, to help people gain skills and confidence (99 per cent), to equip clients to find more work for themselves (94 per cent), and to find jobs for their clients (86 per cent).
- Most Job Brokers provided in-house services for NDDP clients, such as CV preparation (91 per cent), soft skills training (82 per cent), helping with job search activities (93 per cent), job matching (88 per cent), benefits advice (84 per cent), careers advice (80 per cent), work experience (72 per cent) and other help or advice (71 per cent). However, only a small proportion of Job Brokers provided in-work support to clients.
- Job Brokers referred clients to other/partner organisations mainly to acquire educational qualifications (74 per cent), obtain specialist help with their illness or disability (70 per cent), and access specialist help with other problems, such as alcohol or drug addiction (71 per cent).
- Most (42 per cent) Job Brokers had a public sector organisation as a partner, a quarter (26 per cent) had a voluntary sector partner, a fifth (20 per cent) had a private sector partner and a tenth (12 per cent) had a 'mixed' sector organisation as a partner.
- Over half (55 per cent) of Job Brokers did not provide services to people who were ineligible or unsuitable for NDDP, instead they referred them to other providers. Where services were provided to non-registrants, the main service delivered tended to be careers advice (40 per cent).
- Over half (51 per cent) of the Job Brokers had contact with between one and 50 employers. A further third (34 per cent) claimed to have had contact with 51 to 200 employers.
- In general, Job Brokers believed that there were jobs opportunities for NDDP clients. There were employment opportunities from a relatively wide range of sectors, notably manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants, transport, storage and communication, health and social work, and other community, social and personal services. However, most Job Brokers

said only a minority of professional (71 per cent) and intermediate level jobs (53 per cent) were available to their clients. The jobs that were mostly available were skilled non-manual, semi-skilled and unskilled.

- Overall, Job Brokers thought that employers' attitudes, whilst not hostile, were 'lukewarm' towards employing disabled people; for instance, 66 per cent of Job Brokers said only a **minority** of employers were positive about NDDP and already employ people who had registered for the programme.
- The most common method used to monitor the employers' level of satisfaction with NDDP services was to ask the employers for feedback during follow-up contacts. However, the monitoring systems for employers appear to be less well established than they were for clients.