

Department for Work and Pensions

Research Report No 499

Extension of the New Deal Plus for Lone Parents Pilot to Scotland and Wales: Qualitative evaluation

Dr Sarah Jenkins

A report of research carried out by GHK Consulting on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

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First Published 2008.

ISBN 978 1 84712 381 7

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Acknowledgements

This research was commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). I am particularly grateful to Kris Chapman, Jenny Crook, Aisha Riaz, Tim Willis and Alasdair Yeo, for their guidance and support throughout this research.

I would also like to thank all those who gave their time to assist in this research, including Jobcentre Plus staff and managers in the pilot districts, partners in Children's Centres and providers involved in the pilot. We are grateful to the lone parents who agreed to participate in research interviews.

Finally, I would like to thank the GHK research team for their hard work, insights and effort throughout the evaluation. The research was carried out by Mehreen Hosain, Sarah Jenkins, James Page, Shaheen Barket, Michelle Harrison and Nicole Silverman. Dr. Eleanor Breen has supported the team with her valued expertise throughout the evaluation.

The Author

Dr. Sarah Jenkins is a Senior Research Consultant at GHK Consulting Ltd.

Abbreviations

AAT	Adviser Activity Tool
ADF	Adviser Discretion Fund
ASM	Adviser Service Manager
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BOC	Better Off Calculation
CPM	Childcare Partnership Manager
DASO	Diary Administrative Support Officer
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
FTA	Fail to Attend
IB	Incapacity Benefit
IS	Income Support
IT	Information Technology
IWC	In Work Credit
IWEF	In Work Emergency Fund
IWS	In Work Support
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
LMS	Labour Market System
LPA	Lone Parent Adviser
MI	Management Information
MVC	More Voluntary Contact

NDLP	New Deal for Lone Parents
ND+fLP	New Deal Plus for Lone Parents
ONS	Office of National Statistics
OPU	Operational Procurement Unit
QWFI	Quarterly Work Focused Interview
QWFI 11-13	Quarterly Work Focused Interview for lone parents whose youngest child is aged between 11-13 years
TPPM	Third Party Provision Manager
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SOM	Standard Operating Model
WFF	Working for Families
WFI	Work Focused Interview
WSP	Work Search Premium
WTC	Working Tax Credit

Summary

Introduction

The New Deal Plus for Lone Parents (ND+fLP) pilot was launched in England in April 2005 and was based on the voluntary New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) programme which has been in place since 1998. On 2 October 2006, ND+fLP was extended to two districts, one in Scotland and one in Wales. Initially expected to run to 2008, the pilot has been extended in all pilot districts to 2011.

The ND+fLP new intervention regime reflects a move towards a more persuasive effort to challenge and support lone parents in moving towards successful entry to sustainable employment.

The package of support includes a variety of elements to help lone parents move into employment including:

Pre-employment support: More Voluntary Contact (MVC), Action Plans, Childcare Assist, Discovery Events, Flexible Provision for training and Work Search Premium (WSP) (which was withdrawn half way through the evaluation).

Post-employment support: In Work Credit (IWC), In Work Emergency Fund (IWEF) and In Work Support (IWS).

In addition, resources were put in place to help districts to deliver the pilot. This included enhanced adviser training, extra administrative support, an additional Childcare Partnership Manager (CPM), a marketing package and Jobpoints in Children's Centres.

The package of support provided through ND+fLP has been complemented by existing Jobcentre Plus provision such as Work Trials, Adviser Discretion Fund (ADF) and Better Off Calculations (BOC).

The approach for this study was designed to be comparable with the evaluation of ND+fLP in England.¹

¹ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'* Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426.

Management, delivery and staff training

The ND+fLP Jobcentre Plus districts in Wales and Scotland showed a number of different approaches in the management and delivery of the pilot. The Scottish ND+fLP pilot district operated a largely decentralised model with just one element of the administration conducted as a centralised resource for a cluster of offices. In contrast, the New Deal Plus district in Wales moved over time from a decentralised to a centralised model during the operation of the pilot. Both districts feel that their model works best for them and there is no clear evidence to suggest that one model is more effective than the other (see Section 2.3).

Overall, the extra elements of provision that were made available through the pilot have dovetailed well with existing services offered to lone parents. There was some evidence that the additional resources allocated to the district for the operation of the pilot, although ring-fenced, were absorbed into wider provision.

The introduction of structured enhanced training for Lone Parent Advisers (LPAs) was seen to be effective in enhancing the range of strategies Jobcentre Plus staff could employ when interacting with customers. However, staff highlighted that the training was not specifically tailored for working with lone parents; raising questions about its appropriateness for this customer group (see Section 2.5). More ad hoc 'on the job' training for administrative staff has had mixed results. The written guidance from head office for setting up the pilot was deemed clear and helpful; however, at times, follow-up guidance was considered too long and complicated. Advisers felt that they did not have the time in their day-to-day routine to read the guidance.

Management and LPAs can see benefits in regular meetings of all LPAs, Adviser Service Managers (ASMs) and CPMs involved in delivering the pilot. These allow for regular face-to-face sharing of information, good practice, training and dissemination of guidance (see Section 2.5). Regular meetings of all staff also ensure consistency in delivery of the pilot, which is not occurring across all locations.

Recommendations on management, delivery and staff training

- Guidance that was issued was lengthy and complex. A summary version of the guidance should be produced to make it more accessible to LPAs. The summary should specify what is new, what has changed and the impact this has on delivery of ND+fLP. This should then be disseminated to the staff involved. Where possible, this should be done in a face-to-face setting allowing staff the opportunity to ask questions and clarify their understanding.
- Regular meetings should be held with all staff involved in delivering ND+fLP. This could be done in a series of cluster meetings or in a district wide event. This would allow for the sharing of knowledge and good practice and ensure consistency of delivery of the programme across the district.

- Enhanced training should be provided to newly recruited advisers and refresher training for advisers. The regular district meetings could be considered an opportunity to conduct refresher training for staff. Introduce structured quality assurance processes for pilot delivery to ensure skills are being used appropriately by staff.
- All staff should be provided with a reference pack containing definitions of pilot elements with concise instructions on who is eligible for each and how to access it. Provide staff with the contact details of a member of staff who can answer questions and guide the adviser through the process.

Training of administrative staff should take a structured and formal approach. Modules focused on different duties could allow the course to be tailored to different roles.

Tools for engagement

The tools for engaging lone parents had a mixed level of success. An ND+fLP leaflet, based on a box of chocolates design, used to illustrate the choices available to lone parents, was deemed a success as it was attractive and different from usual Jobcentre Plus branded marketing material. However, advisers felt that slow and overly bureaucratic procurement procedures inhibited the effective and innovative use of the available pilot marketing budget (see Section 3.4).

Advisers were generally unclear about what constitutes MVC and how time spent undertaking this element should be recorded (see Section 3.6). LPAs also demonstrated a lack of understanding regarding the use of and application procedure for Flexible Provision (see Section 4.4).

Action Plans agreed at Work Focused Interviews (WFIs) were deemed to be more useful for the advisers to record conversations and agree actions than for lone parents. The voluntary nature of the actions often meant that they were not undertaken by lone parents. Lone parents were not referring to the Action Plans following interviews, or bringing them to follow-up meetings with their adviser (see Section 3.5).

Recommendations on tools for engagement

- Review the rules surrounding marketing associated with ND+fLP with a view to speeding up the procurement process and encouraging local innovation to promote the programme.
- Examine the ways in which advisers can apply discretion to Quarterly Work Focused Interviews (QWFIs) for those lone parents whose situation is not going to change in 12 weeks.
- Give consideration to what constitutes MVC and how it should be recorded on the Adviser Activity Tool (AAT). Guidance should be effectively communicated to advisers and managers about this element.

- Review the action planning process with a view to identifying when it is appropriate for a lone parent to sign and take away a copy of their Action Plan.
- Examine the role of the AAT in determining LPAs' work. Review the use of targets for LPAs with a view to allowing flexibility in addressing individual customer needs.

Improving pilot support

Jobcentre Plus staff and lone parents recognised that the pilot had provided a lot of help to assist lone parents make the transition into work. Advisers felt that they had the tools that they needed to address the multiple barriers that lone parents present when moving into work; however, some of those tools need tailoring to ensure they best meet the needs of the customer.

IWC, Flexible Provision and the IWEF were felt by staff to be the strengths of the pilot. Despite the latter two elements being underused, it was strongly felt that access to these was key to advisers knowing they had a portfolio of options to address the individual needs of a customer.

Although IWC was seen as being the power-tool of the pilot in engaging lone parents, it was the presentation of this element alongside other financial support such as Working Tax Credit (WTC), Job Grant and the ADF in a BOC that enabled lone parents to see what impact work and the package of additional financial support would have on their individual situation. A commonly expressed concern for lone parents entering work was the fear of the transition from benefits onto a salaried income, especially with monthly payment in arrears. Lone parents expressed concern at the additional expense that would be incurred and were worried about how to manage their money (see Section 5.4).

Childcare was often presented as a barrier to employment by lone parents. One element of the pilot, Childcare Assist, which offers childcare provision in the week prior to a lone parent starting work, was not deemed successful (see Section 7.2).

WSP, which was stopped in April 2007, was deemed not to have the anticipated effect of encouraging lone parents to conduct jobsearch, rather it was used to sustain existing activity and so offered no added value (see Section 5.3).

There was a general lack of understanding of the application and processes of MVC, IWEF and Flexible Provision (see Sections 3.6, 4.4 and 6.4 respectively). These elements have raised a series of questions from advisers throughout the evaluation about what they are, when they can be used, how to apply them and how to record time spent on conducting that element. This impacted not only on LPAs' confidence in offering lone parents the provision associated with these elements, but also has obvious impacts on evaluating the Management Information (MI) for these elements.

Recommendations for improving pilot support

The evaluation has identified that some pilot elements need to be further tailored to ensure they best meet the needs of lone parents. More specifically:

- enhanced Adviser Training should be made more applicable to working with lone parents;
- Childcare Assist should be offered for the first week in employment;
- Flexible Provision should have a simplified application process that will also speed up the procedure;
- clearer guidelines should be made available on the use of IWEF;
- consideration should be given to how to support lone parents towards the end of IWC provision;²
- time should be made available for advisers to deliver IWS.

Impact and outcomes

Moving into employment is the ultimate aim for any Jobcentre Plus intervention, including ND+fLP. However, with lone parents there are often several steps along the way, and it may take longer for a lone parent to be job-ready. Therefore, LPAs felt that getting a lone parent to start thinking about entering work and taking steps towards that goal, was also deemed to be a positive outcome from the pilot.

The ability of managers and advisers to clearly assess the impact of the pilot has been affected by the limited availability of MI. Clerical data collated by both districts enabled management to analyse use of the various elements, but without the ability to compare their performance with pilot areas elsewhere.

Conclusions

The experience of the extension of the ND+fLP pilot to a Jobcentre Plus District in Wales and Scotland, has confirmed many of the findings of the earlier evaluation of ND+fLP pilot districts in England.³ Staff viewed the provision offered through the pilot as extensive and appropriate, but some elements require tailoring to ensure

² Department for Work and Pension (DWP) has recently suggested piloting a number of different ways of paying IWC in a mix of weekly and lump sum payments linked to attendance at a meeting with an adviser to discuss their job and identify any future support needs (see DWP (2007) *'Ready for work: full employment in our generation'* Department for Work and Pensions Command Paper, p.14).

³ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'* Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426.

that the needs of lone parents in securing employment are met. It is possible to isolate the effective elements of the pilot; however, it is the availability of the comprehensive package of support that has been successful in aiding the LPA to help lone parents move from benefits into sustainable employment.

Many lone parents were surprised by the volume of support that is available to them and, once they were aware, became more enthusiastic and confident in their ability to return to work in a job that fits their needs. The challenge for Jobcentre Plus and LPAs is sustaining the initial enthusiasm and translating that into active and effective jobsearch.

1 Introduction

1.1 Policy context

The lone parent agenda is central to the government's strategies in addressing welfare to work, increasing the employment rate and reducing child poverty. In the belief that the route out of poverty is through work, the Government has committed to increasing the UK employment rate to 80 per cent, halving child poverty by 2010 and eradicating it by 2020, as well as moving 70 per cent of lone parents into work by 2010. Overall employment in the UK has increased from 72.9 per cent in 1997 to 74.5 per cent in 2007.⁴ At the same time there has been a steady rise in the number of lone parents moving into work, rising from 45.3 per cent in 1997 to 57.2 per cent in 2007.⁵ Current projections suggest that the lone parent employment rate will reach 64 per cent by 2010.⁶ However, further significant numbers of lone parents moving into work is critical to both reducing child poverty and reaching the 80 per cent employment target.

The Government has recently announced the removal of Income Support (IS) for lone parents once their youngest child is 12 or over from October 2008, aged ten or over from 2009 and seven or over from 2010; this is intended to move more lone parents into work earlier.⁷ At the same time, by 2010, every child should have access to a variety of activities beyond the school day through the provision of Extended Schools. Nearly 66 per cent of lone parents with children aged 11 to 15 years are already in work. In order to support these movements into employment, Jobcentre Plus and its partners' provision will be crucial in providing support to lone parents.

⁴ Office of National Statistics (ONS) www.statistics.gov.uk accessed 3 December 2007.

⁵ ONS www.statistics.gov.uk accessed 3 December 2007.

⁶ Harker, L. (2007) *'Delivering on Child Poverty: what would it take?'* Department for Work and Pensions, p.22.

⁷ DWP (2007) *'Ready for work: full employment in our generation'* Department for Work and Pensions Command Paper, p.37.

In December 2007, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) released a Command Paper⁸ that outlines the intention to extend elements of the New Deal Plus for Lone Parents (ND+fLP) nationally, for example, the roll-out of In Work Credit (IWC) to all lone parents. The paper also acknowledges some of the issues highlighted in this report, with the intention of piloting different solutions, for example, a pilot for the payment of New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) participants' up-front childcare costs in London.

1.2 Overview of the pilot

The ND+fLP pilot was introduced in April 2005, building on the voluntary NDLP programme which has been in place since 1998. Evidence indicates that this dedicated labour market programme for lone parents, alongside measures such as Work Focused Interviews (WFIs), has led to significant improvements in the labour market participation rate of lone parents.⁹

ND+fLP is testing a new intervention regime, a more 'persuasive' effort to draw out people's aspirations and provide the capabilities and support they need to realise those aspirations and return to work. Participation on ND+fLP is voluntary; however, elements within ND+fLP are focused on encouraging and incentivising lone parents into employment.

The pilot also reflects the move towards modular provision: a packaged service offer from which advisers can promote a wider range of training and support measures and beneficiaries can choose those interventions most appropriate to their individual needs at a given time. The service offer can also be characterised as offering a continuum of support to lone parents – including:

- assessment of needs and action planning to define aspirations and concrete measures for progression;
- childcare that is affordable and reliable as well as opportunities to discuss parents' concerns and trial childcare options in a supportive environment;
- training to expand and refresh capabilities; to match skills to the labour market; and to upgrade skills and confidence that have not been used for a while;
- financial incentives to enable lone parents to search for work and to manage the transition to work;
- independent and supported jobsearch opportunities;
- employer engagement through tools like Discovery Events; and
- post-job entry support (financial and in terms of other resources) to ensure that any initial transition problems while in work do not result in the lone parent moving back onto IS.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Evans, M. et al. (2003) *'New Deal for Lone Parents: Second Synthesis Report of the National Evaluation'*. Department for Work and Pensions, p.25.

From April 2005, ND+fLP was initially piloted in five Jobcentre Plus districts in England:

- Bradford (now part of the West Yorkshire district);
- Leicester (now part of the Leicestershire and Northamptonshire district);
- Dudley and Sandwell (now part of the Black Country district);
- North London (now part of the North and North East London district); and
- London South West (now part of the South London district).

From October 2006, the ND+fLP was extended to include:

- South East Wales (specifically, the former Cardiff and Vale district within the new South East Wales district); and
- Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders in Scotland.

The extension to the areas of Wales and Scotland, and the testing of its effectiveness in these areas, is a crucial step in preparing for a national roll-out of effective elements of ND+fLP, which it is hoped will support the attainment of the employment target of 70 per cent for lone parents.

When the pilot was extended to Jobcentre Plus districts in Wales and Scotland in October 2006, it consisted of 13 elements:¹⁰

- Action Plans;
- Discovery Events;
- Childcare Assist;
- Work Search Premium (WSP);
- IWC;
- In Work Emergency Fund (IWEF);
- Enhanced training for lone parent advisers;
- More Voluntary Contact (MVC);
- Additional Childcare Partnership Manager (CPM);
- Flexible Provision;
- In Work Support (IWS);
- Jobpoints in Children's Centres; and
- a marketing package.

¹⁰ These are explained in more detail in Appendix A.

On 1 April 2007, WSP was withdrawn. In addition, Quarterly Work Focused Interviews (QWFIs) were introduced in the pilot areas for all lone parents whose youngest child was aged 11-13 years. Although not directly part of the pilot, this did have some impact on its delivery (see Section 3.3).

Some of the pilot elements had been in place for some time in both district areas, prior to the pilot. This included IWC and WSP, which have been in place since 2004 in Scotland and Wales and Childcare Assist, which had been in place since 2005 in Scotland.

1.3 Study objectives

The main focus of the qualitative evaluation has been to examine the effectiveness of the ND+fLP pilot as a whole – to what extent is it a comprehensive and coherent portfolio offer to lone parents?

Specifically, the aims of the qualitative evaluation were to:

- determine the overall effectiveness of the pilot in moving lone parents towards work;
- examine the ways in which different elements interact, determine where the synergies lie and what works less well in particular contexts;
- assess (as far as possible) the effectiveness of the various strands; and
- explore the delivery of the pilot over time and determine how effectiveness could be improved.

1.4 Summary of the methodology and approach

The methodology for the qualitative evaluation was developed on the basis of the research specification and to ensure consistency with the methodology of the evaluation of ND+fLP in England districts,¹¹ to allow for comparisons where applicable. A longitudinal approach was taken, consisting of observation of the live running of the pilot over time to identify and feed back promptly on its development, specifically on: the offer and any changes in delivery, practice and organisational management. Three waves of research were undertaken: at the start of the pilot; six months into delivery; and a final visit once the pilot had been running for a year.

The main components of the evaluation were:

- interviews with district and pilot management within the two pilot districts. Interviews with the CPMs and additional CPMs in each district;

¹¹ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'* Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426.

- in-depth interviews with the Adviser Service Managers (ASM) and Lone Parent Advisers (LPAs), administrative support staff in four offices in the South East Wales pilot area (two in Cardiff and two in the Vale) and three offices in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district (one in Edinburgh city, one in the Borders and one in the Lothians);
- observations of interviews between lone parents and their advisers. These observations focused on: whether the LPA presented the package in its entirety and which elements the LPA highlighted for different 'types' of lone parents; the reaction of the lone parent to the offer and how the LPA assessed what was appropriate; the outcome of the interview and referrals made; and how administrative support, Information Technology (IT) and information available to the LPA enabled the process;
- initial interviews with lone parents eligible for ND+fLP following their meetings with an adviser, complemented by tracking of a panel of lone parents to inform: how the 'package' was perceived by beneficiaries; the prompts, motivations and ease of take-up of elements or combinations of elements from the package over time; and any benefits that occurred from the lone parents' perspective in addition to job outcomes. It should be noted that our sample of lone parents should be considered within the context of a separately published quantitative assessment of the impact of the lone parent pilots;¹²
- interviews with a range of external stakeholders and providers to understand how they link their offer to other elements of the package and any barriers they may have faced in delivering their provision. These interviews were mainly around childcare (with childcare providers/Children's Centres) and with training providers delivering elements such as the Discovery Events; and
- the evaluation tools included in-depth interviews, focus groups, telephone interviews with and observations of lone parent and LPA interviews. The topic guides and observation templates used for the research can be found in Appendices D, E and F.

1.5 Review of report structure

In the remainder of the report:

- Chapter 2 considers the differing management and modes of delivery that the two district areas have adopted;
- Chapter 3 explores the various tools the pilot offers to Jobcentre Plus to engage lone parents;

¹² Brewer, Browne, M.J., Crawford, C. and Knight, G. (2007) *'The lone parent pilots after 12 to 24 months: an impact assessment of In-Work Credit, Work Search Premium, Extended Schools Childcare, Quarterly Work Focused Interviews and New Deal Plus for Lone Parents'*, DWP Research Report No. 415.

- Chapter 4 looks at the options that are available through the pilot to help lone parents access training and provision that will move them closer to the labour market;
- Chapter 5 examines the financial support that the pilot offers and how this can be packaged with other Jobcentre Plus support to ensure lone parents are better off moving into work;
- Chapter 6 considers the follow-up support that the pilot offers once a lone parent has moved into work in order to sustain their employment;
- Chapter 7 looks at childcare and the barriers that lone parents face in taking up childcare provision; and
- Chapter 8 draws the findings together and presents the recommendations that have evolved from this research.

Wherever possible comparisons have been made with the evaluation of ND+fLP delivery in English pilot districts.

2 Management and delivery

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the way in which each pilot district organised and delivered the pilot and whether the additional resources have contributed to effective delivery.

2.2 Summary of main points

- The two Jobcentre Plus districts chose different ways in which to manage and deliver the pilot. Both districts have learnt lessons along the way and made some changes in their delivery to best meet the needs of the pilot, advisers and the lone parents.
- The two New Deal Plus for Lone Parent (ND+fLP) pilot districts had different delivery structures: one mostly decentralised, the other centralised. There is no evidence to suggest that one management structure is better than the other as there are benefits associated with both
- Delivery of the pilot has fitted in well with existing Jobcentre Plus service delivery. All management and advisers in both Jobcentre Plus district areas felt that the processes associated with the pilot had been integrated into mainstream business carried out by Jobcentre Plus staff.
- Lone Parent Advisers (LPAs) in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district are decentralised and managed by an Adviser Service Manager (ASM) in their local office. In the South East Wales pilot area, LPAs were decentralised but in June 2007 they moved to a centralised team, still based in local offices but managed by one ASM.
- Administrative support in the South East Wales pilot area was centralised and managed by one team. In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, administration was mostly decentralised and managed by a Diary Administrative Support Officer (DASO) within the local office. Both districts felt their model worked well, with administrative teams having been instrumental in releasing advisers from some of the paperwork associated with the pilot, thus allowing advisers to concentrate on interviewing lone parents.

- The enhanced adviser training provided LPAs with a new way of working that was more challenging the customer. LPAs felt this new way of working was more persuasive but that it was not necessarily suitable for everyone.
- There has been no formal refresher training since the pilot has gone live or formal training provided for those who have moved into post after the pilot had started.
- In both district areas the Childcare Partnership Managers (CPMs) have had responsibility for the day-to-day running of the pilot. This included dealing with enquiries regarding all elements and processes associated with the pilot. In the South East Wales pilot area, since the LPA team was centralised, the ASM had responsibility for the pilot.
- The administrative teams supporting the LPAs did not receive any formal training on the pilot or the tasks that they would undertake. This sometimes led to a difficult start to delivering the pilot. Where administrative staff were confident in their role, there was a willingness to support the LPAs by undertaking more tasks, however, there needs to be a reassessment of the DASO role for this to be achieved.

2.3 Management structures

The ND+fLP pilot districts in Wales and Scotland displayed several similarities and differences in their delivery model for the pilot.

2.3.1 The role of the Project Manager

In both district areas, the Project Manager has played a supervisory role, leaving the day-to-day responsibility for the pilot to the CPMs. In both districts the main role of the Project Manager has been to ensure everything was set up and in place when the pilot went live, then to step back and explore the progress of the pilot through monitoring the Management Information (MI) with the District Manager to ensure that all elements were being used. If a gap was identified, the Project Manager would meet with the CPMs to discuss how this issue could be addressed, leaving the CPMs to communicate and action any changes with the ASMs and LPAs.

During the course of the pilot both districts experienced a change in the allocation of staff resource available for delivery of the pilot. This increase in resource was to take into account the full financial year of delivery (as opposed to the previously shortened time of September to March). From April 2007, the overall resource allocation in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district was increased from 7.2 to 10.5 full-time equivalents; in the South East Wales pilot area, this was increased from 4.47 to 6.94. With the increase in resource, the Project Manager in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot area increased the amount of time she was spending on the pilot to 40-50 per cent of her time. In the South East Wales pilot area, the Project Manager was initially spending approximately 25 per cent of her time on the

pilot but this reduced to between five and ten per cent. The Project Managers in both pilot districts had other responsibilities in addition to managing the pilot. However, in the Welsh pilot area, despite a reduction in the amount of time the Project Manager spent on the pilot, the district team felt that they had adequate resources to deliver the pilot.

'I think it's fine. We have the capacity; we've always had a good team for lone parents. The manager has prioritised this. It is nothing new really.'

(CPM)

2.3.2 The role of the CPM

The most visible additional resource associated with the pilot was the additional CPM. In the South East Wales pilot district, the additional CPM covered the half of the area offering ND+fLP; the other CPM covered the half of the district without the pilot. In the Scottish ND+fLP district, the pilot was available in the whole district and both the CPM and additional CPM shared their role, although the additional CPM had a more visible role in regularly liaising with the Jobcentre Plus offices.

Both districts were able to build on existing relationships with providers and local Childcare Partnerships. The Scottish ND+fLP district, covers five local authorities, each holding quarterly Childcare Partnerships meetings. The CPMs tried to attend as many meetings as possible but it was not always possible as meetings were often held on the same day. In the South East Wales pilot area, the area covered two local authorities and the CPM has been working with them for many years. The pilot has not changed this relationship.

In addition to their CPM role, CPMs in both districts have also regularly collated statistics, communicated guidance to LPAs and answered questions from LPAs and ASMs on the various elements of the pilot and the Labour Market System (LMS).¹³ In the Scottish ND+fLP district, the CPMs have tried to alleviate some of the time consuming tasks that advisers feel unable to undertake themselves. Specifically, this included helping put together Flexible Provision applications, including seeking suitable courses and obtaining three quotes. In addition, the CPMs have offered to search for suitable childcare provision for lone parents who need additional support. The CPMs have provided advisers with a form on which the advisers completed the lone parent childcare needs, from which the CPMs would seek suitable childcare. The adviser received a reply, even if suitable childcare provision was not identified.

The management arrangements of the pilot in the South East Wales district changed over the course of the research. Through waves one and two of the evaluation the CPM had responsibility for the day-to-day management of the pilot. This has recently been handed to the newly appointed central ASM leaving the CPM to concentrate on her role as CPM and to spend more time in local offices with LPAs.

¹³ The LMS is the Jobcentre Plus computer system for recording client information and engagement.

2.3.3 The management of LPAs

The LPAs in the Scottish ND+fLP district were decentralised and were managed by a local ASM who also had responsibility for other teams in the local office, such as Incapacity Benefit (IB). This meant that the ASM was available to answer questions and approve paperwork. LPAs had team meetings within their office where any knowledge could be shared and issues identified. One weakness that was identified with a decentralised model was that each local office had a slightly different interpretation on delivery of the pilot, mostly in terms of the procedures followed. This means that there was a different understanding on what some elements of the pilot could and could not be used for and the procedure that needed to be followed in order to apply for particular elements of the pilot such as Flexible Provision and the In Work Emergency Fund (IWEF).

At the beginning of the pilot, the LPAs in the Southeast Wales pilot district were decentralised, similar to the Scottish ND+fLP team. However, having been previously centralised with one programme manager, advisers raised concerns that a decentralised way of working meant a reduced focus on lone parent issues and less accountability around the programme.

'I think the centralised team works better because you have more support, frequent team meetings and you can bounce ideas off each other. Now our meetings are not very often; we want more meetings. Also the team here is not specialised enough – the managers also have responsibility for other New Deals.'

(LPA South East Wales (wave 2))

In June 2007, as a result of a decrease in resources and a district restructuring based on the Standard Operating Model (SOM), the LPA team became centralised; although they remained located in local offices, all LPAs were managed by one ASM. The move from a decentralised to a centralised model was preferred by almost everyone: for the district team, this meant that they needed to communicate only with one ASM rather than several, making the process more efficient; the ASM believed that the benefit of working with one customer group allowed her to focus her attention on their particular issues and the programmes being delivered; and management and LPAs felt that having a centralised team ensured consistency in delivery across the district. In addition, they were able to get together as a team of LPAs bi-monthly and share information, knowledge and ideas.

'I felt like we lost out before.'

(LPA)

'I think that the move back to a centralised management structure is a positive one. Office level management was not helpful as it precluded me from focusing on the pilot due to my commitments across all teams.'

(ASM)

Since the team became centralised, LPAs have become more mobile and move between offices during holiday periods to cover peaks and troughs in workloads.

The one issue that was raised as a weakness for the centralised model is the processing of paperwork that needed to be signed off by the ASM. The ASM is officially based in one office but was out visiting different offices most of the time. This meant paperwork was collated until the ASM visits the office. This could cause minor delays in processing applications and in one case caused tension when an LPA had to persuade a Jobcentre Plus office manager to sign an application for the IWEF in the absence of the ASM.

LPAs and managers had different ways of working and the different delivery models require management to adapt their way of working to suit the model and the needs of their staff. However, the different delivery models adopted by the ND+fLP pilot districts were determined more by the way in which the district has historically run programmes and managed its staff than by the design and application of a new model solely for the pilot.

2.4 Administration

The two pilot districts have approached the organisation of administrative support differently, with the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district being mainly decentralised and the South East Wales pilot area centralising their administration team.

2.4.1 Decentralised model

In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, the administrative support was largely decentralised, with each Jobcentre Plus office taking responsibility for their administration. The main tasks being undertaken by the administrative support included booking of interviews, following up on Fail to Attends (FTAs) and undertaking some of the In Work Credit (IWC) paperwork. There were two exceptions where particular tasks have been centralised. The administrative team in one Jobcentre Plus office undertook the paperwork associated with IWC for all the Edinburgh Jobcentre Plus offices. In addition, there was a separate administrative team who booked the Work Focused Interviews (WFIs) for the whole district for any customers who were on the system before Jobcentre Plus rolled out. Those customers who were entered onto the LMS since the roll-out of Jobcentre Plus had their WFIs booked by their local office. This mix of centralised and decentralised administrative support appeared to work well.

'Although the admin team are split geographically, they have specific jobs to do and this system works.'

(ASM)

LPAs felt that having the administrative support mostly based within their office was a strength and did not feel that it would work well with a fully centralised team as they would lose control of the process. They felt that, if centralised,

the administrative support would also lose the local knowledge that they held – something that is pertinent to the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district as it covers a large geographical area. The LPAs and administrative team did, however, identify some weaknesses of having a decentralised administrative team which include:

- inconsistency in the correspondence that is sent to customers across the district;
- varying levels of competency of DASOs meant that some LPAs were receiving a lot more support than others; and
- the administrative resource was not ring-fenced, so different teams within the Jobcentre Plus office may make demands on their time.

In general, the advisers valued the support provided by the DASOs. Despite initial teething problems in organising processes, advisers felt the administrative support allowed them to focus on meetings with lone parents.

'The admin are excellent; they take an awful lot on board for us.'

(LPA)

2.4.2 Centralised model

In the South East Wales pilot district, all administrative support was centralised in one office. The main tasks being undertaken by the administrative team was all the paper work associated with IWC, Childcare Assist and Flexible Provision, although the latter two are rarely used and IWC forms the bulk of their work. In addition, the team had responsibility for booking WFIs for LPAs in the district. Staff felt that the centralised administrative team was one of the strengths to the way in which they deliver the pilot and felt it is more effective than a decentralised model as it increases efficiency amongst the team, therefore requiring fewer staff to support the pilot. If a member of the team was off sick, colleagues were able to pick up the workload preventing a backlog of work.

'If we weren't centralised and able to work together then I don't know how we would be able to do it. We are all trained to look after each other's responsibilities.'

(Manager)

By having a centralised administrative support team, the administration team felt that they had built up a rapport with the providers that could be useful when trying to sort out problems or chase late payments.

LPAs and management in the South East Wales pilot district also liked having the administrative team centralised, as this meant that when they needed to contact administrative support, there would always be someone there to help them. The administrative team felt that by working together they had built up a knowledge base and someone on the team is always able to answer questions.

'All queries are directed to a central point.'

(LPA)

'All expertise is in a central point.'

(LPA)

'The team being centralised hugely supports the process happening effectively and efficiently.'

(ASM)

2.4.3 Additional administrative support

The pilot provided additional administrative resource to support advisers in delivering the pilot. However, LPAs in neither district were able to identify the additional administrative support allocated as part of the pilot. In the Scottish ND+LFP pilot district, due to a decentralised model, the additional resource was spread thinly, giving each office a small proportion of the additional administrative support. For example, there was a 1.2 administration resource increase to distribute across 13 Jobcentre Plus offices in the district, resulting in little visible increase in available resource locally. In the South East Wales pilot area, the additional resource enabled them to maintain the resource dedicated solely to IWC that had been in place since 2005. As a result, many staff had not seen, and were not aware of, any additional resources that were put in place as a result of the pilot. Those staff who did have administrative support to process the paperwork associated with IWC considered this to be 'an essential resource'.

Both districts felt that the support of a DASO was beneficial to the lone parent team. DASOs helped the LPAs by setting up caseload interviews and WFIs, following up on FTAs and organising the paperwork associated with IWC, Childcare Assist and Flexible Provision. Both districts identified that the role of the DASO had rapidly expanded and there was a need for more administrative support to be made available to advisers. One district management team described the current ratio as one DASO to seven advisers, but felt that one to four was needed. It was felt that if the administrative capacity existed and they were trained, they would be able to undertake more tasks to support the LPAs, such as searching for suitable training under Flexible Provision and telephoning customers to remind them of their appointments.

2.5 Training for advisers

2.5.1 Before the pilot went live

In both districts 'walk through' events were conducted prior to the pilot going live and LPAs received Enhanced Adviser Training. The Enhanced Adviser Training provided LPAs with a new way of working that encouraged them to be more

challenging towards the customer. LPAs felt that the training also emphasised the need to have an individual approach with the customer and helped them to think about how to deliver the various elements of support. However, as identified in the evaluation of ND+fLP in English pilot districts,¹⁴ there were few lone parent examples used during the training and some LPAs felt there was an inherent tension in the new approach: on the one hand to 'listen' and respond to lone parents' needs while on the other hand also being more challenging and focusing on work.

'The new way of working is very work focused and is about finding out someone's job goal and focusing on that.'

(LPA)

Many LPAs felt that this new way of challenging customers was *'the ideal way of working'* but that it was not suitable for everyone as not all lone parents are at the point of being able to look for work and need further long-term support to help them become job-ready. One lone parent who was not ready to go back to work, commented that there was too much focus on employment.

'I felt that the interview was about going to work too much. It made me feel like what I was doing wasn't important. I am busy doing other things like educating my children, which is important to me. I think there should be a bit more support for things like that.'

(Lone parent)

On the other hand another lone parent said,

'I was very fed up after losing my job. After my first meeting with my adviser I felt reassured about finding work. They told me that we work alongside each other to help me find a job. Within a week after this meeting, I had my first job interview.'

(Lone parent)

2.5.2 Training since the pilot went live

Since the Enhanced Adviser Training conducted prior to the pilot going live, there had been no formal pilot refresher training on the pilot conducted in either district; something that the LPAs felt would be beneficial. Staff were not given any summary sheets or hand-outs from the training, something that they feel would be useful to refer to, particularly for elements not used on a regular basis. For example, one LPA said that she was told about IWEF at the initial training but had not used it in over six months. She was no longer clear what it could be used for and consequently did not promote it to the customer. The LPA felt that having a reference sheet would have helped her remember what it was for and how to apply for it.

¹⁴ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.20.

Members of staff who joined the lone parent team after the pilot went live received generic adviser routeway training and then job shadowed an LPA, who informed them of the pilot. Following the initial training, advisers have been able to request attendance on Enhanced Adviser Training courses at a later date. In one district the CPM has tried to meet with every new member of staff on a one-to-one basis to explain the pilot.

In the South East Wales pilot area all LPAs and the ASM met bi-monthly. In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, one cluster of local offices met regularly with LPAs, the ASM and the Administration Manager. This allowed for the sharing of knowledge, ideas, training and good practice. It was reported that doing this through a team meeting ensured the dissemination of information was consistent and allows the opportunity to ask questions and gain clarity, rather than leaving it to individual interpretation when information was sent out via email. The CPMs had attended some of these meetings, particularly if there were specific pilot questions anticipated or information to be shared. Those LPAs that did not meet regularly with other LPAs reported that meetings had occurred in the past and expressed a strong desire for them to happen again. This was particularly pertinent for LPAs in rural offices where they may work alone or with only one colleague and can feel isolated. Management would also like the opportunity to meet with all the LPAs in a district-wide meeting. A CPM expressed that *'Even if this is just twice a year it would be useful'*.

In one district, the District Manager believed that the Enhanced Adviser Training helps to re-energise advisers. To follow this up, the District Manager had been working with a work psychologist and was in the process of putting together a course looking at Solution Based Interviewing to help LPAs adopt positive interviewing techniques and in encouraging lone parents to find the solutions to the issues and barriers they raise. The aim was also to aid advisers in becoming more challenging towards lone parents. If successful, the intention was to roll this training out to all Jobcentre Plus advisers in the district.

2.5.3 Common administration issues

Despite different delivery models, there were some common issues that have been highlighted from both districts relating to processes and the level of support offered.

Administrative staff felt that the process of organising payment for customers via an external payments administration company was unnecessarily slow due to the need to print forms and put them in the post. They felt that an electronic system should be put in place.

'The termination of IWC can be done electronically through the Resource Management system; why can't authorisation to start payment be done in the same process?'

(Administration Manager)

Although it is felt that the administrative staff were an asset to the lone parent team, LPAs identified that there were some additional tasks that administrative teams should undertake if capacity allowed. This included:

- handling deferrals and waivers on Quarterly Work Focused Interviews (QWFIs);
- taking phone calls on behalf of LPAs while they are interviewing;
- processing all the paperwork associated with training or at least preparing the necessary forms; and
- providing support with the necessary forms for Flexible Provision.

Managers felt that Jobcentre Plus should reassess the role of the DASO. The number of duties they undertake has expanded considerably since the role was first established and the volume of work can be 'overwhelming'. In the Scottish ND+FLP pilot district this was described as particularly so since the introduction of organising monthly coffee mornings.

The administration team would have liked to receive specific training for the roles they were to undertake in supporting the delivery of the pilot. They received no formal training to explain the pilot and the tasks they would be undertaking to support it: it was assumed that they would learn as they went along, which led to a difficult start to delivering the pilot.

LPAs did not have control over their own diaries and there could often be a delay in trying to book up caseload interviews or interviews for lone parents who needed more support. There were some lone parents they would have liked to see the following week but they had to wait up to three weeks. LPAs would have liked to have time slots booked out for different types of interviews: for example, in the morning undertaking WFI, in the afternoon undertaking NDLP caseload interviews. As one LPA said, *'If you are converting all your WFIs to caseload, then you never get a chance to see your caseload customers'*.

In addition, with DASOs booking appointments, some lone parents were not always seeing the same LPA. Advisers felt that they worked hard to gain the trust and respect of lone parents in order to get them to open up. Sometimes issues were discussed which were not suitable to write onto the LMS. If the lone parent was not seeing the same LPA, then they had to go through the same things every visit. LPAs prefer to see the same customers as this *'allows you to deliver a personal service'*.

Some LPAs suggested there should also be allocated slots blocked out in their diary for conducting IWC and administrative tasks. For example, LPAs in one office indicated that once an interview had been completed, advisers have to complete a LPWFF2 form to indicate that the lone parent had attended their interview. This form had to be completed and faxed for each interview. This was felt to be time consuming and a task that could be completed by the administrative team. One LPA said *'You shouldn't be playing catch up all the time'*.

2.6 Conclusion

Project Managers in both pilot districts have played a role in setting the pilot up and appointing the additional resource. Project Managers subsequently handed the day-to-day running of the pilot to the CPMs and then undertook a more distant role of monitoring the MI.

As in the evaluation on ND+fLP in England,¹⁵ training provided to advisers prior to the pilot going live lacked lone parent examples and raised many questions amongst advisers. Advisers felt there would be a benefit to providing refresher training for staff once the pilot had been running for a period of time.

The evaluation of ND+fLP in England suggested that there was no clear evidence as to whether a centralised compared to decentralised model for the LPAs was the best organisational model.¹⁶ The ND+fLP pilot districts in Scotland and Wales have chosen two different delivery models, both stating that their model worked best for them. A centralised model allows for efficiency of resources and a focus on the needs of lone parents. A decentralised model gives LPAs immediate access to management and a feeling of control over processes in the programme. The choice in management structure was determined by the way in which programmes have been delivered historically in that district, thus aligning the pilot with their standard approach to management arrangements.

All managers and advisers in both districts felt that the processes associated with the pilot had been integrated effectively into mainstream business carried out by Jobcentre Plus staff. This includes the additional resources that have not been ring-fenced, but rather have been absorbed into everyday processes and roles within Jobcentre Plus. One ASM said *'The pilot ticks along as part of the process'*.

'To be quite honest it isn't being run like a pilot as it becomes part of everyday work. The elements contained within the pilot are more or less incentives, so it has become an everyday thing...it is part of the everyday job and [LPAs] take it in their stride.'

(ACPM)

¹⁵ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.20.

¹⁶ Ibid.

3 Tools for engagement

3.1 Introduction

A variety of tools were available to help engage lone parents and support them in working with Jobcentre Plus to move into employment. An additional marketing budget was made available to districts to promote the pilot locally and leaflets marketing New Deal Plus for Lone Parents (ND+fLP) were different from the normal Jobcentre Plus branded leaflets instead using a chocolate box motif. Action Plans were made mandatory to enhance lone parents' sense of responsibility, and provide a structured framework for interaction between the adviser and the lone parent. Advisers were encouraged to conduct More Voluntary Contact (MVC) with lone parents who were not yet ready to commit to New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP), but were happy to stay in touch with Jobcentre Plus, formalising a procedure that advisers said they were already doing. Finally, Jobpoints were placed in Children's Centres away from Jobcentre Plus offices. The Jobpoints provided access for lone parents often in rural areas and, in one case, initiated further outreach work.

3.2 Summary of main points

- Lone Parent Advisers (LPAs) felt that, due to the high number of targets advisers have to meet in their daily routine, the pilot has not improved the overall quality of engagement with lone parents;
- advisers tailored the information provided and elements offered according to the individual needs of the lone parent. Advisers felt that it would be an 'information overload' to tell customers about everything offered under the pilot;
- the chocolate box leaflets have been well received by both advisers and lone parents. Both LPAs and lone parents were attracted by the fact that it was different from the normal Jobcentre Plus branding;

- spending on the marketing budget allocated to the pilot for innovative promotional activities has been restricted by slow procurement procedures and the need to conform to the Jobcentre Plus brand. This has stopped management from trying to be innovative with the additional marketing budget;
- Action Plans were considered a valuable tool for advisers to record conversations. However, they were seen as less useful for lone parents. Few LPAs print out a copy to give to lone parents;
- MVC has not had the impact anticipated. Part of the reason for this was the priority to convert customers to the NDLP caseload early. LPAs were not clear or consistent in how they record time spent on MVC;
- the Jobpoint located in a Children's Centre in the South East Wales pilot district has been successful and has led to Jobcentre Plus advisers conducting regular office hours at the Centre supporting lone parents in the local area; and
- the Jobpoint in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district has been less successful due to access difficulties and a lack of awareness of its existence, leading to very low usage. District staff in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot area have moved the location of the Jobpoint, but this has taken more than 16 weeks to organise.

3.3 Engagement with lone parents

Lone parents met with their advisers for a number of reasons, including exploratory discussions, follow up visits, MVC appointments, new claims, Work Search Premium (WSP) and to inform their adviser they were returning to work. Meetings usually lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. To prepare for meetings with customers, most advisers would take the time to review the Labour Market System (LMS) record and familiarise themselves with any previous notes on the customer's situation. The amount of time the adviser spent on this task varied by office, how familiar they were with the client and how busy the adviser's schedule was on the day.

Clients varied from lone parents with complex issues and constraints to achieving employment, to lone parents who could benefit quickly from the support and jobsearch advice available through the pilot. Observations of interviews demonstrated that generally advisers had a similar style and approach regardless of the client's situation. Advisers usually had good relationships with their customers and dialogue was interactive and informal. The LPAs were motivational and supportive of customers' situations, trying to encourage them into work, either as an immediate step for job-ready clients or as a longer-term goal for clients with constraints. During the study's follow-up interviews with lone parents, most felt reassured by their LPAs and that they were not '*pushed into making any decisions*'. They felt as if they had options and that the pilot offered them the opportunity to choose the situation that was most suitable for them. One lone parent commented on her relationship with her adviser saying that:

'...he is very good. He is supportive and is always sending me information. I always drop in and use the Jobpoint if I am in the area.'

(Lone parent)

Lone parent case study

The lone parent was previously employed with a retailer on a temporary contract for three months. The contract was not extended and the lone parent lost his job. He visited Jobcentre Plus in July 2007 and was assigned an LPA who provided details of the various elements of support available to him including NDLPs. The adviser reassured him that they would help him to find employment. The lone parent was looking for employment in retail or as a pharmacy assistant. He has attended Jobcentre Plus on a regular basis to discuss vacancies in the local area and has been looking in the local press. *'I am very confident that I will be able to work again. My adviser has been very helpful. I have applied for lots of different jobs. I will get one soon'.*

He has three children, two aged 18+ years and one aged 11-18 years. He does not consider that he has any childcare barriers and thinks that there is no reason for him not to be working.

It was generally felt that the pilot offered a lot of support to lone parents through the various elements. The majority of advisers did not tell their customers about all elements on offer. Rather, they informed them of the most appropriate elements, based on the individual's circumstances.

'The incentives are helpful – not everyone needs all the elements. It's about deploying the help appropriately.'

(Adviser Service Manager (ASM))

In addition, LPAs felt that telling the customer about everything would be an *'information overload'* for them and would raise expectations for the lone parent if they did not qualify for particular elements. It was also felt that important messages would be lost.

3.3.1 LPA workload

From 30 April 2007, Quarterly Work Focused Interviews (QWFIs) were introduced in pilot areas for lone parents whose youngest child is 11-13 years old. This has placed a noticeable increase on the workload of LPAs and administrative support that are booking the appointments. Appointments for QWFIs were filled up LPAs' diaries for up to four weeks in advance, leaving little room for other interviews such as NDLP caseload appointments. In order to get through the number of QWFIs required, many offices were booking ghost diaries with appointments so that if they had a Failure to Attend (FTA) the time was not wasted. In effect, three to four staff were covering five diaries which meant that some lone parents

were having to wait to be seen. This also applied to those lone parents who call into the office without an appointment scheduled: for example, if they popped into the Jobcentre Plus office to inform the LPA they were starting work or had found out about a training course they wished to attend. In these cases advisers were accommodating and would squeeze customers in between appointments, checking over customer details during the interview. The advisers had a full workload, but generally this was felt to be manageable. The issue is ensuring that space is also available in the LPA diary to conduct interviews that are not Work Focused Interviews (WFIs).

The national guideline on timing for WFIs is 60 minutes; however, due to the number of interviews that advisers must achieve, they were allocated 30 minutes diary time. However, 30 minutes was widely felt by LPAs to be insufficient for the first interview when the adviser has a lot of information to get across, including a Better Off Calculation (BOC). One District Manager observed one LPA conducting a WFI; the adviser ensured that everything was covered properly and was praised for the interview. However, it took one hour and ten minutes to cover everything.

There was a mixed reaction from LPAs on whether introducing QWFIs was a good idea, although generally they thought it was aiding the encouragement of lone parents into work. Some advisers felt the QWFI was valuable as it reinforced the message that Income Support (IS) will come to an end and allowed the adviser to work with the lone parent, preparing them to move into work. Other LPAs felt that they were '*unfair*' for those whose children are under 15 years and who do not have to start thinking about returning to work. However, it has recently been announced that from October 2007, lone parents may no longer be eligible for IS shortly after the youngest child turns 12 years old.¹⁷

LPAs preferred to have consistency and to see the same lone parents; which helps to build up a rapport and trust with the customer. In most offices, they tried to book interviews with the same LPA that the lone parent saw previously. However, there were generally a high number of FTAs amongst this client group. The administrative team did not have time to call customers before interviews to remind them of their attendance. Staff in both districts felt that the pilot had no impact on FTAs. One of the Jobcentre Plus offices in the South East Wales pilot area was trialling a new system called the 'Luton Model'. WFIs are arranged for a certain time, but lone parents are not allocated a personal adviser; they will see whoever is available at the time. If six advisers are working, interviews for eight advisers are arranged to compensate for the FTAs. Although LPAs use the time available from an FTA constructively for other activities, the LPA has a target for the number of lone parent interviews they need to achieve each day.

¹⁷ DWP (2007) '*Ready for work: full employment in our generation*', Department for Work and Pensions Command Paper, p.48.

3.3.2 Pressure to meet targets

It was generally felt across both districts that the quality of engagement with lone parents has not improved as a result of the pilot:

'I would like to say that it has improved, but it has stayed the same.'

(Childcare Partnership Manager (CPM))

If anything, LPAs felt that quality of interaction with lone parents has decreased due to the number of targets they need to meet, including the number of interviews they complete, the number of Work Trials they organise, BOCs undertaken, submissions for interviews and caseloading onto NDLP. At wave two, we identified issues with recording tasks on the Adviser Activity Tool (AAT) that monitors adviser performance. If an adviser fails to meet the required targets set, they are put onto Adviser Improvement where they are monitored more closely. By wave three, most of the issues appeared to have been resolved in terms of process, although it was reported that this sometimes meant an LPA may push what was needed in relation to their target, rather than the most appropriate tool for that lone parent.

'We are primarily working to AAT at the expense of doing what is best for the customer.'

(LPA)

3.4 Marketing

The marketing package was designed to sell the benefits of an overall package of interventions, bringing together all elements in the pilot using a distinctive 'chocolate box' motif. In addition to large brochures and smaller leaflets, other material such as videos, audio and posters are also available. Material has been produced in translation in a range of languages including Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi and Punjabi.

3.4.1 Chocolate box leaflets

The main marketing tool associated with the ND+fLP pilot is that of the chocolate box leaflets. As in the English ND+fLP pilot districts,¹⁸ the design of the leaflets was liked by both lone parents and advisers as it was different to the usual Jobcentre Plus branded materials.

'I picked this up myself just before the meeting with the adviser. It was the picture of the chocolates that made me pick it up. I liked the pictures. It's really colourful. It made it easy to read.'

(Lone parent)

¹⁸ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) 'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation', Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.37.

There was a mixed reaction from advisers as to whether they preferred the smaller or larger leaflet. However, many advisers and managers felt that the large leaflet was too large to fit in a bag or handbag and therefore, awkward to carry. This was particularly so in the South East Wales pilot area where the leaflet was twice the thickness due to the need to have the leaflet available bilingually. In one office in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, they had adapted the questionnaire at the back of the large leaflet into a letter and sent this out to customers when they invited them for a WFI. They have found that many customers came to their interview with the questionnaire completed and with some thoughts about the type of work they would consider. As identified in the England ND+fLP pilot evaluation,¹⁹ Advisers highlighted the fact that the leaflets do not outline the eligibility criteria for the elements, sometimes inappropriately raising lone parents' expectations. This was particularly noted with regards to In Work Credit (IWC) and training options.

In wave one, some Jobcentre Plus offices were running low on leaflets and district managers commented that the leaflets were expensive to purchase. As a result, advisers were not necessarily giving every lone parent a ND+fLP leaflet. However, as a result of changes in the elements being offered under the pilot from April 2007, there had been a new purchase of leaflets to update and replenish stock.

Advisers indicated that they had no need for leaflets to be available in languages other than English and Welsh. In fact, advisers were unsure if the leaflets were even available in other languages.

ND+fLP leaflets were given out in less than a third of the interviews observed. Around a half of the lone parents that were interviewed after their meetings with their advisers recalled seeing the chocolate box brochure, either through their advisers at some stage or having received the material by post. Most LPAs had the marketing material displayed on their desks, even if they did not proactively give them to lone parents.

Due to the various sources of support available for lone parents, advisers felt that there were too many leaflets, all of them full of information which can be difficult for a lone parent to digest. Advisers in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district have recently received a short and concise '*Thinking About Work*' leaflet that summarises much of the support available to lone parents, including elements that are not part of the pilot, such as Job Grant, Work Trials and Up-Front Childcare Costs.²⁰ LPAs have found this leaflet extremely useful and many are now using this leaflet rather than the ND+fLP chocolate box leaflets.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.36.

²⁰ The Scottish ND+fLP pilot district is using the Adviser Discretionary Fund to help lone parents to pay for up-front childcare costs. This is separate to the Up-Front Childcare Costs pilot that is being piloted in London from April 2008.

3.4.2 Additional marketing material

In addition to the chocolate box leaflets, both district areas conducted additional marketing initiatives. In Scotland, there was a national lone parent campaign which included multimedia advertising and the production of DVDs with stories from lone parents who had been helped by Jobcentre Plus to move into work. Advisers were encouraged to show sections of the DVD to customers during their interviews but they felt there was not time to do this. Administrative staff also sent a copy of the DVD to every lone parent they invite for an event, such as the regular coffee mornings that every Jobcentre Plus office in Scotland holds. Lone parents living locally were invited to the Jobcentre Plus office to find out what support Jobcentre Plus is able to offer them. Unfortunately, all offices experienced a low turn out, with an average of more than 160 invitations being sent out for each coffee morning and fewer than ten people attending or making an appointment as a result. These events were a lot of work for the Diary Administration Support Officers (DASOs) who were organising two a month, including one for Incapacity Benefit (IB) customers, with the perception of little reward.

The South East Wales pilot area produced separate leaflets for their Discovery Event and a similar Look to the Future course which they procured for lone parents. They have also produced a voucher for IWC saying *'Don't start work without me'*, which was sent out to all lone parents who have been on IS for 12 months when they are invited into the Jobcentre Plus office for an interview.

There was an additional marketing budget specifically allocated to the pilot and districts are encouraged to be innovative in the way they use it to promote ND+fLP. Both districts have come up with a variety of ideas; however, almost all ideas have been rejected by head office. For example, radio advertising was considered too expensive and marketing focused on parents with children who have Special Educational Needs (SEN) was not felt to be cost effective.

'What's the point in having a marketing budget if we are not allowed to spend it?'

(CPM)

'All ideas we put to Sheffield [Head Office] they knock back with the same corporate excuse.'

(ASM)

In addition, the procurement for ordering marketing materials was deemed to be bureaucratic and slow (taking between six and ten weeks). The slow procurement process can mean that some opportunities are lost. One district put together a proposal in March to order parasols for parents' buggies during the summer. Head office sourced a cost for procurement that was thought to be twice what it would have been to procure them locally. A manager described how it took several months to negotiate the ability to procure them locally, *'by which time it was August, when it was too late for parasols, and there was more of a need for umbrellas!'*

Negative experiences surrounding the procurement of marketing materials have deterred management in both districts from trying to be innovative with the marketing budget; instead they have decided to stick to the list of NDLP branded goods available from head office such as pens and filofaxes, yet procuring these has also been problematic. One district had tried to procure NDLP pens three times and had not received them and the other district had to wait more than two months for them to arrive. One district ordered filofaxes to be distributed to lone parents. However, they came in several parts and needed to be assembled before they could be sent out to Jobcentre Plus offices for distribution. As a result they sat in the district office for many months. Shortly after the filofaxes were distributed to the local offices, the pilot changed and the filofaxes were out of date. LPAs now go through the filofax manually and cross out Work Search Premium (WSP), but they still had lone parents asking about it and why they are not entitled to receive it.

3.5 Action Plans

Action Plans are a mandatory requirement for advisers during each WFI. Advisers are expected to complete one at the initial WFI and then regularly review and update the Action Plan. From October 2005, it has been a requirement for lone parents to agree on the Action Plan as part of participating in a WFI. Since April 2005, changes to the LMS data entry and recording system used by Jobcentre Plus have supported this requirement.

Action Plans were introduced as a way of engaging lone parents to actively participate in their WFI and are encouraged to view the document as an agreement between themselves and Jobcentre Plus. The use of Action Plans was variable across both districts and across staff within offices. At the beginning of the pilot, advisers indicated that they were using Action Plans more frequently than in wave three. Throughout the evaluation it was clear that Action Plans were being used more as a record for advisers than a mutually agreed document to encourage lone parents to actively participate in their WFI.

Due to the amount of information that needs to be shared in a short period of time, advisers felt that it was useful to document, clarify and summarise conversations in an Action Plan. In theory, the Action Plan can then be followed up at the subsequent interview. However, in practice, because actions are not mandatory, tasks were not always completed by the lone parent, especially if they were not yet ready to think about entering into employment. Advisers therefore felt that, depending on the lone parent's circumstances, it was not always appropriate to conduct a full Action Plan on every occasion. However, when they are updated regularly, advisers find them a useful tool to gain background on a customer, especially if it is a customer they have not seen previously.

'The information is in front of you, you don't need to ask the customer to recap what they have been up to. This gives us more credibility.'

(LPA)

Most advisers said that they thought printing out the Action Plan was unnecessary and that it was only printed and signed if there was a specific action, for example, referral to training or WSP. Only a handful of lone parents interviewed had been given an Action Plan to take away from their interviews; however many had agreed to undertake actions following their meeting. This included such activities as applying for three jobs before the next meeting, calling a couple of childcare providers or putting together a CV to bring to the next meeting. One LPA completed an Action Plan at every interview and felt that *'it makes people feel like the interview is more structured and they take it more seriously if they have to sign it'*. Lone parents were not observed to be referring to Action Plans following interviews with their adviser.

A couple of advisers felt that typing an Action Plan while conducting an interview was disruptive and felt it was more important to gain the trust and confidence of a customer, so they preferred to take notes and type them up later. Some LPAs also identified that the Labour Market System (LMS) was not always working properly, which could make completing Action Plans difficult.

3.6 More Voluntary Contact

This initiative involves the provision of named advisers to work with lone parents through the duration of their benefit claim. The rationale is to apply a more intensive regime, but without the conditionality that accompanies other regimes such as Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). This allows for more frequent and sustained contact to reach a broader cross-section of lone parents and encourage them to participate in NDLP and move into work.

Advisers were encouraged to use More Voluntary Contact (MVC) where a lone parent was not ready to be caseloaded onto NDLP, but were willing to stay in touch with Jobcentre Plus to consider their options with a future intent of returning to work. Despite initially indicating that MVC was something that they would have done anyway, but which is now formally recognised, there were some initial issues with MVC that did not appear to have been clarified through the course of the evaluation. Management also felt that MVC had not been successful and should be removed from the pilot.

'MVC has been confusing right from the start, we got mixed messages and it wasn't clear to us or to advisers.'

(ASM)

Lone parent case study

One lone parent is on the pilot, although she is not currently looking for employment. Her children are 14 and 15 years old and currently on alternative teaching curricula, meaning that they are at home most of the time. The lone parent was undertaking MVC and popped in to see her adviser every few weeks. The lone parent has been discussing a tiling and plastering course with her adviser, and will return to the Jobcentre to discuss this further when she feels she is ready to start work.

3.6.1 Understanding of MVC

There was a general lack of understanding about MVC amongst advisers in terms of what constitutes MVC, how often it should be undertaken and how time spent on MVC should be recorded.

For example, in one district, advisers identified four NDLP caseload markers but were unable to agree amongst themselves if one of these was the right one or if MVC was in fact for customers who were not caseloaded. In the other district, LPAs thought that there was no credit for spending time on MVC and, therefore, no incentive to do it. However, some advisers suggested that they could not see the difference between MVC and putting the lone parent directly onto NDLP caseload and so were not using MVC.

Overall, although undertaking MVC, many advisers did not grasp why MVC was necessary. Some LPAs felt that an MVC interview was:

'an interview for the sake of an interview. It's a waste of time and there is no point to it. If customers were interested they would become caseloaded.'

(LPA)

One adviser had no idea what MVC was and did not know how to record that time because they had never used it.

'We are under pressure to convert one in six customers. As far as [the LPAs] are concerned, if they get any level of engagement from the customer, they will convert them to caseload.'

(ASM)

Conducting MVC, rather than caseloading a customer onto NDLP, was usually addressed when a Discovery Event was due to be held. Advisers used MVC for those customers they were referring to the events, as customers who were caseloaded were unable to attend Discovery Events.

There is also a lack of clarity amongst management in both ND+fLP pilot districts regarding MVC. In one district, one of the managers saw a document from head office that outlined that MVC was not required as it offered customers the same

as NDLP. As a result, she indicated that LPAs were told to no longer conduct MVC, but were to caseload customers onto NDLP. Guidance issued from head office in May 2007 suggested that customers who have more than one meeting between WFIs should be caseloaded.²¹ In an interview with another member of the same district management team, we were informed that only a few weeks previously the district team told the ASM that not enough MVC was being conducted, which had to be addressed with LPAs.

3.6.2 Time to undertake MVC

Since the introduction of QWFIs for lone parents who have children aged 11-13 years (QWFIs 11-13) in pilot areas from 30 April 2007, advisers have had less time to undertake MVC and are often reliant upon FTA rates to release the time to undertake other tasks. In addition, due to the voluntary nature of MVC, advisers described how MVC interviews could result in a high number of FTAs, leaving spaces where caseload interviews could have been done. This impacts on the number of lone parents LPAs see.

'I can see the logic behind everything else, but not behind the voluntary contact. Because it isn't mandatory then there is no purpose to the meeting so there is low attendance and they don't follow up on any of the actions.'

(LPA)

'[MVC] is one thing that takes a back seat when they are busy.'

(ASM)

As a result of the above difficulties, managers in both districts felt that MVC was not being fully utilised.

3.7 Outreach including Jobpoints in Children's Centres

This initiative involves the installation of a remote access Jobpoint in one Children's Centre in each pilot district. This would allow better information about the availability of jobs and the take up of other services such as NDLP. CPMs are expected to raise awareness about the Jobpoints and handle enquiries through regular contact with Regional Sure Start teams and Children's Centre managers.

²¹ The guidance states *'Lone parents in regular contact (i.e. more than one interview) with a personal adviser are receiving the same support as under NDLP. Therefore in these circumstances the NDLP marker should be used in preference to the MVC marker. In other words, one interview between WFIs should be counted as MVC, more than one interview as NDLP caseloading'*.

Placing a Jobpoint in a Children's Centre has had differing success in the two district areas.

In the South East Wales ND+fLP area, the installation of the Jobpoint in the Children's Centre has been successful and has led to further outreach work from Jobcentre Plus. In addition to the Jobpoint there was a warm phone to enable customers to call employers directly. The Jobpoint was used mainly by young parents. A high proportion of those using the Jobpoint were lone parents, however, it was certainly not accessed exclusively by them.

The Children's Centre Manager felt that hosting the Jobpoint had made minimal demands on the Children's Centre. Whenever there have been any problems with the Jobpoint, for example if a change of paper is needed, these issues were usually dealt with on the same day. Occasionally, parents had asked to be shown how to use the Jobpoint, but they felt it was fairly self-explanatory. The Children's Centre Manager would like to see the Jobpoint advertised more so that more parents knew it was there.

In addition to the Jobpoint, Jobcentre Plus provided an outreach worker on a Thursday morning and on Thursday afternoon 'Want 2 Work' (a Welsh Assembly Government and Jobcentre Plus initiative) was run. Jobcentre Plus also attended job fairs and had a mobile job unit that they shared with other partner organisations. This Jobcentre Plus support helps parents with their individual needs, such as writing CVs and applying for jobs. Despite initial problems with gaining access to broadband and providing a laptop for the LPAs to use, this outreach has been deemed successful by all those involved.

Outreach was also conducted in other areas of the district, where LPAs did regular office hours in three community centres, conducting WFIs with lone parents. One estate had a high number of lone parents and regular outreach work was conducted there. Jobcentre Plus, in association with the council, held a 'Money Matters' event that covered information on money management, debt control and how the lone parents would be better off in work than on benefits. The event was open to all parents who lived on the estate but a high proportion of attendees were lone parents. There were 80 people who attended the event, 40 of whom moved onto NDLP caseload. This outreach was felt to be important in terms of reaching the client group and reducing the number of FTAs. Word-of-mouth has worked well in these communities, generating referrals to Jobcentre Plus.

Lone parent case study

The LPA had been advising a 56 year old customer for two years. The woman had never worked and had lost her husband. She had no confidence or self-esteem and could not read or write. The LPA referred her to a literacy and numeracy course in the local college. She spent 18 months studying and attending every session. The LPA saw the lone parent regularly through that period. At a recent meeting the LPA thought she seemed to exhibit more confidence and could read and write better. However, the customer also had health issues and was diabetic as well as deaf in one ear. The LPA referred her to support for her disability and caseloaded her for six to eight weeks. She is now working and the LPA thinks that this outcome would not have been achieved outside of the outreach centre.

The Jobpoint in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district has been problematic. The foyer to the Children and Family Centre was chosen as the initial location for the Jobpoint. However, this was changed to an annex building where there was more space for Jobcentre Plus staff to potentially hold clinics and provide leaflets. Once the contract for the Jobpoint had been signed, there was a change in use of the annex building: the council was going to be using the office space and so access to the Jobpoint would be restricted. The Jobpoint was put in the hallway of the building. Marketing posters were provided to outreach facilities and local schools; however, there was no signage to locate the Jobpoint on the premises. A lack of awareness of its existence, combined with restricted access to the building, has led to very low usage.

The district team decided to move the location of the Jobpoint from the Children and Family Centre to a local council office. It was felt that this would increase the number of people who may access the Jobpoint. However, it took 14 weeks for the contractor to move the Jobpoint and costs were incurred by the district. When it was eventually moved, there were further installation issues. The Jobpoint was eventually up and running in its new location seven months after initiating the request for it to be moved.

The effectiveness of the Jobpoints in outreach locations is difficult to determine, as it is impossible to establish how many of those using the Jobpoint are lone parents. However, the number of jobsearches in each district gives an indication of level of usage. In the South East Wales pilot area the Jobpoint had 1,684 jobsearches,²² whereas in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot area the figure was 38.²³

Little additional outreach work was done in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district. ASMs in rural locations believed that outreach was important and where possible, tried

²² Up to 12 October 2007.

²³ Up to 1 October 2007.

to attend local groups, for example, parent and toddler groups and community centres. They took example BOCs and talked about the support that Jobcentre Plus was able to offer. This outreach work was done on an ad hoc basis, despite the belief that it is important; the main constraint is time.

3.8 Conclusion

Overall, the tools for engaging lone parents have had a limited success. In agreement with findings from the England ND+fLP evaluation,²⁴ the chocolate box motif on ND+fLP leaflets was liked because it was different from the usual Jobcentre Plus branding. However, as the pilot has progressed, developing additional innovative marketing has been identified as problematic due to slow procurement procedures. This has led to managers in both pilot districts 'giving up' on trying to be innovative and using existing NDLP branded goods, which had its own problems.

When completed on a regular basis, Action Plans and MVC were deemed useful for Jobcentre Plus staff but a lack of conditionality led to a lack of action and high FTAs. As established in the England ND+fLP evaluation,²⁵ LPAs did not feel it necessary to print out the Action Plan on every occasion, doing so only when there was a definite commitment to undertake an action by the lone parent. Advisers, therefore, found the document more useful for themselves, rather than for the lone parents. A lack of understanding of MVC and its value throughout the evaluation means this element is underutilised and lone parents tended to be caseloaded onto NDLP. For these reasons, staff raised questions over the effectiveness of these elements in engaging customers.

The Jobpoint and outreach in the Wales ND+fLP pilot area has led to engagement with customers who perhaps would not have accessed Jobcentre Plus services; but this has not been reflected in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district where difficulties with the location of the Jobpoint have meant its utility could not be assessed.

²⁴ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.36.

²⁵ Ibid., p.42.

4 Training

4.1 Introduction

The training provision associated with the pilot consisted of two elements: Discovery Events and Flexible Provision. Discovery Events are a two-day course designed to help lone parents overcome issues of low confidence and self esteem, making them aware of the support available to help them move into employment. Flexible Provision is a source of funding that can be used to cover training provision that is not available through other mainstream provision.

4.2 Summary of main points

- Discovery Events have had differing success in each district area. In the Scottish New Deal Plus for Lone Parents (ND+fLP) pilot district, they were generally considered successful, with many lone parents achieving a positive outcome. In the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area, they were under-subscribed and felt to be ineffective.
- Many Lone Parent Advisers (LPAs) in both districts were unaware of what the Discovery Events offered to lone parents and who would benefit from attending. Many advisers, therefore, felt unable to promote Discovery Events to customers.
- Both districts have used Flexible Provision funding to procure additional courses similar to the Discovery Events. These courses are longer in length and aimed at lone parents who are on New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP).
- Flexible Provision was considered by all staff to be one of the most useful elements of the pilot but there was acknowledgment by all that it was underused.
- Barriers to using Flexible Provision included a lack of clarity about what it can be used for and a lengthy and complicated application procedure that has put advisers off using this element.
- The application process for Flexible Provision involved a duplication of tasks carried out by the LPA, the Third Party Provision Manager (TPPM) and the Operation Procurement Unit (OPU).

4.3 Discovery Events

Discovery Events are a form of support for lone parents who have not yet joined NDLP. The objective is to build confidence, engage with employers, explore career paths and address concerns and limitations to entering employment. Their aim is to help lone parents move closer to the labour market by encouraging them to take up NDLP or Employment Zone provision or through work-related training.

The Discovery Events have had differing success in the Scottish and Welsh ND+fLP districts. In the Scottish ND+fLP district, those lone parents that have attended the events have given very positive feedback and many have subsequently signed up for NDLP or entered training shortly after the event. In the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area, numbers attending events have been very low, feedback has been negative and consequently advisers have been reluctant to refer any new customers to future courses.

In the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area three Discovery Event courses had been delivered in three different locations. Overall, the Discovery Events were not considered to be successful by LPAs, management or the external training provider themselves. LPAs were, therefore, reluctant to refer lone parents to the events.

The external provider felt that they had experienced difficulties from the start when they gave a presentation to Lone Parent Advisers. LPAs told the provider that they did not feel lone parents would attend such a course. Overall, the provider felt that they received a negative response from LPAs and have found it hard to get them on-board to promote the Discovery Events.

The number of people who have attended the course in the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area was low. The provider had been expected to draw lone parents who were not already engaged with Jobcentre Plus onto the event, with Jobcentre Plus also referring a few customers who were not caseloaded. Despite using a variety of methods to promote and advertise the course, such as putting posters in schools and shops, contacting parent and toddler groups, handing out leaflets at lone parent events and knocking on doors, the provider had not been highly successful in getting participants on the course, thus relying mainly on Jobcentre Plus referrals. In order to ensure those lone parents who were referred actually attended the course, provider staff offered to transport lone parents to and from their homes to the event. Even so, they have had only 17 people attend the three Discovery Events.

Despite low numbers attending the first course, all participants were referred to attend an NDLP interview. The provider felt this was because the first course was attended by the Childcare Partnership Manager (CPM). The provider feels that the CPM managed to engage with the lone parents and get them motivated. In addition, she booked lone parents interviews with an LPA while they were on the course.

'This kept the momentum going.'

(Discovery Event Provider)

Although invited, no one from Jobcentre Plus attended subsequent courses.

Neither the Jobcentre Plus staff nor the external provider were aware of any feedback from those customers who had attended the event but the general feeling from staff was that Discovery Events were too short to be able to make any difference. Advisers also felt that one of the main reasons for low attendance was that customers were not caseloaded and were, therefore, unlikely to attend an event as it was not mandatory. The South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area was also running a similar course to the Discovery Event called 'Look to the Future' where lone parents need to be on the NDLP caseload to be able to attend. This course has received much higher attendance rates.

'If you get them to an event, you might as well send them on a Look to the Future course.'

(LPA)

There was one final Discovery Event to be delivered in the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area in February 2008. The district team were keen that the final event was successful and has asked the provider to put a contingency plan together to run two courses in February if enough customers sign up. Jobcentre Plus has agreed to send out a mail shot to all lone parents, and the provider was thinking about the incentives they would be able to provide to encourage attendance, such as Easter eggs, goodie bags or high street vouchers.

With the announcement that ND+fLP is to be extended in pilot areas to 2011,²⁶ the Discovery Event provider contract was up for renewal. Initial Discovery Event providers were procured through head office without consultation with the district. The district felt that they should have a say in who is chosen to deliver the events as head office are unaware of the history associated with working with any one given provider, *'they simply see a quote'*. The district team strongly believe that they should be involved in the procurement of the provider.

In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, the Discovery Events have been deemed to be successful. With the exception of the first event, the courses have been almost full, and the provider has exceeded the 70 per cent positive outcome²⁷ target for each course. The combination of seeing the success of the first course and the positive feedback from customers has spurred advisers to 'sell' the course to other lone parents. The provider felt that the positive feedback had *'given advisers a bit more confidence to refer people to it'*. These feelings were echoed by some advisers:

²⁶ Department for Work and Pensions (2007) *'Working for Children'*.

²⁷ A positive outcome is considered to be attendance at an NDLP interview or a movement into education or training within 13 weeks of attending the course.

'[Discovery Events] are an excellent thing, one of the best things to come out of this.'

(LPA)

The provider felt that the Discovery Events had gone *'very well'*, and that the Discovery Event is *'a nice short provision that is achieving what Jobcentre Plus want to achieve which is getting them onto NDLP'*. The provider believed their success was been due to:

- flexibility in the delivery of the course – the provider has adapted the course depending on the type of customer who has attended. For example, *'if three-quarters of lone parents on the course are over 35 years, then we would shorten the amount of time we spend talking about childcare and do more of the motivational and confidence work'*;
- the staff delivering the course enjoy what they do and this came through to the parents;
- they tried to find a fun way to deliver every aspect of the course – the provider is conscious not to simply talk at the lone parents for a long time, so they include group work and discussion sessions wherever possible;
- the provider regularly looked at the evaluation forms – every parent completed an evaluation form at the end of the event, and the provider discussed every comment made with the CPM when considering future courses. A copy of the evaluation forms was given to the CPM; and
- consistency of staff delivering the courses – the provider felt that this enabled the staff to learn and develop from each event.

All lone parents who completed the course received a 'goodie bag' which contained a £20 high street voucher and a pamper kit. The provider acknowledged that lone parents tend to spend every penny on their children and this was to give them something for themselves. It was also felt to be a reward for the lone parents. The provider felt that *'if you do something you get a reward, that's what work does'*. Plus, the provider prepared a CV for each parent after they have attended the course which allowed them to start applying for jobs straight away.

4.3.1 Common issues between the pilot districts

Despite the differences identified in the districts, there were some common issues that have been identified.

The current guidance is for two Discovery Events to be held a year. This was not felt to be enough as advisers were only targeting lone parents they see in the weeks leading to an event. Staff felt that if the events were more regular, for example, every two to three months, then advisers would be able to continually look for appropriate customers, rather than pushing only those they see in the weeks preceding an event. In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, they procured

some additional Discovery Events using Flexible Provision. Due to the geographical nature of the district, Discovery Events had not been held in every location. Lone parents were unable or unwilling to travel to these events, leaving LPAs in some locations feeling that they have had no events to which they are able to refer lone parents.

Providers in both districts have tried to meet with lone parents before they attend the course. It was felt that this would give lone parents the opportunity to ask questions and a face to recognise when they turned up on their first day. In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, this has been a positive experience and has given the provider the opportunity to establish if lone parents had any particular issues they wanted the course to cover. In the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area, no one turned up for the session before the first course, so the provider has not offered this opportunity at future events.

There have been issues in both districts regarding the provision of childcare during the Discovery Events. In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, the provider believed it was in their contract to provide childcare for those lone parents requiring it. The provider said that *'providing childcare is the most difficult aspect of providing the course'*. This is because they need to book childcare provision three to four weeks in advance but they do not meet the lone parents to establish childcare need until the week before the course.

'Providing a crèche for two days can cost between £400 and £500, however Jobcentre Plus will only refund £27 per child per day.'

(Discovery Event provider)

In some locations in Scotland, the provider was able to apply to Working for Families (WFF) to cover the cost of providing childcare. However, when they had to provide the childcare themselves, they did not recover the full expense. In the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area, the provider was not contracted to provide childcare, however, the provider indicated that Jobcentre Plus felt childcare may be one of the barriers for lone parents attending the event. When lone parents were referred to the course, the provider asked them about their childcare needs and often childcare was already arranged or a family member was able to look after the children for the two days. The provider therefore felt that childcare was not a barrier to attendance.

In both districts there were a number of LPAs who felt they did not know enough about the Discovery Events to be able to 'sell' them to customers. In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district there appeared to be a handful of advisers who were knowledgeable and proactive about Discovery Events, other advisers said that they would like the provider to give them a presentation on what they are and who would benefit from attending them. In the Wales ND+fLP pilot area, advisers were generally negative about Discovery Events and had very little interest in them. Consequently, very few advisers knew the content of the events. One Adviser

Service Manager (ASM) said: *'I've never really understood how the Discovery Events sit with the rest of the pilot or NDLP'*.

The contract that has been issued to Discovery Event providers in both districts is identical. However, as highlighted there has been local variation in its interpretation. In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, the provider was expected to make childcare available on site for the duration of the Discovery Event. In the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area, the provider offered help to lone parents to find childcare. In the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area, the provider was expected to identify the majority of attendees for the course, whereas in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district most referrals came from Jobcentre Plus.

4.4 Flexible Provision

This resource is intended to allow District Managers the flexibility to purchase training courses or provision which is currently unavailable and they believe will make a difference to lone parents' employment opportunities. This would allow advisers greater opportunity to address specific needs.

Advisers and managers in both districts felt that Flexible Provision was a useful and effective tool in helping lone parents move closer to the labour market and one of the key elements of ND+fLP. However, as also identified in the England ND+fLP evaluation,²⁸ it was underused.

Advisers stated that Flexible Provision enabled them to address the individual needs of a customer. Where Flexible Provision has been used, it has funded qualifications in book keeping, driving licences, proof-reading, classroom assistant training, sign-writer training, nursing, holistic therapies and yoga instruction.

Lone parent case study

A lone parent expressed an interest in undertaking the qualification to become a classroom assistant. The course cost £900. The Individual Learning Account covered £200. Having gone through an interview with the college the customer had already been accepted onto the course. The LPA put together an application for the remaining £700 using Flexible Provision.

28 Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents Qualitative Evaluation'* Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.54.

Lone parent case study

A Pakistani Muslim woman wanted to become self-employed as a childminder. Through Flexible Provision, the pilot funded her qualification to enable her to meet the social services criteria. It was felt that by doing this, they were not only helping one lone parent but would also be helping her peer group as she was going to be providing childcare amongst her own community.

Lone parent case study

A lone parent had been on the NDLP for approximately one year. She became interested in work as a teaching assistant and started applying for vacancies. Unfortunately, she was unable to secure employment and it was felt that a relevant qualification would help her to secure permanent employment. Although she has no previous experience working as a teaching assistant, the lone parent did have previous experience of working with children and wanted to find employment that fitted in with term-time hours.

She identified the training she wished to complete and visited Jobcentre Plus to discuss the course. The Personal Adviser explained that Jobcentre Plus could provide help with childcare costs and travelling costs while she completed the training. *'I was aware of the course I wanted to do. I knew I needed to get the qualification to get the job I wanted. They were really helpful. They helped with the childcare costs while I was training and helped to pay for my travel. I really needed them. I would not have been able to do the course without them.'*

Despite feeling it was an essential element of the pilot, both districts felt that they did not use the Flexible Provision as much as they could. The reasons for this are summarised as a lack of clarity on what it can be used for, coupled with a complicated and time consuming application procedure.

4.4.1 Lack of understanding

During wave one fieldwork, advisers demonstrated a lack of clarity about what Flexible Provision could be used for. This was still the case at wave three of the evaluation. Each LPA appeared to have a different understanding, some being clearer than others. Advisers and management felt that there were no clear guidelines or instructions set out from the start. Advisers were confused with many questions that management were unable to answer.

'We were simply told there was mainstream funding; and now there is Flexible Provision to pay for other things.'

(LPA)

Additionally, advisers were not clear about what the standard procurement route, mainstream funding, could be used for and consequently, were not clear when Flexible Provision should be used.

'I am not sure what is available under mainstream.'

(LPA)

In addition, LPAs expressed an interest in receiving regular presentations from training providers and partners about the provision that is available and suitable for lone parents.

Lack of understanding has led to a lack of confidence in referring lone parents amongst almost all LPAs in both districts. One ASM felt *'LPAs are shying away from Flexible Provision'*. Some advisers felt that it had been so long since they received training on procuring Flexible Provision that they did not remember what to do. Other advisers have put together applications that have been rejected, leaving them reluctant to apply again.

4.4.2 Application procedure

One of the main barriers to using Flexible Provision was the time it takes to complete and process an application. As identified in the England ND+fLP evaluation,²⁹ access to funding for training, whether mainstream or Flexible Provision, was viewed as bureaucratic and this acted as a deterrent to making funding applications. The advisers indicated that they have to find time to research and collect multiple quotations before putting together the application. Adviser diaries were often booked up with back-to-back interviews and they had little time to undertake the research and put together an application for Flexible Provision. Advisers were dependent upon FTAs to release the time they need. It was felt that applying for Flexible Provision was a complicated process and one that was not fully understood by the advisers or ASMs.

'They need to simplify the process of obtaining Flexible Provision.'

(ASM)

'It can be a lot of hard work to pull all the evidence together.'

(LPA)

The lack of understanding by LPAs was reflected in the proportion of applications for Flexible Provision that have been rejected due to a lack of information provided on the application form, estimated by one district to be approximately 50 per cent.

²⁹ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.55.

In order to support advisers with the administration required, the CPMs in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot area have taken on responsibility for conducting the research to get quotes for provision. As a result, requests for Flexible Provision have slightly increased. Through discussions with TPPMs and the Operational Procurement Unit (OPU), it became evident that a different number of quotations is required depending on the value of the procurement and that the LPAs and ASMs did not know this.

It was the responsibility of the ASM to approve the funding and confirm that the lone parent would benefit from the training. It was the responsibility of the TPPM to decide if the training procured was value for money. If accepted, the request was passed to the OPU to also source the necessary quotations and procure the provision. In one district, advisers felt that the ASM was acting as a gatekeeper for Flexible Provision funds. It was the responsibility of the TPPM to judge the suitability of the training course; however, at the local level one ASM would reject many applications before they were sent to the TPPM because they did not feel that the course was value for money, or that the lone parent would have little chance of gaining employment in that field once they have completed the course. Some LPAs felt they were doing the job of the OPU in order to get the application approved by the ASM. The ASM felt that some requests for Flexible Provision had not been adequately justified:

'There are a number of cases that come to me, but once I investigate further and looked at the job outcome and the cost of the course, there are issues about authorising it.'

(ASM)

The ASM felt that LPAs needed to use their knowledge of the area, the labour market and what jobs are available, to judge how realistic it is that the lone parent would get a job at the end of it.

'Flexible Provision is great, but we need to get our heads around using the fund.'

(ASM)

In order to try to increase the uptake of Flexible Provision, management in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district circulated a list of all applications that have been successful, in the hope that by giving LPAs examples of when Flexible Provision has been used, it would encourage them to think about which customers would benefit. Advisers explained that the process of application for Flexible Provision could take up to ten weeks. As identified in the England ND+fLP evaluation,³⁰ this sometimes meant that lone parents have missed the start date of their course.

The process of application for Flexible Provision appeared to involve duplication.

³⁰ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.55.

The adviser, the ASM and the TPPM all checked to see if the training was available through mainstream provision. The adviser and the OPU both spent time sourcing provision and gathering quotations. Putting the form in the post added to an already slow process and advisers expressed the desire to conduct the process electronically. One OPU felt strongly that LPAs should not be charged with obtaining quotations: *'They are not procurement experts; it is dangerous to get them involved in procurement'*. Both districts identified a need to simplify the application and consequently speed up the time it takes to process an application for Flexible Provision.

During a workshop session with advisers and managers, the staff developed an ideal process identified for the procurement of all training provision, including Flexible Provision as identified by LPAs, TPPM and OPU in both districts. This new application process was estimated by staff involved to take approximately three weeks, a significant reduction on the current time required, and is a much simplified process compared with the existing procedures. A diagram of the ideal process for providing training provision for lone parents can be found in Appendix C.

Both districts have used Flexible Provision to procure a course similar in its aims and objectives to the Discovery Events, but longer. At the very beginning of the pilot, the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area procured a two-week training course for lone parents who were on the NDLP caseload. This course was called 'Look to the Future' and has been designed specifically to tackle issues of low self esteem and confidence amongst lone parents by assessing individual circumstances and working with lone parents over a two-week period. This course is similar to previously trialled Discovery Weeks³¹ except that they were available to customers who had already been caseloaded. This course received positive feedback from customers and the training provider. Advisers were keen to refer customers to the course and felt that this was a good tool to encourage customers onto their caseload. By the end of the wave 3 fieldwork, 46 lone parents had attended the Look to the Future course, with 21 achieving a positive outcome by either moving into work or onto training.

The Scottish ND+fLP pilot district has also recently procured a five-day 'Steps to Work' course for lone parents on the NDLP caseload. They were using the same provider for the Discovery Events. The five-day course would be of similar content to the two-day Discovery Event but with the ability to spend longer on each topic. For example, in the two-day course they have a 30-minute slot to discuss money management. In the five-day course this will become two hours.

³¹ Family, Poverty and Work Division (2006) *'Work Works' final evaluation report*, Working Paper No. 35, p. 10-11.

4.5 Conclusion

The training provision has had mixed success in engaging lone parents. In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, the success of Discovery Events has increased with time as providers and LPAs become more knowledgeable of what the course provides and how to meet lone parent needs. In the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area, the Discovery Events have failed to engage large numbers of advisers or lone parents from the start and this has not improved with time. Where Discovery Events have been successful, there were a number of elements of good practice that should be shared for future delivery. The different local interpretations of the same centralised contract seems to have provided one of the main sticking points in delivery, namely, the recruitment of participants and provision of childcare. As identified in the England ND+fLP evaluation,³² the effectiveness of Discovery Events in addressing entrenched confidence issues was questioned by advisers, management and providers, who noted that a much longer course was needed.

It was clear that LPAs and ASMs within, and across, districts had a differing understanding of what Flexible Provision could be used for and of the application procedure. The current process presented duplication of tasks and results in a slow turn-around of applications, resulting in lone parents missing the start of their courses. As established in the England ND+fLP evaluation,³³ the process of applying for Flexible Provision was deemed complex and deterred LPAs from using this resource. There needs to be clear communication to LPAs on identifying potential needs and referrals, for a lack of clarity has led to both elements being underutilised.

³² Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.53.

³³ Ibid., p.54.

5 Financial support

5.1 Introduction

The financial offer available through the pilot has been central to its effectiveness. The financial elements offered in the pilot districts include: Work Search Premium (WSP), which incentivised customers to search for work, and In Work Credit (IWC), which was considered by all to be the element in the pilot which engaged lone parents and motivated them to think about employment. These elements were frequently combined with other financial support elements available through Jobcentre Plus, such as the Adviser Discretion Fund (ADF) and Job Grants, and presented to lone parents through a Better Off Calculation (BOC) so they could see what impact all the financial incentives will have on their total income. Other financial elements of the pilot offered access to an In Work Emergency Fund (IWEF) and payment for childcare for the week prior to the lone parent entering employment through Childcare Assist. These latter elements are discussed elsewhere: see Chapters 6 and 7 respectively.

5.2 Summary of main points

- WSP was removed from the pilot on 1 April 2007. Most advisers felt that this element did not achieve the impact it was designed to: rather, it sustained existing jobsearch and so added little value.
- The financial benefits of IWC remain the most persuasive element in getting a lone parent to think about work.
- In order to manage the transition off IWC at the end of 12 months, advisers felt there should be an early warning or reminder issued to lone parents or a tapering of funds towards the end.
- Financial elements are often packaged with non-pilot support and presented to the customer in a BOC.

5.3 Work Search Premium

WSP offered £20 per week extra support for up to six months payable to lone parents who had been on benefit for more than one year but who agreed to actively and consistently look for work. This initiative was introduced in October 2004 and was piloted in all the Extended School areas except one. This exception was due to the area also being an Employment Zones area and the WSP was not compatible with Employment Zones. To qualify for WSP the lone parent had to be participating in the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) programme. WSP was discontinued from 1 April 2007.

The uptake of WSP was slow in both districts. Advisers in one district were given targets and were able to count searches and submissions under WSP on the Adviser Activity Tool (AAT). As a result, the volume of WSP activity did increase.

Advisers had mixed feelings on whether WSP acted as an incentive to encourage lone parents to undertake jobsearch or whether it was paid to those lone parents who were either already conducting jobsearch or seriously committed to jobsearch.

'Work Search Premium is seen as another source of income.'

(Lone Parent Adviser (LPA))

Generally, it was felt that WSP was not being used as an incentive to start jobsearch, but rather as a tool to sustain action. In addition, advisers felt that the condition of attendance at the Jobcentre every two weeks was too much like Jobseeker's Allowance and put lone parents off. One LPA felt that WSP was a good tool but only *'if it is targeted right, for a genuine customer'*.

'Just being on Work Search Premium can get people used to the extra money, and that provides an incentive to look for work.'

(LPA)

For those lone parents who were receiving WSP and who then moved into work, issues were highlighted. One set of payments had to be stopped and another started with concerns over the scheduling of these. One adviser pointed out that when there was overpayment of WSP, the *'customer starts work with a debt'*.

From 1 April 2007, WSP was no longer available to lone parents on the pilot. Few advisers felt that their customers had moved into employment as a result of undertaking jobsearch through WSP. As identified in the England New Deal Plus for Lone Parents (ND+fLP) evaluation,³⁴ some advisers felt that the paperwork

³⁴ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.58.

and eligibility criteria for WSP were too complicated and that if lone parents were interested in looking for work then they would do it without the £20 additional payment.

'I am relieved it has gone. I did use it, but I think those that were motivated would have looked for work anyway.'

(LPA)

'There was a lot of paperwork and hassle for no outcome. I had no one move into work as a result of Work Search Premium.'

(LPA)

5.4 In Work Credit

£40 per week (or £60 per week in London districts) is payable to lone parents who have been claiming Income Support (IS) for 52 weeks or more when they get a job of more than 16 hours per week. This allowance is paid for the first year of work.

IWC had been in place in both districts since 2005 and was deemed a powerful and effective tool. It was the foremost element of the pilot that advisers and managers felt was crucial in engaging lone parents and getting them motivated to think about employment. LPAs felt that 'without question' it helps to engage the lone parent. The impact of IWC was more often than not, illustrated by a BOC. One lone parent said:

'The benefits are very helpful for those in my position. Lone parents are always concerned about their children – who are looking after them, how they can afford to pay for it – the benefits help with this. I think the extra £40 a week for the first year of work is a really good idea. It encourages people to stay in work.'

(Lone parent)

Advisers felt that presenting IWC in a BOC was when it made sense to lone parents and they can really see how much better off they are going to be by going to work.

'It makes a huge difference.'

(LPA)

'It changes the tone of the interview straight away.'

(LPA)

'IWC is the main tool.'

(Project Manager)

Lone parents recalled conversations with their adviser about IWC more than other elements of ND+fLP.

Lone parent case study

This lone parent attended the Jobcentre for her Work Focused Interview (WFI). She was initially somewhat hesitant about working as she was worried about whether she would be financially better off because she has five children. Her adviser conducted a BOC, which showed she would be £160 per month better off in work (including the IWC). On receiving this information the parent stated:

'This is excellent, especially the extra £40 a week. I would be so much better off in work. I still worry about not receiving free school meals and having to pay for glasses and the dentist, but £160 better off is excellent.'

The lone parent decided to look for 16 hours a week during term time. She was also thinking about training to be a paramedic or a qualified nurse.

In both pilot districts, administrative support teams conducted much of the paperwork associated with IWC. The administrative team felt that one of the benefits with IWC was that the process of administration for the element is considered straightforward.

'Although there may be a lot of paperwork, it is easy to administer.'

(Administrative Support)

As identified in the evaluation of ND+fLP in English pilot districts,³⁵ one of the main concerns expressed by advisers related to the transition off IWC at the end of the period. Advisers explained that many parents have not realised that they have got to the end of their 52 weeks and there is no warning or reminder for them. One adviser made a point of writing a note in the final letter requesting payslips, to remind the lone parent that this would be their last payment. Advisers have suggested that perhaps the IWC payment should be tapered towards the end, to help lone parents become less dependent on the money. A recent Command Paper from DWP³⁶ announced the piloting of different ways of paying IWC through a combination of weekly payments and lump sums linked to meetings with advisers with the expectation that these would assist lone parents in the transition off IWC.

³⁵ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.61.

³⁶ DWP (2007) *'Ready for work: full employment in our generation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Command Paper.

Another initial concern from staff with IWC was that lone parents would move from work back onto benefit once the IWC payment finished. ASMs felt that this concern was not justified. Although a few customers had returned to benefits, this was mainly as a result of changes in personal circumstances. An adviser described one of her customers who is about to return to IWC for the second time. She previously went into employment and received IWC for the full 52 weeks. The lone parent later became pregnant and left her employment to look after her child. She was then ready to return to work and would receive IWC for the second time.

'Very few people come back onto benefit once their IWC has stopped. Once they have been working they want to continue.'

(LPA)

'No one has ever said they have come back to Income Support because IWC has run out.'

(LPA)

Some advisers and managers felt that the eligibility criteria for claiming IWC was too long. By the time lone parents have been on IS for 12 months, there were often more barriers to entering work. Some advisers, therefore, felt that the eligibility criterion should be reduced to six months on IS. There have been some cases where, out of sympathy for the lone parent, some LPAs would encourage a lone parent close to the 12 months' eligibility criterion to put off job entry until they could collect IWC. One Adviser Service Manager (ASM) said she had witnessed incidents of advisers not starting to look for work with a customer at the earliest opportunity; rather, they waited for the customer to qualify for IWC.

IWC has now been extended beyond ND+fLP pilot areas and a recent report from the Department of Work and Pensions proposed that it should be rolled out nationally.³⁷ For lone parents in Jobcentre Plus London districts, IWC is now worth an additional £60 a week; outside London it remains £40 a week.

5.5 Other non-pilot financial support

The adviser would often talk with lone parents about additional elements of financial support that are available through Jobcentre Plus such as Job Grants, Work Trials, ADF, benefit run-ons and Working Tax Credit (WTC). This level of information could be daunting and confusing for lone parents, so it was usually presented in a BOC to help clarify what it all meant for the lone parent.

³⁷ Ibid., p.141.

Lone parent case study

One lone parent attended the Jobcentre for her WFI. She was feeling anxious as this was her first meeting and she didn't know what to expect. She had a lot of concerns about not being better off in work, especially as she needed childcare.

'I had decided not to look for work because I was worried about childcare. After meeting with [my adviser] they made me see how much I could be getting if I went back to work. It was really useful to see it all on the screen.'

Most LPAs conducted BOCs with their customers at WFIs even when the lone parents were not interested in pursuing work. This was usually done based on a job that the lone parent was interested in, rather than a minimum wage calculation. The rationale was to try and help these customers to focus on their future goals and highlight how, by being employed, they could offer their children a better future. For customers whose children were older and closer to the age when the lone parent would have to leave IS, the approach was more focused on ensuring the customer was aware of this imminent change and encouraging them to start looking for work.

The fear of not coping financially once off benefits was highlighted by lone parents in a number of interviews. The focus on the financial benefits of returning to work had the most persuasive power in reassuring lone parents that they would be better off going to work.

'The extra financial benefits have been really useful. They are particularly helpful when I started work as they bridged the gap between coming off benefits and my first salary.'

(Lone parent)

'I've mentioned this to a few friends. Even though I have to pay full rent and council tax I am much better off. And not just financially; it is much better than sitting at home all day.'

(Lone parent)

'I am a bit worried about how much I will shell out at the beginning as I don't have any spare cash...I didn't realise that there were so many extra benefits.'

(Lone parent)

Often ADF was used to purchase clothes for interviews or work. However, one customer was using it to buy petrol for their first few weeks in work until they are paid. Another was using it to pay an agent to get their book published.

'I think the benefits discussed are very helpful for people going to work. The extra money for clothes is a really good idea. I haven't got any suitable clothing for work.'

(Lone parent)

Some examples of the use of BOCs in WFI are illustrated below.

Lone parent case study

The adviser started the interview by introducing herself and asking the lone parent if she had seen an adviser before. The adviser ran through the features of ND+fLP, providing a general overview of the different pilot options. She then reviewed the lone parent's job goals and history, as well as qualifications and experience. She checked the lone parent's housing arrangements and discussed childcare and the hours the lone parent would be able to work. The younger child is in nursery, which means that the lone parent has some availability but would need to return home early enough to pick up her child.

The adviser next explored job goals and how the lone parent could use her NVQ qualification in hotels and catering. The lone parent stated that her parents have a laundrette and she has thought about working there but needed to know if she will actually be better off in work than if she stayed on benefit. The LPA conducted a BOC and discussed IWC as part of the BOC. She informed the lone parent that she would lose the free school meals but that 80 per cent of childcare will be paid. The lone parent currently receives child maintenance and they discussed if that would be affected. The lone parent decided, after the conversation with the adviser, that she will actually be better off working at the laundrette part-time and decides to take the job.

Lone parent case study

This lone parent was on the NDLP caseload and had been looking for work. She told her LPA that she had applied for several positions over the past two weeks and had attended two interviews. She explained that she had not heard anything from either of the companies and had left messages to try and gain feedback.

During her interview she raised concerns about going off benefits and returning to work. She was anxious about the initial costs of starting work, such as paying deposits for nurseries for her son and travelling to work. Her adviser outlined the different forms of financial support, such as Childcare Assist and IWC. This was illustrated to her through a BOC. She was pleasantly surprised at her potential income once she started work.

Continued

'I am a bit worried about how much I will have to shell out at the beginning for the little one's nursery, as I don't have any spare cash. I didn't realise that there were so many extra benefits available to me once I started work.'

Her adviser provided her with further jobsearch support, citing three vacancies in hotels within the city, making telephone enquiries on her behalf and providing Jobcentre Plus application forms. She had booked a follow-up appointment with her adviser two weeks later to review the jobs she intended to apply for.

5.6 Conclusion

The financial support on offer to lone parents was the same in both ND+fLP pilot districts. As identified in the England ND+fLP evaluation,³⁸ IWC was seen to be the most effective tool for engaging lone parents. However, IWC alone did not completely remove the concerns that lone parents had about making the transition and truly being financially better off in work. It was the presentation of a BOC with the IWC alongside additional financial support, such as WTC, ADF and Job Grant, that highlighted the impact of this element and gave the lone parent much more confidence in their ability to go into work.

WSP was felt to involve too much paperwork and time commitment from advisers, with little evident benefit. Lone parents did not like the conditionality attached to the element which required them to attend the Jobcentre Plus office every two weeks. WSP was, therefore, felt to sustain existing jobsearch activity rather than incentivise new jobsearch.

³⁸ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.82.

6 Follow-up support

6.1 Introduction

The pilot offered lone parents follow-up support once they have a job in order to help ease the transition into work and sustain their employment. This support consists of In Work Support (IWS), where the adviser offers help during the period of transition between claiming benefits and work should the lone parent need it, and the In Work Emergency Fund (IWEF), which is there to help pay for any emergencies that may prevent a lone parent from continuing in their employment.

6.2 Summary of main points

- Advisers felt that they have always offered IWS; the difference is this became a formalised procedure. However, such support was not limited to the first 60 days in work but was available for as long as the lone parent needs it.
- Advisers did not promote the existence of the IWEF in case false emergencies were created.
- Advisers were unclear of the guidance concerning the circumstances in which the IWEF can be used.

6.3 In Work Support

IWS allows advisers to maintain contact with lone parents who require additional support within the first 60 days after they have started work. The aim is to ease the transition to work and prevent the lone parents returning to Income Support (IS). To claim IWS, lone parents must be or have been on New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP).

As in the England New Deal Plus for Lone Parents (ND+fLP) evaluation,³⁹ advisers felt that IWS was something that they had been doing anyway but that the pilot formalised the procedure. In one district, LPAs felt that as IWS is now officially recognised as an activity under the pilot, they were able to book IWS interviews onto the Adviser Activity Tool (AAT).

'We are justified in doing it now.'

(LPA)

However, in the other district, some advisers felt that as they were not assessed on how much IWS they did and chose to spend their time on activities with clear targets, such as conversions to NDLP, Work Trials and submissions for jobs.

The level of IWS offered to customers varied across districts from adviser to adviser. Support ranged from simply telling customers that if they have any problems to get in touch, to one phone call a fortnight for 12 weeks. Mostly advisers simply told the customer that if they have any problems to get in touch because they were there to help them. This was a general invitation, not limited to 60 days, and examples were given of where IWS was provided one or two years after a customer had moved into work. Advisers described how customers would contact them with enquiries regarding Job Grants, organising benefit run-ons and getting help with organising tax credits. For example, if an adviser had built up a good rapport with the lone parent they may look to that adviser for support when they struggle to understand forms for Council Tax or Working Tax Credit (WTC).

'I particularly feel the IWS is really important – knowing you can go back to someone if you need help and support. This is really important for me when I go back to work.'

(Lone parent)

Lone parent case study

This lone parent had been on the ND+fLP for about a year. When we spoke with her at wave two, she was looking after her daughter full-time and told us that she was not ready to think about returning to work for health reasons and had, therefore, not considered any of the support available through the pilot. By wave three she informed us that she had started to look for work two months earlier and had found a job within a couple of weeks. She had previous experience as a waitress and managed to find a full-time position in a local restaurant.

Continued

³⁹ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.45.

'My PA sorted out all of my benefits for me – my Working Tax Credit, Childcare Tax Credit, the Job Grant and the In Work Credit – making sure it was all set up really quickly so I could start work'. [The lone parent explained that some of the additional benefits, such as the Job Grant, were not processed very quickly. She telephoned her LPA and they were very helpful, resolving the issue very quickly.] The lone parent stated that: 'The extra financial benefits have been really useful. They were particularly helpful when I first started work as they bridged the gap between coming off benefits and my first salary.' [The lone parent's motivation to work was to be able to provide for her daughter, but she now feels that she has gained much more.]

A few advisers felt that there *'there has to be a cut off point somewhere'* and that moving into work was the time that their support should finish. Due to demands on their diary, advisers felt they had very little time to be proactive about conducting IWS. Often, IWS was fitted into the beginning or end of the day or when Lone Parent Advisers (LPAs) had a Failure to Attend (FTA).

A few advisers reported that there were some customers who were not happy to be contacted after they have moved into work, sometimes becoming irritated by the on-going contact. This reinforces the idea that IWS should be discussed and the degree of contact should be agreed with the customer before they move into work.

'This will vary from person to person, but the minimum it should be is a phone call after the parent has been in work two or three days to see how things are going.'

(Project Manager)

6.4 In Work Emergency Fund

The IWEF was introduced to help lone parents meet the cost of emergencies during the first 60 days in employment and overcome issues that might otherwise make it difficult to remain in work. The purpose is to help lone parents remain in work rather than returning to a life on benefits.

Although it was not regularly used, the IWEF was felt to be an essential element of the pilot. Having spent a long time working with a lone parent to get them into employment, it *'gives the adviser confidence'* to know that should anything happen in the first few weeks the lone parent is in work, they have some support they can offer if needed.

LPAs described how the IWEF has been used to good effect to cover delayed tax credit payments, childcare, transport and domestic appliance emergencies.

6.4.1 Telling customers about the IWEF

Advisers were wary of openly telling the customers about IWEF for fear that they were going to create false emergencies to access the fund. Instead, advisers gave customers a vague notion that funding may be available should something come up.

'An element of customers would definitely use the funding if they knew it was available. There is a grapevine and it would get round so that it is used by lots of parents.'

(LPA)

Some advisers recalled being told by their managers not to inform lone parents about IWEF. However, other advisers felt that if lone parents knew of IWEF, they would have more confidence in going out to work knowing that if there were an emergency, there would be support available to them.

'Lone parents are not abusing the IWEF. I think it is a bit of a relief for them knowing it is there if they need it.'

(LPA)

Towards the end of the evaluation period, the guidance was updated and now states: *'as the IWEF is a discretionary payment, it should not be formally publicised or advertised. However, advisers must ensure that all eligible lone parents are made aware of this fund'*. One ASM felt that advisers should tell lone parents about the IWEF but in such a way that they do not refer to 'a pot of money'.

'You need to inform customers smartly.'

(Adviser Service Manager (ASM))

6.4.2 IWEF guidance

Advisers in both districts expressed a lack of clarity and understanding about what IWEF could and could not be used for. Advisers and one ASM cited the examples that were provided in the guidance as being car maintenance and clothes but felt that these were not the type of emergencies that lone parents face in the first 60 days. It was felt by LPAs and ASMs that the majority of issues faced concerned the payment of bills but that the IWEF could be used for this.

In addition, the associated paperwork was felt to be lengthy and time consuming. The guidance indicates that the customer should be able to receive the necessary funds immediately; however, a new financial system meant that they have to wait four days for payment and *'by then it can be too late'*. One adviser explained how, in the absence of the ASM, he had to coerce the Jobcentre Plus office manager to sign the paperwork. Any delays in the process can take away from the concept that it is to help out in an emergency.

LPA case study

One adviser talked about a lone parent who had been on IS for less than six months, so they were not entitled to receive a continuation of some of their benefits for four weeks after they have moved into work (a 'benefit run-on'). The customer was moving into work and was required to pay rent from day one but their IS was stopped and they would not receive a salary for a month. The LPA wanted to be allowed to use IWEF to help cover a couple of weeks' rent for the customer and put together an application. However, they were told that this was not an appropriate use of the IWEF. As a result, the lone parent immediately went into debt when they started work.

6.5 Conclusion

Variation in the volume and use of IWS was evident within and between districts. The IWS on offer will depend on the LPA attitude to support once a lone parent has moved into employment, the time available to undertake IWS and an understanding of what constitutes IWS. To ensure consistency of delivery, clear guidance needs to be issued to advisers on what was expected, together with the promotion of good practice.

As in the England ND+fLP evaluation,⁴⁰ the IWEF was regarded as an important part of the ND+fLP package, despite it being underutilised. There was variation in levels of understanding of what the fund can be used for within the pilot districts, with some advisers being more open with their lone parents about the fund than others.

Although not currently the case, IWS and IWEF could be packaged and presented to customers as support to aid the sustainability of their employment.

⁴⁰ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.63.

7 Childcare

7.1 Introduction

Childcare is often seen as one of the main barriers preventing lone parents from entering into employment. One element of the pilot was specifically aimed at helping lone parents with their childcare needs. Childcare Assist was available to enable lone parents to settle their children into childcare before they start work. Furthermore, the provision of the extra resource for an additional Childcare Partnership Manager (CPM) enabled advisers to have access to support in addressing lone parents' childcare needs.

7.2 Summary of main points

- Childcare Assist was used very rarely, as it was not felt to be an appropriate offer for lone parents returning to work.
- Up-front childcare costs present one of the biggest barriers for lone parents taking up formal childcare places.
- Some lone parents are reluctant to use formal childcare.
- The same issues were reported with regard to the limitations of childcare supply in Scotland and Wales as in England: mainly cost and hours of availability.
- Staff felt that if Childcare Assist was available for childcare provision during the first week the lone parent moves into employment, there would be an increased take-up of this element.

7.3 Childcare Assist

Childcare Assist allows for the payment of formal childcare during the week immediately before the customer starts work.

There have been few reported uses of Childcare Assist in either district. Advisers and managers felt that the low uptake of Childcare Assist was due to a number of factors: Firstly, lone parents did not want to leave their children in care the week before they started work because they wanted to make the most of the time they were able to spend with them. Secondly, many providers offered a 'trial period' where a parent was able to leave their child with the provider without charge, allowing the provider to ensure they settle in. CPMs and advisers continue to believe that if Childcare Assist was offered for the first week in employment, rather than the week before, it would be much more valuable. Thirdly, many lone parents will go into the Jobcentre Plus office on a Friday to inform the Lone Parent Adviser (LPA) they were starting work on the Monday. This meant that Childcare Assist would not be an option for them.

'It either needs to be changed so that childcare is purchased for the first week in work, or scrapped altogether.'

(Project Manager)

These factors were also identified and presented in the England New Deal Plus for Lone Parents (ND+fLP) evaluation.⁴¹

7.4 Other childcare issues

Lone parents identified other childcare issues, similar to those faced by all parents, and which were not addressable within the remit of the pilot. These were: finding out about childcare options; not wanting to use formal childcare; and the payment of up-front childcare costs.

Some lone parents were not keen to use childcare because they did not know about the childcare options that were available to them. Although advisers may not know about all local availability, they were able to refer to the CPM for help or provide the lone parent with details of who could help such as the Children's Information Service or Working for Families (WFF).⁴² One lone parent with experience as a hairdresser found a vacancy advertised in a shop window. She applied for the job and visited Jobcentre Plus to discuss with her LPA how this would affect her benefits. She had some issues around childcare but was able to solve these with her adviser's help. The lone parent said,

'The adviser is very good. He was really helpful today. It is worrying going back to work, childcare is a problem, but I think I've got it sorted now.'

⁴¹ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) 'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation', Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.66-72.

⁴² WFF is an organisation that is available in Scotland but not in Wales.

Lone parent case study

This lone parent attended the Jobcentre Plus office for her Quarterly Work Focused Interview (QWFI). She felt ready to go back to work. However, she had concerns about childcare as she had never used it before. Additionally, she had only recently moved to the area and was unsure about what was available. She thought it was helpful to receive information about local provision as she had limited knowledge. *'I feel more confident about childcare after meeting with my adviser. They have given me a number and I'm going to phone it later. Hopefully, they will tell me about childcare and I can have a look around before I send my kids'.*

Some lone parents were reluctant to use formal childcare, and often did not want to leave their children until they were at least of nursery age⁴³ if not older.

'My biggest worry is childcare. It would have to be someone who I knew really well. I don't want to leave him with just anybody. I don't think it would be safe.'

(Lone parent)

Some lone parents told us that the adviser had discussed childcare issues during their interview, but that they were definitely not interested in going to work until their child was in school. One lone parent explained that she was not happy to use childminders because *'I don't know who they are'*. As a result of not wanting to use childcare, those lone parents who were considering finding work, would only consider term-time, part-time employment. This was often low paid but highly sought-after work.

Staff and lone parents in both pilot areas, with the exception of rural areas in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, felt that there was an ample supply of childcare in their areas. The childcare barrier was not one of supply per se, but often cost or opening hours. Both management and LPAs in both district areas highlighted the lack of childcare provision for children with disabilities.

The cost issue frequently refers to paying up-front childcare costs to get a place with a provider. If a provider required a month's payment in advance, this could be in excess of £800 per child. In the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district, advisers use WFF for help to locate childcare and pay for any up-front childcare costs. WFF gave a presentation to the LPAs about the services they were able to offer and LPAs felt that WFF *'have their finger on the pulse more'* with childcare across the district. The payment of up-front childcare costs is something that the Government recognises as an issue. In order to address this barrier, London Jobcentre Plus districts are

⁴³ In both ND+fLP pilot districts, children aged three to four years have access to free voluntary part-time nursery education. Children start compulsory full-time primary education aged five years.

piloting the payment of Up-Front Childcare Costs for NDLP participants from April 2008.⁴⁴

It is felt that the paperwork associated with the pilot could be complicated. For example, there were several different forms for childcare, depending on the type of provision being sought. Management and LPAs would like to see one form.

7.4.1 The additional CPM

The presence of an additional CPM means that advisers should have access to additional support to source suitable childcare provision for lone parents. In the Scottish ND+FLP pilot district the CPM has given advisers a pro forma to fill in on a lone parent's childcare needs and then the CPM will spend the time sourcing childcare provision. The adviser will receive a response from the CPM even if they have been unable to source the childcare requested.

One CPM felt that the childcare offer within the pilot could be improved if advisers were able to source and purchase childcare for lone parents, for example a booking for the initial 13 weeks of work, allowing lone parents to get used to childcare and then take over responsibility for payment once they have been in work for a while.

The CPMs did not feel that the pilot had added to the workload associated with the role of CPM. In both pilots, childcare partnerships had been established for many years, and have continued through the pilot. New partnerships have been established with childcare providers, but this has been manageable within their role.

Lone parent case study

One lone parent felt that there was very little available to meet her needs as the availability of childcare options outside office hours was thought to be quite limited. This, combined with the cost of childcare discouraged the lone parent from looking for work. The lone parent felt that advisers held limited knowledge on available childcare provision and that the interview focused too greatly on the financial support available and less on exploring the lone parent's personal needs and interests. After their meeting, the lone parent said:

'I don't really feel any more confident about the childcare options available to me. My adviser did talk to me about a number of options but none of them meet my needs. They told me they can help with the money but I want more information about the type of childcare. I feel like I have to find out everything myself. I want to find work as a fitness instructor. There is limited childcare available for these working hours. I felt that my adviser had a small amount of knowledge on the provision and I need to know it's ok. I want my son to be safe.'

⁴⁴ DWP (2007) 'Ready for work: full employment in our generation' Department for Work and Pensions Command Paper, p.46.

7.5 Conclusion

All staff would like to see the childcare offer improve. As identified in the England evaluation,⁴⁵ it was widely felt that lone parents need support for their childcare in the first couple of weeks after they return to work, rather than before they enter employment, hence the low take-up of Childcare Assist.

Lone parents have identified other childcare issues that they need support to address. Many lone parents were not happy to consider using childcare options; but in some cases, advisers were able to inform lone parents of childcare options they had not been aware of, with the result that they felt more positive about using formal childcare. The future increased visibility and accessibility of the CPM in Jobcentre Plus offices may help increase awareness of childcare provision and provide the opportunity to find suitable options for lone parents.

⁴⁵ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426, p.71.

8 Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This evaluation has followed the set-up and delivery of New Deal Plus for Lone Parents (ND+fLP) in two district pilot areas in Scotland and Wales over its first year. During this time the elements on offer to lone parents have changed and the mode of delivering some elements has evolved. Where possible, comparisons have been made with the England evaluation of the ND+fLP pilot in England,⁴⁶ however, it is important to remember that there are geographical variations between the districts and delivery models have varied.

ND+fLP delivers a new way of working with lone parents that is both challenging and flexible. In order to support this, the policy move from a voluntary regime delivered through New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) to a greater emphasis on rights and responsibilities needs to be accompanied with a parallel shift in attitudes from advisers and lone parents. Although participation on ND+fLP is voluntary, as it is for NDLP, from October 2008 lone parents will experience an increased conditionality, with the removal of Income Support (IS) for many lone parents when their youngest child is 12 years old, reducing to seven years old in 2010.⁴⁷

8.2 Management, delivery and staff training

The two district areas have chosen differing ways in which to manage and deliver the ND+fLP pilot. The Scottish pilot district operated a mostly decentralised model, with small elements of administration conducted by a centralised resource, while the Wales ND+fLP pilot area has moved from a decentralised to a centralised model

⁴⁶ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426.

⁴⁷ DWP (2007) *'Ready for work: full employment in our generation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Command Paper.

of management. The administrative team has been centralised throughout delivery of the pilot in Wales. Both district areas felt that their model of delivery worked best for them and there was no clear evidence to suggest that one mode of delivery is more effective than the other. A centralised team allows for consistency in delivery and an efficiency of resources. Moreover, a centralised team allows staff to gain an increased knowledge of the needs particular to lone parents. A decentralised model ensures access to management to resolve issues and authorise paperwork and the ability to monitor administration. Staff within both district areas expressed the importance of meeting regularly with other Lone Parent Advisers (LPAs) in their district to share knowledge, ask questions and determine best practice. This also ensures consistency in delivery across the district.

The guidance issued to the districts for setting up the pilot was deemed useful and clear, if a bit lengthy. However, there appears to be some contradictory messages in the guidance issued. For example, Jobcentre Plus Local Payment System guidance indicates that all customers are to complete a form for their expenses and have it paid direct into their bank account or by cheque within four days. However, Jobcentre Plus guidance for lone parents asserts that lone parents are not to be left out of pocket and should be able to claim their expenses immediately.

'Why is there not one set of guidance?'

(Childcare Partnership Manager (CPM))

LPAs wanted to see a change in the way that guidance and information was shared with them from district. Guidance was forwarded to Adviser Service Managers (ASMs) and LPAs by district management, however, the guidance is lengthy and staff said they did not have the time to read large documents to establish what had changed. It is felt that head office should either provide a summary for staff or the Project Manager should read the guidance and summarise it for the relevant staff, rather than simply forwarding it on.

'Advisers and ASMs are too busy to read pages and pages of complicated guidance.'

(ASM)

LPAs would like more face-to-face interaction with district management and delivery partners. They felt that *'it is a one way flow of emails'*, and would like to have more face-to-face interaction to allow them to ask questions and get clarity. In addition, they would like some of the partners (e.g. Discovery Event providers, local training providers, etc.) to come and give informal presentations to them, to inform them of what they provide and which lone parents may benefit and should be referred on.

Advisers in both districts felt there could be improvements with the training provided prior to the pilot going live, with greater focus on the needs and barriers of lone parents. The final guidance for More Voluntary Contact (MVC) and Flexible Provision had not been finalised at the point of training, so advisers were left

unclear on the details of these aspects of the pilot. This created confusion for LPAs and ASMs and led to inconsistency in levels of understanding amongst staff. Staff who joined the lone parent team after the pilot went live, did not receive formal training for the pilot; rather, they shadowed other staff and worked it out as they went along. Moreover, administrative staff did not receive any training on the pilot as a whole or the tasks that they would be undertaking. Administrative staff have tried to work things out as they went along, which in some cases led to teething problems for the pilot and variations in the degree of support offered to the lone parent teams.

If individual elements of the pilot were not used on a regular basis (for example Childcare Assist and the In Work Emergency Fund (IWEF)), advisers lost knowledge and confidence in their ability to deliver it and therefore, shied away from offering it to lone parents.

CPMs, ASMs and LPAs in both pilot district areas could see a benefit to regular district-wide meetings for all staff involved in delivering the pilot to meet and share good practice. Since moving to a centralised model, the South East Wales ND+fLP pilot area had created this opportunity bimonthly. LPAs in the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district expressed a desire to at least have regular cluster meetings to meet with local colleagues.

'Every office has a different perception on the same things but we're still supposed to be delivering a universal service.'

(LPA)

8.2.1 Recommendations on management, delivery and staff training

- Guidance issued can be lengthy and complex. A summary version of the guidance should be produced to make it more accessible to LPAs. The summary should specify what is new, what has changed and the impact this has on delivery of ND+fLP. This should then be disseminated to the staff involved. Where possible, this should be done in a face-to-face setting allowing staff the opportunity to ask questions and clarify understanding.
- Regular meetings should be held with all staff involved in delivering ND+fLP. This could be done in a series of cluster meetings or in a district wide event. This would allow for the sharing of knowledge and good practice and ensure consistency of delivery of the programme across the district.
- Provide enhanced training to newly recruited advisers and refresher training for advisers. The regular district meetings could be considered an opportunity to conduct refresher training for staff. Introduce structured quality assurance processes to ensure skills are being utilised.

- Provide all staff with a reference pack containing definitions of pilot elements with concise instructions on who is eligible for each and how to access it. Provide staff with the contact details of a member of staff who can answer questions and guide the adviser through the process.
- Ensure a structured and formal approach to the training of administrative staff. Modules focused on different duties could allow the course to be tailored to different roles.

8.3 Tools for engagement

The **chocolate box leaflets** associated with the pilot have been received well by both lone parents and Jobcentre Plus staff. The larger leaflets were often deemed too large, particularly in the Wales ND+fLP pilot area where the leaflet was bilingual. However, the amount of support available for lone parents meant that there was a large number of leaflets on advisers' desks and a lot of information for lone parents to digest. The Scottish ND+fLP district recently received one concise leaflet that summarises a lot of the support available to lone parents, which proved popular with both advisers and lone parents.

The **additional marketing budget** available for promoting the pilot to lone parents has proved problematic due to the need to remain within the Jobcentre Plus brand and the bureaucratic and slow procurement process. This has stifled innovation and management have had to use NDLP branded goods available from head office, which have also proved difficult to procure.

When **Action Plans** were completed on a regular basis, they were deemed more useful for the adviser than the lone parent. Due to the voluntary nature of agreed actions, advisers said that lone parents rarely complete them; thus, the document has become meaningful as a record of the conversation for the LPA rather than a tool for the lone parent to use.

Although not directly related to the pilot, the introduction of **Quarterly Work Focused Interviews** (QWFIs) for lone parents whose youngest child is 11-13 years old and who had been on Income Support for at least one year increased the level of engagement with some lone parents. LPAs had a mixed response to the impact of QWFIs. Some advisers have seen lone parents who previously had no intention of returning to work move into employment. Other advisers felt that the increased demand on their time means that adviser resources are often *'juggled'* to meet demand. ASMs described how they try, where possible, to maintain resource capacity for the pilot. In one Jobcentre Plus office, the ASM was looking to train Incapacity Benefit advisers so that when the lone parent team are short staffed, *'we will be able to pull people in to cover the busy times. Basically we are just moving people around to maintain the capacity'*.

Advisers felt that QWFIs were not suitable for all lone parents, specifically those with long-term care responsibilities or disabled children. Advisers would like some

flexibility to defer QWFIs for those customers whose circumstances were not likely to change in the immediate future.

Advisers indicated a lack of understanding about what constitutes **MVC** and how time spent undertaking it should be recorded. In addition, advisers have recognised little benefit in undertaking MVC and felt that if a lone parent was happy to undertake voluntary contact then they should be caseloaded onto NDLP. As there was no time allocated in the diary for undertaking MVC, advisers were dependent upon Failure to Attend (FTA) in order to deliver this element.

It was generally felt that there is a strong focus on **job outcomes and Adviser Activity Tool (AAT) targets** which did not provide credit for 'soft outcomes'. Advisers had targets for the number of interviews they must achieve each day, such as the number of lone parents they convert to the NDLP caseload, submission for jobs, Work Trials, etc. Advisers expressed concerns that they were being pushed to meet all their targets, sometimes at the detriment to what might be the most appropriate outcome for the lone parent.

8.3.1 Recommendations on tools for engagement

- Review the rules surrounding marketing associated with ND+fLP with a view to speeding up the procurement process and encouraging local innovation to promote the programme.
- Examine the ways in which advisers can apply discretion to QWFIs for those lone parents whose situation is not going to change in 12 weeks.
- Give consideration to what constitutes MVC and how it should be recorded on the AAT. Guidance should be effectively communicated to advisers and managers about this element.
- Review the action planning process with a view to identifying when it is appropriate for a lone parent to sign and take away a copy of their Action Plan.
- Examine the role of the AAT in determining LPAs' work. Review the use of targets for LPAs with a view to allowing flexibility in addressing individual customer needs.

8.4 Improving pilot support

Overall, it was felt that there was a lot on offer to support lone parents in moving into work. It was broadly felt that the pilot offers '*an excellent menu*' (LPA) of support for lone parents, and advisers were confident that they have the tools to support lone parents in moving them back to work. However, some of that provision needs further tailoring. The evaluation has identified that:

- **enhanced adviser training** should be made more applicable to working with lone parents;
- **Childcare Assist** should be offered for the first week in employment;
- **Flexible Provision** should have a simplified application process that will also speed up the procedure;
- clearer guidelines should be made available on the use of **IWEF**;
- consideration should be given to how to support lone parents towards the end of **In Work Credit** (IWC) provision;⁴⁸ and
- time should be made available for advisers to deliver **In Work Support** (IWS).

IWC, Flexible Provision and the IWEF were felt by staff to be the main strengths of the pilot. Despite the latter two elements being underused, having all the elements available was felt to be a comfort to advisers in being able to help address any barriers that lone parents may present. Lone parents appeared to recall conversations about IWC above other elements.

Staff felt that the loss of the **Work Search Premium** (WSP) from the pilot is the right thing given the level of paperwork involved for little evident benefit in moving lone parents into employment.

One CPM and a Discovery Event provider who has experience of working with this customer group recognised that lone parents responded well to being in a group with other lone parents and would like more opportunity to work with them in groups.

'This is a good opportunity to get them onside and engaged.'

(Discovery Event Provider)

Lessons learned from experience of engaging with groups of lone parents during the pilot, giving the opportunity for customers to share experiences with peers, has already begun to influence wider lone parent engagement policy. Options and Choices Events, aimed primarily at lone parents in the run-up to changes to their IS entitlement when their youngest child reaches a trigger age, are due to be introduced nationally in 2008.

Although the majority of staff believed that current provision for lone parents was adequate in being able to support their transition into employment, staff did highlight some issues associated with the transition period of moving into employment.

⁴⁸ Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has recently suggested piloting a number of different ways of paying IWC in a mix of weekly and lump sum payments linked to attendance at a meeting with an adviser to discuss their job and identify any future support needs. (See DWP (2007) *'Ready for work: full employment in our generation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Command Paper, p.14.)

One of the primary concerns that lone parents had when moving into work was that they would immediately incur a lot of expenses as they move off benefits. Lone parents face an uncertain time when moving to a monthly salary, which can be difficult for them to manage. In addition, they need to negotiate the complex web of paperwork and the payments of benefit run-ons, Working Tax Credit (WTC), Council Tax, childcare and travel. Advisers and management would like to see formal money management support available for lone parents who are making the transition from benefit into work.

When a lone parent moves into work they lose benefits, such as free school meals. Losing this entitlement can mean a large additional expense, particularly for those with three or more children. Staff felt the continuation of these other support benefits could be offered as part of the IWS package.

8.4.1 Recommendations for improving pilot support

- Address the management of adviser workload to enable LPAs to deliver QWFIs and caseload interviews without lone parents needing to wait up to three weeks to be seen. Ensure that time is made available for advisers to carry out MVC and IWS without being reliant upon FTAs.
- Review the childcare offer available under the pilot and reconsider the rules associated with Childcare Assist. We are aware that an Up-Front Childcare Costs pilot is being run in London districts from April 2008.⁴⁹
- Improve adviser knowledge on training provision available through Jobcentre Plus and its partners: specifically, that which fits in with lone parents' needs. This includes the content of Discovery Events and guidance on who would benefit from attending.
- Simplify the process for application of Flexible Provision to ensure applications are processed smoothly and efficiently and are delivered within a time frame that meets the needs of lone parents.
- Introduce a more structured approach to helping lone parents with financial and debt management. Consider the provision of money management workshops for lone parents who are making the transition into employment. This could be delivered through referrals to a specialist agency and offered as part of the IWS package offered to lone parents.

8.5 Impact and outcomes

A move into employment is viewed as the ultimate outcome from any intervention that Jobcentre Plus offers, including ND+fLP. However, with lone parents, many staff felt that lone parents are generally *'further away from the labour market*

⁴⁹ DWP (2007) *'Ready for work: full employment in our generation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Command Paper, p.46.

than a JSA customer' and that *'there are many steps in the journey'*. Many LPAs felt that most lone parents needed lots of support and hand-holding to help them see beyond the barriers they initially present and to get them ready for work. Thus, LPAs felt that getting a lone parent to think about entering into employment is also a positive outcome, particularly if they have been out of work for a long time and initially had no intention of moving into work. Measures of success need to capture the distance travelled as well as employment outcomes.

Both district management teams expressed frustration at the lack of Management Information (MI) available in order to assess the progress of the pilot. Informal communication with other pilot areas has proved valuable in reassuring management. One ASM feels that *'Unfortunately we have such low MI on lone parents I feel like I am treading water and looking for the light, but the light never comes'*. Through collation of clerical data by each Jobcentre Plus office, both districts have noted that different Jobcentre Plus offices are achieving different results with different elements of the pilot. The MI provided an indication to district management on how they were delivering different elements. However, the Scottish ND+fLP pilot district were keen to enforce the importance of understanding the stories behind the MI as it became evident that some advisers were using different markers and some not recording certain activities at all.

8.6 Overall conclusions

The extension of ND+fLP to districts in Scotland and Wales has confirmed many of the findings of the evaluation of ND+fLP in England.⁵⁰ Staff felt that the pilot offered lone parents the much needed support to address the multiple barriers that lone parents face in entering employment but with the need to fine tune some of the elements to make them more appropriate to customer needs. Some elements of the pilot have been deemed more effective than others at engaging lone parents but it was the availability of the package of support which aided LPAs in their role of moving lone parents into sustainable employment.

Many lone parents were genuinely surprised at the volume of support available through NDLP and the ND+fLP pilot. Once lone parents became fully engaged and aware of the opportunities available, through the work of Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisers, there was a marked impact in levels of confidence and enthusiasm. The positive evaluation findings from the pilot in Wales and Scotland illustrate further the published evaluation of the five ND+fLP pilot districts in England,⁵¹ that increased engagement with lone parents using an integrated package of support and incentives can be valuable in helping them return to work.

⁵⁰ Hosain, M. and Breen, E. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 426.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Appendix A

Summary of New Deal Plus for Lone Parents Pilot elements

Action Plans

Action Plans are a mandatory requirement for advisers during each Work Focused Interview (WFI). Advisers are expected to complete one at the initial WFI and then regularly review and update the Action Plan. From October 2005, it has been a requirement for lone parents to agree on the Action Plan as part of participating in a WFI. Since April 2005, changes to the Labour Market System (LMS) data entry and recording system used by Jobcentre Plus have supported this requirement.

Discovery Events

Discovery Events are a form of support for lone parents who have not yet joined New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP). The objective is to build confidence, engage with employers, explore career paths and address concerns and limitations to entering employment. Their aim is to help lone parents move closer to the labour market by encouraging them to take up NDLP or Employment Zone provision or through work-related training.

Childcare Assist

Childcare Assist allows for the payment of formal childcare during the week immediately before the customer starts work.

Work Search Premium

Work Search Premium (WSP) offered £20 per week extra support for up to six months payable to lone parents who had been on benefit for more than one year but who agreed to actively and consistently look for work. This initiative was introduced in October 2004 and was piloted in all the Extended School areas except one. This exception was due to the area also being an Employment Zones area and the WSP was not compatible with Employment Zones. To qualify for WSP the lone parent had to be participating in the NDLP programme. WSP was discontinued from 1 April 2007.

In Work Credit

£40 per week (or £60 per week in London districts) is payable to lone parents who have been claiming Income Support (IS) for 52 weeks or more when they get a job of more than 16 hours per week. This allowance is paid for the first year of work.

In Work Emergency Fund

The In Work Emergency Fund (IWEF) was introduced to help lone parents meet the cost of emergencies during the first 60 days in employment and overcome issues that might otherwise make it difficult to remain in work. The purpose is to help lone parents remain in work rather than returning to a life on benefits.

Additional Administrative Support

Each district was provided with an additional administrative resource to help them deliver the pilot. The resource could be distributed across the district at the discretion of the Project Manager.

More Voluntary Contact

This initiative involves the provision of named advisers to work with lone parents through the duration of their benefit claim. The rationale is to apply a more intensive regime, but without the conditionality that accompanies other regimes such as Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). This allows for more frequent and sustained contact to reach a broader cross section of lone parents and encourage them to participate in NDLP and move into work.

Additional Childcare Partnership Manager

An additional Childcare Partnership Manager (CPM) resource was provided as part of the pilot. Responsibilities have either been shared between the CPM and the additional CPM or the additional CPM has had full responsibility for the pilot area of the district.

Flexible Provision

This resource is intended to allow District Managers the flexibility to purchase training courses or provision, which is currently unavailable and they believe will make a difference to lone parents' employment opportunities. This would allow advisers greater opportunity to address specific needs.

In Work Support

In Work Support (IWS) allows advisers to maintain contact with lone parents who require additional support during the first 60 days after they have started work. The aim is to ease the transition to work, and prevent the lone parents returning to IS. To claim IWS, lone parents must be or have been on NDLP.

Jobpoints in Children's Centres

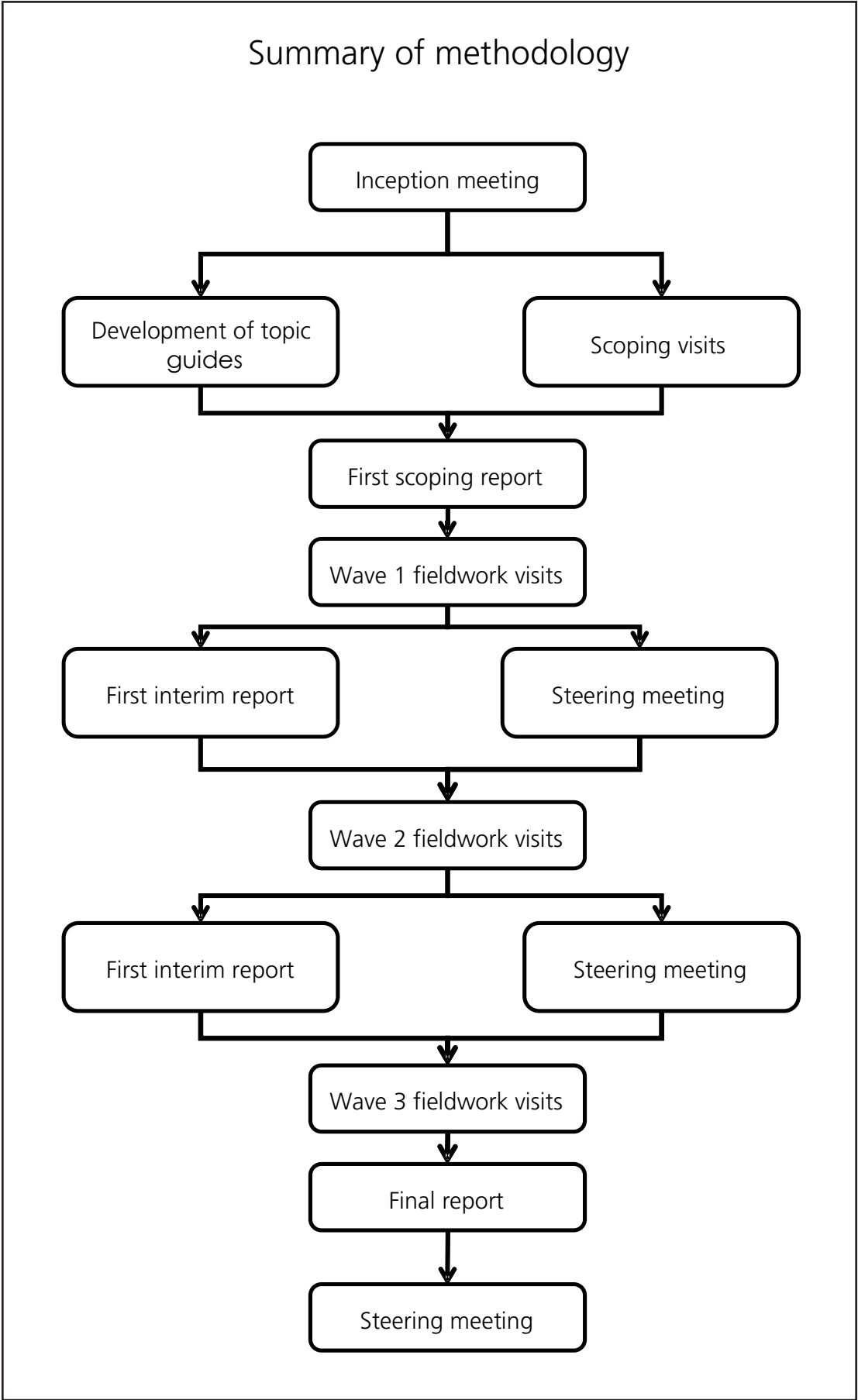
This initiative involves the installation of a remote access Jobpoint in one Children's Centre in each pilot district. This would allow better information about the availability of jobs and the take up of other services such as NDLP. CPMs are expected to raise awareness about the Jobpoints and handle enquiries through regular contact with Regional Sure Start teams and Children's Centre managers.

Marketing package

The marketing package was designed to sell the benefits of an overall package of interventions, bringing together all elements in the pilot using a distinctive 'chocolate box' motif. In addition to large brochures and smaller leaflets, other material such as videos, audio, and posters are also available. Material has been produced in a range of languages including Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi and Punjabi.

Appendix B

Detailed methodology



Qualitative approach and method

Approach and sample

The methodology for the qualitative evaluation was developed on the basis of the research specification and initial discussions with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to ensure consistency with the qualitative methodology for the evaluation of the Pilot in England.⁵²

The approach is longitudinal, consisting of observation of the live running of the Pilot over time to identify and feedback promptly on development of the Pilot, specifically on: the policy offer, changes to delivery and practice and organisational management.

The Pilot was initially set up in five English districts in April 2005 and has been extended to two further Jobcentre Plus Districts, one in Scotland (Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders) and one in Wales (South East Wales, specifically the former Cardiff and Vale district). The Pilot district in Wales includes five Jobcentre Plus offices; three in Cardiff City, one in the Vale of Penarth and one in Barry. The area covered by this district is fairly compact. In Scotland, the district covers a large geographical area including Edinburgh, the Lothians (East and West) and the Borders (five local authority areas). There are 13 offices across the district (four in Edinburgh, six in the Lothians and three in the Borders).

The Pilot went live in Scotland and Wales on 2 October 2006 and the fieldwork was planned in three waves:

- wave one (February 2007) was towards the beginning of the Pilot and was intended to examine the process of setting up and rolling out the Pilot across the district, identifying any issues with implementation;
- wave two (June 2007) was midcourse of the evaluation and was set up to explore the running of the Pilot and identify any emerging impacts; and
- wave three (October 2007) after the Pilot had been running for one year to allow the evaluation to pick up final reflections of the Pilot and any impacts it may have had.

In all waves of the research, detailed written guidance was prepared for researchers. In addition, team briefings were held to discuss the approach and methodology before each wave of fieldwork. The main components of the evaluation are:

- a scoping visit to each district;
- interviews with the district and Pilot management within the two Pilot districts. Interviews with the Childcare Partnership Managers (CPMs) and Additional Childcare Partnership Managers (ACPMs) in each district;

⁵² See Breen, E. and Hosain, M. (2007) *'New Deal Plus for Lone Parents qualitative evaluation'*, DWP Research Report 426.

- interviews with Adviser Service Managers (ASMs) and Lone Parent Advisers (LPAs), and administrative support staff;
- observations interviews between lone parents and their advisers;
- initial and follow-up interviews with lone parents following their meeting with their adviser; and
- interviews with Discovery Event providers and the Children's Centre Manager where the Jobpoint was located.

The evaluation tools included in-depth interviews, focus groups, telephone interviews and observations.

Scoping

A scoping exercise preceded fieldwork and was conducted in August 2006. In order to minimise the burden on districts, the visits were coordinated to coincide with DWP baselining visits. The purpose of the visit was to establish: initial plans for delivery of the Pilot; if all the elements would be in place when the Pilot went live; and to set up the communication strategy for the evaluation. The scoping visit also allowed us to agree logistics and details for the evaluation with district staff. During the scoping visits, the case study offices were agreed based on a combination of factors including size, location (rural and urban) and the volume of customer traffic.

Fieldwork

Interviews

During waves one and two, the main evaluation tools used with staff were in-depth interviews. This allowed for individual perceptions and opinions to be explored at all grades. Wave one focused on the initial set up of the Pilot including guidance, training and initial delivery issues. Wave two explored delivery issues in more detail, and the impact of each of the Pilot elements. During wave three, a combination of focus groups and interviews were used with staff to reflect back on the pilot, consider what worked well and any areas of improvement.

Topic guides where the depth interviews were developed for all categories of staff and external partners and are included in Appendix D. In each wave of fieldwork, new topic guides were developed to capture the progression through the pilot and issues specific to particular stages of implementation.

Table B.1 summarises the number of interviews undertaken with Jobcentre Plus staff during the course of research.

Table B.1 Summary of interviews with staff

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3 ¹		Total
	Wales	Scotland	Wales	Scotland	Wales	Scotland	
District Management	3	4	3	4	3	2	19
Adviser Service Managers	4	2	2	2	1 ²	N/A	11
Lone Parent Advisers	7	6	8	9	N/A	N/A	30
Administrative support	5	4	4	4	N/A	N/A	17
Discovery Event Provider	2	1	1	1	2	1	8
Children's Centre Manager	1	1	1	1	1	N/A ³	5
Total	22	18	19	21	7	3	90

¹ Focus groups were conducted with many staff in wave three, therefore, removing the need for in-depth interviews.

² The structure of the team had changed by wave three and one ASM has responsibility for all LPAs. The ASM was unable to join the focus group for managers, so was interviewed separately.

³ As the Jobpoint was not in use at wave three, and had not been moved to its new location, it was felt inappropriate to speak with either the old or new contact.

Focus groups

Six focus groups were conducted during the wave three fieldwork. The Table B.2 outlines the focus of the topics and the attendees.

Table B.2 Description of focus groups undertaken and the number of attendees

Topic of focus group	Who attended	Number of attendees		Total
		Wales	Scotland	
Overall delivery of the pilot	LPAs and administrative support	9	7	16
Flexible Provision and Mainstream Provision	LPAs, Third Party Provision Manager (TPPM) and Operational Procurement Unit (OPU)	7	6	13
Management and impact of the pilot	Pilot Management and ASMs	2	4	6
Total		18	17	35

Many of the participants in the fieldwork were involved at all three stages, except where staff had moved on. This enabled an examination in any shifts in perspective over the course of the pilot.

Observations

Observations were conducted with the intention of capturing the dynamic between frontline staff and lone parents. Delivering the appropriate information at the right pace for the lone parent to understand was considered key to engaging lone parents and therefore, the delivery of the Pilot.

The sample of observations was dependent on the bookings for the day. Observations included first Work Focused Interviews (WFIs), Quarterly Work Focused Interviews (QWFIs), exploratory discussions with advisers, New Deal Plus for Lone Parents (NDLP) interview/follow-up and lone parents informing their adviser that they were starting employment.

The sampling for the interviews was opportunistic. Two or three researchers would visit an office to undertake interviews with staff, observations and lone parent interviews. Wherever possible, one researcher would observe the interview between the adviser and lone parent, while another would subsequently interview the lone parent to determine their response. This was particularly useful to gain differing perspectives and for the interview with the lone parent not to be tailored around what the researcher had just witnessed in the interview. This, therefore, allowed for an examination of the interaction both from the perspective of the interviewer and the interviewee.

Researchers prepared for the observation by discussing the forthcoming interview with the adviser, while also observing the preparation for the interview. During the interview, researchers sat unobtrusively behind LPAs, but close enough to see what was being entered in the Labour Market System (LMS), and during the action planning process. As non-participant observers, no comments were made during the interview. Following the interview, the researcher again interviewed the adviser to discuss the content and outcomes from the interview.

There were some methodological concerns that the observations would influence the advisers' behaviour, prompting them into presenting text-book behaviours, which would deviate from their normal mode of interaction. Moreover, there were fears that the observations could be intrusive and invade privacy; both for the adviser and the customer.

These concerns were mitigated to some extent by gaining the permission of both staff member and customer prior to the observation. It was also stated that the information gathered about the lone parent's circumstance would be kept anonymous and, in the case of staff, the fact that it was unrelated to any assessment of performance. In all cases, customers were open to having their interview observed.

Observation templates are included in Appendix E.

Table B.3 Number of observations of lone parent interviews

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3		Total
	Wales	Scotland	Wales	Scotland	Wales	Scotland	
Lone parent/LPA observations	8	8	2	4	N/A	N/A	22

Interviews with lone parents

Face-to-face interviews

During waves one and two, lone parents were interviewed face to face after their interview with their LPA. During wave one, we experienced a high number of Fail to Attends (FTAs) for interviews, and did not achieve the number of face to face interviews we were hoping for in Scotland. This was due to the fieldwork taking place during a school holiday and lone parents are less likely to attend their interviews. In order to ensure this was not repeated during wave two, the Jobcentre Plus staff provided the contact details of lone parents who had attended an interview the week prior to our visit. If there was a FTA during our time in the Jobcentre Plus office, a researcher would telephone a lone parent from the contact list and conduct the interview over the phone.

Lone parents were recruited to the study after their interview with their adviser. As such, the sample was opportunistic rather than scientific and, therefore, only indicative conclusions may be drawn from the lone parent interviews. The purpose of the qualitative evaluation was to capture process, perceptions and responses, rather than measure impact and outcomes.

Two topic guides were developed, one for those lone parents in employment, and one for those not yet in employment. The topic guides for the interviews can be found in Appendix F.

Telephone interviews

A panel of lone parents who could be tracked throughout the evaluation was set up. During the Jobcentre Plus office visits in wave one, as part of the interviews, lone parents were asked if they would be willing to be contacted over the period of the next few months through a phone interview. Those who agreed to the follow up were then called during wave two. The panel was built on in wave two with a new group of lone parents who, combined with those remaining from wave one, were followed up during wave three.

The purpose of the telephone interview was to establish if anything had changed since we last spoke to them, what engagement they had had with Jobcentre Plus, and if they had moved into employment. Different topic guides were used depending on whether the lone parent was in employment or not. The topic guides used for the interviews can be found in Appendix F.

As is common in most longitudinal exercises, the issue of attrition was experienced, with many lone parents dropping out of the panel from one wave to the next. This was not always due to unwillingness to be interviewed, frequently it was found that mobile numbers had changed or calls were not answered. During each wave of the research, at least four attempts were made to contact each lone parent on different days of the week, at different times of the day.

Tables B.4 and B.5 below summarise the number of lone parent interviews conducted and the number of lone parents tracked throughout the waves of the evaluation.

Table B.4 Summary of interviews with lone parents

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3		Total
	Wales	Scotland	Wales	Scotland	Wales	Scotland	
Face-to-face lone parent interviews	20	8	17	16	N/A	N/A	61
Telephone lone parent interviews	N/A	N/A	3	8	N/A	N/A	11
Follow up telephone interviews	N/A	N/A	4	3	7	10	24

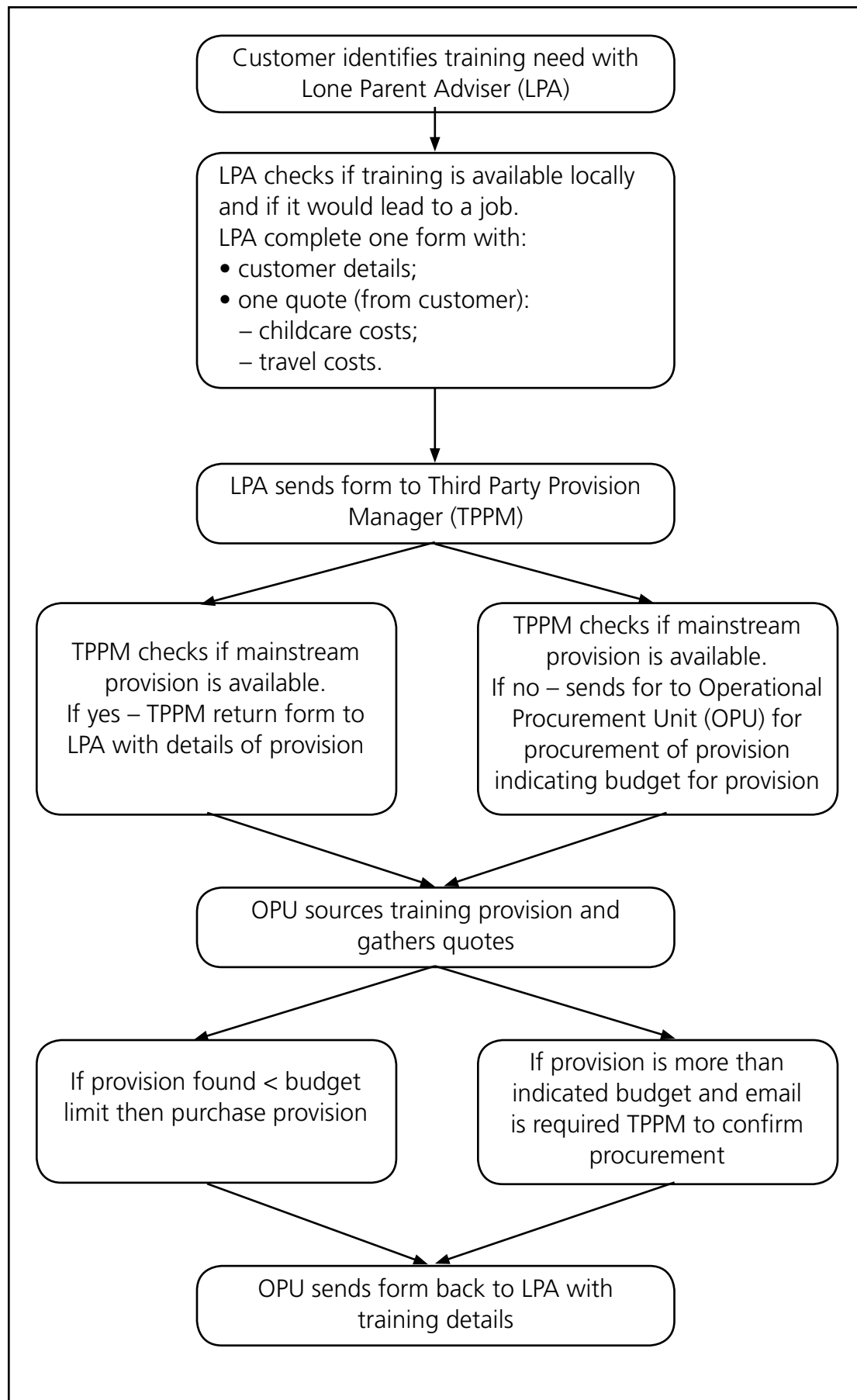
Table B.5 indicates the number of lone parents we tracked through the different waves of research during the evaluation.

Table B.5 The number of lone parents tracked during the evaluation

Waves 1, 2 and 3	Waves 1 and 3	Waves 2 and 3	Total
0	4	13	17

Appendix C

Ideal process for procuring training provision



Appendix D

Staff topic guides

4.1.1 Wave one ND+fLP Pilot Project Manager/District Manager

Delivery and practical issues

What is the current status of roll-out for the pilot? Are all elements now in place? How long has each element been running?

How have additional resources been deployed? Where were the additional resources recruited from?

How are the advisory and administrative resource managed (centralised or decentralised)? What benefits do you see to this approach?

Have any new external relationships been put in place for implementing the pilot (formal or informal)? Do you envisage any issues in managing these partnerships?

How important do you feel outreach is in delivery of support to lone parents?

How do you view the partnerships with children's centres?

Do you have any forms of on-going support for implementing the pilot (examine support from the project team, guidance, training, workshops, etc.)? Has there been any knowledge sharing with districts where the pilot has already been implemented? If so, has this helped in planning delivery?

Has the guidance material on the pilot been adequate and clear?

Are headcount issues at the district level impacting on the implementation of the pilot in any way?

Are there any new management mechanisms you are considering (or have put in place) for the pilot (e.g. Steering Groups)? Who is represented in the Steering Group (if present)? How frequently are meetings held to discuss issues around the pilot?

Were any specific workshops or events undertaken to enhance understanding of the pilot? Who attended these events? How effective were they?

How do you propose to monitor progress and outcomes? Have you put any specific measures in place?

The Package

What are your expectations from the pilot?

In what ways do you feel the pilot enhances existing provision?

How important do you feel the different elements in the pilot are? Is there any element which you expect will help address the barriers in your district more than others?

Do you perceive the pilot as a 'package' or as a set of individual elements? Is it viewed as a 'menu' at the district, local office and lone parent levels?

If perceived as a 'package' – do you feel the concept is a useful one, rather than promoting individual strands?

To what extent has it been possible to flex the implementation of parts of the package? How and why have you used that flexibility?

Which elements do you think work well together?

Which elements have advisers and lone parents perceived as most important? Have advisers promoted any elements with greater enthusiasm than others? Has this related to preference or availability of resources?

What change in existing processes of delivery to lone parents has the delivery of the pilot entailed, if any?

Have any specific measures been put in place to enable local offices/advisers market the pilot? Have you made any local adaptations?

Outcomes and effectiveness

What are the key indicators used for measuring performance related to lone parents? What was your performance on these indicators prior to the pilot going 'live'? Has there been any difference since then?

How was performance affected when IWC and WSP were initially introduced? What do you think made the difference?

Are there any customer groups who are particularly difficult to reach? Do you think the pilot will help in reaching them?

Who do you feel are the key stakeholders/partners in making the pilot work? What has the initial reaction of these key stakeholders been?

Do you feel that the right elements are included in the package to respond to demand in your district? If not, which parts of the service offer need enhancement?

Has there been any initial feedback from advisers and Adviser Managers on which elements are proving to be particularly effective?

Has the full 'package' of interventions had any visible impact on participant's attitudes and motivation to work, which is over and above to their response to the individual elements previously in place?

4.1.2 Wave one ND+fLP Pilot Lone Parent Adviser Manager

Delivery and practical issues

When were you told about the pilot? Who introduced the pilot to you? What information was provided? Is the guidance for all elements of the pilot clear?

What marketing material was provided? Do you feel the material is clear and relevant to the local context? Do you have enough materials?

How did you cascade down the information to your staff?

Have you put in place any specific management arrangements for the pilot?

Were any initial workshops or events undertaken for understanding the pilot? Were they effective?

Has there been any exchange with other offices on the implementation? If so, has this been helpful?

What support/guidance is provided at the district level? Have you had to approach the district for support in certain areas? If so, what was the outcome?

Was sufficient time provided for the roll out? Have other initiatives or pilots impacted on the roll out of this pilot?

What existing staff resources did you have for lone parents in your office? What additional resources have been provided as part of the pilot and are these viewed as adequate for delivery of the pilot? When were the additional resources provided?

Have there been any specific issues in setting up the pilot in your office/district? Have you had to make any local adaptations?

Have all elements of the package been available from the outset, or were some being phased in?

How do you propose to monitor progress and outcomes? Have you put any specific measures in place?

Training

Has all staff now undergone the enhanced training? How did it work?

Did you also attend the training? If not, do you feel this would have helped?

Has the training helped advisers in delivering the 'package' as a whole? Has it helped them in better understanding lone parent needs?

How do you monitor whether the training is being used?

Has the administrative support been trained in any way to help them support the advisers in delivery of the pilot? Has this training been any different from the usual training that is imparted to administrative support staff? Do feel this training has been adequate (if relevant)?

The Package

In your view how does the 'package' now available to you differ from existing provision?

Has implementation of the pilot entailed any changes in processes of delivery?

Do you view the offer as a 'package' or as separate elements? Have the advisers been able to deliver the offer as a 'package', or are individual elements being offered selectively to customers?

How are the pilot's elements used in conjunction with existing offers such as BOCs, ADF, training premium, etc.?

Has the package been linked to any other service offers to enhance its value to customers?

Outcomes and effectiveness

What are your existing performance figures on lone parents?

Has there been a change since the pilot went 'live'? What do you hope the pilot will achieve?

How have the different stakeholders/partners reacted to the pilot?

How effective do you feel the different elements are in the package in addressing the barriers faced by lone parents?

Do you feel the package contains the right elements to respond to the demand in your catchment? If not, what is missing?

Do advisers perceive some elements or combination of elements to be more effective than others?

Has there been any sense in this initial stage that lone parents are responding positively to the offer (incremental to their response to individual elements)? Is the package appealing to a broader range of lone parents?

Has the package had any impact on participant's attitudes and motivation to work which differs from the previous response to various strands?

Do you feel that the package offers a sequenced 'pathway' towards employment over time?

4.1.3 Wave one ND+fLP Pilot Lone Parent Advisers

Delivery and practical issues

What are your roles and responsibilities? How long have you been a lone parent adviser?

When were you informed about the pilot? What information was provided to you? What questions did you have? Do you feel the guidance is clear?

Were you given sufficient time to prepare for the implementation?

Have you had to make any changes in implementation or introduce any specific administrative measures?

Do you feel the pilot adds to your existing work-load? In what way?

What support did you have prior to the pilot? What additional support have you been given and do you feel it is adequate for you to deliver the pilot?

What do you feel the pilot introduces which is incremental (over and above) to your existing service offer?

Do you feel you have sufficient resources (other than staff) and knowledge to implement the pilot?

Have you been provided with adequate marketing material (quantities, languages)? Do you feel it is well designed?

Training

How do you feel about the enhanced training you received?

Do you feel the training provided has helped you in better understanding and responding to the complex needs of your customers?

Are there any specific areas in which you feel you require further training?

The Package

How do you view the pilot? Is it a 'package' or 'menu', or simply a lot of different strands?

Do you present the whole 'package' to lone parents, or do you inform them about what you feel is most relevant? Is there any value in presenting a 'package' to lone parents? Does the availability of a 'package' of support containing many different things help in making lone parents more comfortable?

How does it differ from your existing service offers such as what you had available through NDLP?

Have you linked the package to any other service offers to enhance its value?

Which elements do you feel are the most important in helping you to address lone parent barriers? Are there any elements which work particularly well when you use them together?

Are there any elements which you have found are not particularly effective in addressing lone parent barriers? How do you feel their effectiveness could be improved?

What kind of a customer profile do you have, and how does this influence what is delivered?

Have you bundled different elements of the 'package' towards different groups of customers? Why do you feel they will work especially well for these different groups?

How have lone parents responded to the offer? Do they view it as a 'package'? Has there been any noticeable difference in their response to this package in comparison to the elements offered individually before?

Outcomes and effectiveness

How do you think the pilot will impact on your performance? Have you seen any changes as yet?

What do you think the key benefits of the pilot will be?

Has the pilot allowed you to tailor interventions better to your customers needs?

Has the availability of options and resources available influenced which elements of the package you have been able to deliver?

In what ways have the additional staff resources helped? (If relevant)

Are there any elements you feel should be included in the package to address the barriers lone parents face in your area?

Have you tried to access other provision to overcome those barriers not addressed, and how effective has this been?

Do you feel the marketing effort and materials have been adequate for engaging customers and conveying the 'message'?

Has there been a difference in the response of lone parents to the package? Has it appealed to a broader range of customers?

Has the 'package' had any impact on customer's attitudes and motivation to work, which seems to be different from their response to the individual elements?

Have you been able to have more voluntary contact with lone parents between WFIs as yet? What effect does this have?

Do you feel that the package offers a 'pathway' towards employment over time? Do you feel you can progressively offer them the support from the different elements of the package to urge them towards employment?

4.1.4 Wave one ND+fLP Pilot: Administration Manager

Delivery and practical issues

What are your duties in relation to the lone parent team? Who do you coordinate with on the lone parent team?

When and how was the pilot introduced to you? Were your duties clear to you? Do you feel you got sufficient guidance on the pilot elements?

Have you received any additional guidance since? Where do you receive support and guidance from when issues related to the pilot arise?

How many administrative staff do you manage? What are their central tasks?

What kind of coordination arrangements are in place with the advisory staff?

Are the administrative staff centrally located or decentralised to local offices?

Which tasks related to the pilot are perceived as over and above normal administrative duties?

Which pilot elements require the most administrative support?

Were the additional resources provided through the pilot adequate? How are these additional resources being used?

Was any training provided to the administrative staff? What was the nature of the training? Was it adequate for preparing them for pilot delivery?

Are there areas of further training that would be beneficial for the administrative support staff?

Have you experienced any issues with the delivery of the pilot?

Are any backlogs in any area? How are these being managed? Is the work-load manageable? Has the pilot added to work-loads? Which specific tasks or pilot elements generate the most workload?

Do you see the pilot as a 'package', or do you feel that it is a lot of separate elements?

Outcomes and effectiveness

Do you feel the administrative resources are adequate for supporting delivery of the pilot?

In your view how have lone parents responded to the pilot?

Are there any aspects of the pilot which could be improved?

Has the pilot impacted on the performance of the administrative staff? How are you measuring performance?

4.1.5 Wave one ND+fLP Pilot: Administrator

Delivery and practical issues

What is your previous experience in Jobcentre Plus? When were you integrated into the lone parent team?

Who is your line manager?

What are your duties as part of the lone parent team? What tasks do you have to undertake? *(e.g taking phone queries, sending out letters, completing forms and getting them authorised, sending them to finance, booking appointments for lone parent advisers, following up FTAs/DMA)*

When were you told about the pilot? Were your duties clear to you? Do you feel you got sufficient guidance?

Are you fully aware of all the parts of the pilot? Do you feel you need more information about any particular element? (Probe for awareness around the different pilot elements)

Do you feel you have the confidence to carry out your new duties, or are there certain areas you feel you need mentoring and support in?

(If newly inducted to the team) Do you feel the work in the lone parent unit is more complex than your previous duties? In what way?

Do you occasionally get drawn into other activities not related to lone parents? How does this affect your ability to support the lone parent team?

Do you deal with any enquiries from lone parents? What sort of enquiries? Do you feel confident to respond?

Which parts of the pilot package do you provide administrative support on? Are there any issues related to the administration of the pilot elements? If so, how have these been resolved?

Do you do any administration for the Work Search Premium? How are you finding it?

Do you do any administration for the In Work Credit? How are you finding it?

Do you do any work on the More Voluntary Contact?

Do you support the QWFIs? How? How are you finding it?

Has the volume of administration increased since the pilot began?

Have there been any specific problems related to the pilot elements?

Who do you coordinate with in performing your duties?

How is your relationship with the advisers? How do you feel that your role has supported the advisers? Have there been any issues in your relationship with the advisers? Describe.

Training

Were you provided any training? What kind of training was it? Was it adequate?

Overall, has the introduction and training provided given you confidence in your ability to deliver support to advisers and lone parents?

Have you received any additional guidance since?

Outcomes and effectiveness

Do you feel the resources in the unit are adequate for delivering the pilot?

Do you feel you have the right roles and responsibilities in the team? (Probe for whether they feel they have too much or would like to take on further responsibilities).

Are the marketing materials proving to be adequate in guiding lone parents?

In your view how have lone parents responded to the pilot?

Which elements do you feel work well?

Are there any aspects which could be improved?

4.1.6 Wave one ND+fLP Pilot: Childcare Partnership Manager/Additional Childcare Partnership Manager (CPM)

Delivery and practical issues

What are your role and responsibilities? Who do you report to?

How are responsibilities shared between the CPM and additional CPM? (Probe for whether they have the same responsibilities with geographical delineation or if they have different responsibilities)? How do you interact with each other? (Probe for whether they have regular meetings, feedback, planning sessions).

How long have you been working in this district and this role?

How do you interact with district staff and Jobcentre Plus staff? Are there any specific management and coordination arrangements in place (e.g. regular meetings)?

How is experience shared with CPMs from other districts?

How many childcare providers are there and how do you interact with them? What is your relationship like? Do you view it as a 'partnership'?

How was the pilot introduced to you? Was sufficient training and guidance provided? If not, what would you have liked?

Has the pilot resulted in any changes in your work or any additional workload for you?

Are there any new management arrangements for the pilot and do they allow sufficient coordination?

Have the new elements been available at the outset, or were they phased in?

Who are the main partners you work with regard to childcare? Has any additional work been done in setting up new partnerships and lining up resources to implement the pilot?

How do you interact with children's centres? Do you hold 'clinics' or any other types of sessions? How are these working out? Do you have sufficient logistical and other support in carrying out your duties in children's centres?

Do you feel the resources provided and implementation time-frame, are adequate?

The Package

Do you view the pilot as a 'package' or as individual strands?

Do you feel that it is being delivered as a 'package', and if not, why?

How do you feel the pilot differs from what was on offer previously?

What do you view the Jobcentre Plus role in childcare? How important do you feel the childcare elements of the package are?

How important do you feel the relationships with children's centres are and why? What kind of a relationship does Jobcentre Plus have with children's centres? (Probe for whether it is formal/informal, joint planning, monitoring, logistics/space issues, common vision and goals, synergies/complementarities).

Do you think the relationship could be improved? How?

What are the main concerns of lone parents with regard to childcare?

Do you feel the childcare offer in the pilot adequately addresses these concerns?

Are there any other childcare initiatives which mesh with those included in the pilot? How are these used in conjunction with the pilot?

Do you feel the financial incentives work well to encourage lone parents to work?

Is there sufficient and appropriate childcare provision available to meet demand? If not, what are the issues? (Probe for whether there are any specific gaps in childcare, quantity, quality, location of childcare).

Are there any affordability issues around childcare? Is this something Jobcentre Plus is able to help with?

Are there issues with securing places and up-front payments for childcare? How is Jobcentre Plus able to help with this?

What kind of coordination is there between the different childcare providers and the Jobcentre Plus?

Do you feel that lone parents will be responsive to the enhanced pilot offer?

What do you hope to focus on in delivering the pilot over the course of the year and why? What impact do you anticipate this will have?

How do you intend to monitor specific areas? Do you anticipate any issues in monitoring and evaluating outcomes?

Outcomes and effectiveness

Are the childcare resources available in your area of sufficient quality to instil confidence in lone parents and to cater to their differing needs?

How do you feel the ND+fLP offer helps lone parents in accessing childcare?

What has been the initial lone parent response to the childcare element in the pilot?

Has there been any change in take up or interest since the offer was introduced?

Do you feel that the offer for lone parents is responsive to their childcare needs?

If not, how do you feel it should be enhanced?

Do you feel that any changes are needed in the design of the childcare offer?

4.1.7 Wave one ND+fLP Pilot: Manager of Children's Centres (with Jobpoints)

Delivery and practical issues

What services are provided here and for whom?

Who are the key partners in the delivery of these services? What are the coordination mechanisms in place between the various stakeholders involved? Do you feel these are adequate?

Which services are provided in collaboration with Jobcentre Plus? How are you contracted for these services? When were they initiated?

How was the ND+fLP pilot introduced to you?

How do you perceive the pilot? What is different about the service offer? (Probe for levels of awareness around the pilot elements)

Do you see yourself as a 'partner' in the pilot, or as a service provider?

Do you feel there are competing demands on your services?

How do you plan for services that will be jointly offered?

What are the coordination and management arrangements with Jobcentre Plus? Is the CPM your main point of contact? How frequently do you meet with the CPM?

Are there other staff from Jobcentre Plus who are also involved in delivery (e.g. advisers)? How well does this work?

Has any training or guidance been provided to your staff for implementing the pilot? Do you feel this would have helped?

What resources have been provided to you for implementing the pilot? Are you providing any resources towards the delivery of the pilot?

Do you feel the resources provided for the pilot have been timely and adequate? Is delivery being constrained in any way by resource availability (space, IT, CPM/ adviser time)?

Are there any monitoring mechanisms in place? What specifically are these, and who is responsible for them? Do you feel they are adequate?

Outcomes and effectiveness

What are the main concerns of lone parents with regard to childcare? To what extent does the pilot address these barriers?

What do you feel the role of Jobcentre Plus should be in childcare?

What do you feel are the main gaps in childcare provision?

Which elements of the pilot do you feel have been particularly effective?

How is the Jobpoint working out? (Probe for awareness around levels of usage, who is using it, how it enhances the Children's Centre offer)

If 'clinics' are held by Jobcentre Plus in the Children's Centre, what has the response been?

How and where are these 'clinics' publicised? What is offered through these 'clinics'? (Check of awareness around content, regularity, quality)

How does the Jobcentre Plus offer mesh with the wider services you offer?

What do you feel is achieved through the collaboration?

Are there any other complementary services which you feel should be offered?

Has there been a greater level of interest from children's centre users since the pilot offer came into place? Is the new service offer engendering greater confidence in and demand for the childcare facilities available?

Have the 'work' focused elements delivered here had a positive impact? Do you feel the offer is indeed an enhanced one?

Are there ways in which you feel the offer could be improved?

4.1.8 Wave one ND+fLP Pilot: Discovery Event Provider

Guidance and delivery

How did you get involved with the Discovery Event provision?

What are your roles and responsibilities?

Please describe the design of your event and the rationale behind each component.

What kind of guidance did you receive for the events?

How was the event designed? Was there any flexibility to adapt the event adapted to local circumstances? How was this done?

Has any experience from events delivered elsewhere been shared with you?

Are you clear on what outcomes are expected from these events? Do you feel the Jobcentre Plus expectations and targets are reasonable?

What would your expectations be from an event of this nature?

Are the resources provided for delivery adequate?

Have you been a provider on any other services for Jobcentre Plus? If so, which ones? How has that experience been?

Are you aware of other elements in the ND+fLP pilot? (Probe for levels of awareness around elements)

Do you deliver similar events or courses for other clients? Who are the main participant groups you deal with?

How many Discovery Events have you delivered? How many are you contracted to deliver?

Who is your main point of contact in Jobcentre Plus? Do you feel the coordination arrangements with Jobcentre Plus are effective?

How do you organise events? (Probe around timing, choice of venue, logistics, background materials etc) Who do you work with in Jobcentre Plus in preparing for events?

Who is responsible for monitoring outcomes? How are outcomes being monitored (probe for indicators and processes)? Did you receive any guidance on monitoring from Jobcentre Plus? Have you encountered any issues in monitoring outcomes?

Is the event differentiated for different types of clients, or is the same event offered to all? How do you feel this works?

Is there any guidance on the type of participant who would benefit most from the event?

Do you feel the right participants have been referred to the event(s)? Do you have any role in the referral process?

How do you liaise with Jobcentre Plus in follow-up of customers who have been referred and not attended?

How many participants have been referred to the events that have run? How many have attended?

If participants have not attended, are you aware of the reasons?

Do most participants complete the event? Please provide details of whether any have not and why?

Where have the events been delivered and who determined the venue? Do you feel the venue worked well? If not, why?

How many trainers are involved in delivery? What experience do they have with this customer group?

Do you feel that the event is pitched correctly at the range of participants who attend? Do you attempt to adapt the event for any particular client or groups of clients? How?

Are there any specific issues related to any customer group? If so how would they best be addressed?

Do you refer participants with any issues to specialised provision? Do you attempt to provide further support of any form?

Are there any issues in the design or delivery of the event that you have encountered? How have you attempted to overcome them?

What guidance and support have you received from Jobcentre Plus in addressing issues that arise?

Outcomes and effectiveness

Do you track what happens to participants following the events?

Have you been able to meet targets? If not, why?

What do you feel are the key issues for this customer group?

How adequate do you feel the design of the event is in addressing these issues (content, length, delivery modes)?

Do participants evaluate the events? What has the feedback been?

How have the participants reacted to the events? Are there any parts of the event which you think have particularly benefited clients and why? Are there any parts that you think have not been as effective?

Can you give examples of the type of client who you think has especially benefited from the event?

Can you give examples of clients who do not particularly benefit from the events?

Do you feel that anything in the way you have delivered the events represents innovative/best practice? If so, what?

How would you change the events? Do you have any further comments?

4.2.1 Wave two ND+fLP Pilot: District Manager/Project Manager

Overall

1. Generally, how are things going with the pilot?
2. Has there been any knowledge sharing between Districts? If so, has this helped adopting best practice or improving delivery?
3. What is the best method for communicating best practice? Can you give examples?
4. Has there been support from Headquarters? How has this helped?

Delivery

1. Has any further guidance or changes in procedures been introduced? Has this helped? Has it resulted in any changes in delivery arrangements?
2. How is the management of the pilot working? Are Steering Groups meeting? If so, what issues are being resolved through these forums?
3. Has there been any flexibility in how you have been able to structure delivery of the various strands?
4. Have any local adaptations been necessary or been introduced to improve delivery?

Partnership

1. Have any new relationships been put in place for implementing any strand of the pilot? How are these working?
2. Is there a common understanding amongst all partners of the objectives of the pilot?
3. Who are the key stakeholders you are working with to deliver the pilot? Are there any issues that have emerged in the partnerships?

Staff

1. Are all AO and PA resources currently in place and fully trained?
2. Since the pilot started, have there been any changes to the structure of delivery and roles and responsibilities of staff, including additional staff resources?
3. How are the additional resources (headcount) being used? Have the additional resources provided through the pilot helped in releasing time for LPAs to focus on the offer to lone parents and a more in-depth engagement?
4. Are headcount issues impacting on the implementation of the pilot in any way?
5. Have District staff been able to work effectively with the local offices in delivery of the pilot?

Training

1. Apart from the initial training prior to the pilot going live, has any further training or mentoring been provided?
2. Are any further training events been planned? Has there been any follow-up to ensure the enhanced training is being utilised?
3. As a result of the enhanced training. Are advisers being more persuasive to encourage lone parents into work?

Elements

1. Are all elements now in place and fully functional? Including the Jobpoint in the Children's Centre?
2. What has been the take-up of various elements in the Package?
3. Have you received any feedback that LPAs finding that customers are responding to certain elements of the package more than others? If so, which ones? Why do you think this is?
4. Have any offices struggled to deliver any particular elements? Why?
5. Has there been any impact as a result of the introduction of QWFIs?
6. What is the status of the QWFI's? Are there any backlogs? If so, how is this impacting on the delivery of the other elements?
7. Has More Voluntary Contact and case-loading increased?
8. Has the Flexible Provision been used? In what way? Do you feel that there are sufficient funds and flexibility to meet the needs of lone parents?
9. What other forms of training provision are available to lone parents? Are there gaps which are not covered by Flexible Provision?
10. Have any specific measures been taken to promote elements for which there has been low take-up?
11. Is there any element which you are currently focusing on more than others in your District? Why?
12. At this stage, how important do you feel the different elements are in the package? Which ones?
13. Which elements do you think are working well together?
14. Which elements have PAs and lone parents perceived as most important? Have PAs promoted any elements with greater enthusiasm than others? Has this related to preference or availability of resources and administrative complexity?
15. Have any specific measures been put in place to enable local offices/PAs market the 'package'? Have you made any local adaptations?

16. Do you feel that the right elements are included in the package to respond to demand in your District? If not, which parts of the service offer need enhancement?

Marketing

1. What marketing materials are available? When are they being used?
2. Has the marketing been effective? Have there been any additional marketing materials produced to localise the offer?
3. Have there been any recent marketing efforts for the pilot? What has been the response?
4. What are your current monitoring arrangements?
5. Has feedback from monitoring resulted in any adjustments to delivery modalities?

Outcomes and effectiveness

1. What is your existing performance on indicators related to lone parents? Has this changed since the last quarter?
2. Are you able to relate outcomes to any particular elements or to the package as a whole?
3. How has the pilot impacted on advisers ability to meet targets set on the AAT?
4. Has there been a change in customers motivation and confidence as a result of the package?
5. What has been the impact of the QWFIs? Have there been more conversions on to NDLP?
6. Has the package appealed to a broader range of lone parents as demonstrated by take-up. Are there any groups with specific needs which are not catered to by the 'package'?
7. Has the package had any visible impact on participant's attitudes and motivation to work, which is over and above to their response to individual elements previously in place?

4.2.2 Wave two ND+fLP Pilot: Childcare Partnership Manager (CPM) and Additional Childcare Partnership Manager (ACPM)

Delivery and practical issues

1. In general, how is the pilot going?
2. Can you describe your main activities in relation to the pilot? How much of your time is spent working on the pilot?
3. How are the management and coordination arrangements for the pilot working (e.g. regular meetings)?
4. Have you interacted with other CPMs with regard to the pilot and shared experiences?
5. How many childcare providers are there and how do you interact with them? What is your relationship like? Do you view it as a partnership?
6. What outreach services are you providing?
7. Has the pilot resulted in any changes or incremental work in delivery?
8. What is the status of the various services related to childcare within the pilot?
9. How is the Jobpoint in the Children's Centre working out? Are you providing any other services at the Children's Centre other than the Jobpoint? E.g. an Adviser having office hours, conducting QWFIs.
10. Has any additional work been done in setting up new partnerships and lining up resources to enhance delivery of the Pilot?
11. Do you feel the resourcing and time-frame are adequate?

Project management

1. Are you undertaking any project management tasks for the pilot?
2. If so, what? How much of this time does this take?
3. Do you feel you have adequate knowledge to undertake this role?

The Package

1. What are the main concerns of lone parents with regard to childcare?
2. Do you feel the childcare offer in the pilot is adequately addressing these concerns?
3. Do you feel that the package of elements work well together to the address multiple barriers that lone parents face in returning to work?
4. Which elements of the package are the most/least useful in addressing lone parent needs? How could the support be improved?

5. Are there any other childcare interventions which mesh with those included in the pilot? How are these used in conjunction with the pilot?
6. Do you feel the financial incentives are well worked out to 'persuade' lone parents towards the path to employment?
7. Is there sufficient and appropriate childcare provision available and if not, what are the issues?
8. Do you feel that there is sufficient coordination between the different childcare providers and the Jobcentre Plus?
9. Have lone parents been responsive to the offer?
10. What are you focusing on in the delivery of the pilot? Are there any areas where you feel more support is needed?
11. Have you had any feedback from monitoring?

Outcomes and effectiveness

1. Are the childcare resources of sufficient quality to instil confidence in lone parents and to cater to their differing needs?
2. What do you feel the benefits of this pilot are?
3. What has been the initial lone parent response to the childcare provision?
4. Has there been any change in take up or interest?
5. Which elements of the childcare offer have elicited the most positive response and why?
6. How have the schools and childcare providers responded? What are the gaps and concerns? Do they have any specific comments or suggestions?
7. Do you feel that any changes are needed to meet lone parent childcare barriers? If so, what recommendations would you make to meet the childcare needs of lone parents?

4.2.3 Wave two ND+fLP Pilot: Lone Parent Adviser Service Manager

Overall

1. Generally, how are things going with the pilot?
2. Are other initiatives or pilots impacting on the implementation of this pilot?
3. Have you had to make any local adaptations for the pilot?

Guidance

1. Have any changes been made to roles and responsibilities of the additional staff?
2. Has any further guidance been provided on the pilot since the pilot started? Has it helped?
3. If further guidance has been provided, how did you cascade down the information to your staff?
4. What support/guidance is provided at the District level? Have you had to approach the District for support in certain areas?

Delivery

1. How are the management arrangements working?
2. Has there been any exchange with other offices on the implementation? If so, has this been helpful?
3. Are the additional resources fully in place and operational now? Since when have they been in place? Are the resources proving to be adequate?
4. Have you had any referrals from Children's Centres?
5. Have you made any alterations/additions to the pilot in order to localise it and meet the needs of your population? (probe: differences in rural/urban nature)
6. How does the additional administrative support help the team of advisors? Is the admin team based in your office, or centrally? How does this work? Could the admin team be more efficient, if so, how would this be done?
7. Is there enough admin support to aid the team? If not, how much more would you want, and what tasks would they undertake?

Staff

1. Are all staff currently in place and operational?
2. Do you have any new staff from a non LPA background? If so, are they fully operational or are they in need of continued guidance?

Elements

1. How important do you feel the different elements are in the package?
2. Do you feel that the package of elements work well together to the address multiple barriers that lone parents face in returning to work?
3. Do you feel that particular elements of the package work well together?
4. What has been the take up of various elements?
5. Do PAs perceive some elements or combination of elements to be more effective than others? If so, which ones and why?
6. Are there any elements that are not being used as much as others? If so, why? (probe for level of LPAs understanding). Have your LPAs struggled to deliver any of the elements? If so, why?
7. Is the pilot being offered in conjunction with other provision to enhance the offer (probe: jobtrails in Scotland)?
8. Has IWC remained a powerful tool in persuading lone parents to enter employment? Do lone parents always receive IWC for the full 52 weeks? If not, why not?
9. What has been the impact of the QWFIs? How are the QWFI's proceeding? Are there any backlogs? If so, how are they impacting on other elements?
10. With the introduction of QWFIs, how are lone parents reacting to mandatory interviews?
11. Are action plans always being undertaken? Are they printed out and given to lone parents?
12. Have action plans proved to be a useful tool? How have staff and lone parents reacted to them?
13. Have you noticed any impact as a result of WSP stopping?
14. What constitutes MVC? Is it being undertaken? How do LPAs record the time they spend undertaking MVC?
15. What arrangements are in place for More Voluntary Contact? How has this proceeded?
16. Has the package been linked to any other service offers to enhance its value to customers? How is the 'package' being supported by complementary offers such as Adviser Discretionary Fund/Jobtrails?
17. Do you feel the package contains the right elements to respond to the demand in your catchment? If not, what is missing?
18. Do you tell customers about the IWEF or do you wait for them to come to you with a problem first?

19. Have you received any guidance on communicating the existence of the IWEF to customers? If so, what impact has this had on its use?
20. Do you feel that customers knowing about the IWEF has led to a higher take up of the fund, or an increased security of moving into work, knowing that there would be support if they needed it?

Training

1. Have any further workshops or events been undertaken? What issues were they structured around? Were these resolved?
2. Have any further training events been undertaken?
3. Do you feel the PAs are able to utilise the training in their work? How?
4. Has there been any follow up to the training e.g. quality assurance/ observations?
5. Are staff recruited from a different background being supported or mentored in any way?
6. Has the training provided to Administrative Support been adequate to allow them to carry out their new functions?
7. As a result of the enhanced training are LPAs being more persuasive in encouraging lone parents into work?

Marketing

1. What marketing materials are available? When are they being used?
2. Has the marketing been effective? Have any additional marketing materials been produced to localise the offer?
3. Have you made the marketing materials available in any other languages (other than English or Welsh)? What has been the demand/use for the translated versions?
4. Have any additional marketing efforts been undertaken? What has been the response?

Outcomes

1. How are you monitoring progress and outcomes? Have you received any guidance?
2. What are your existing performance figures on lone parents? Has this changed since the last quarter?
3. Do you think targets are influencing the way in which the pilot is being delivered?
4. Is the pilot achieving the results you had hoped it would? If not, why?

5. Are lone parents responding positively to the offer (incremental to their response to individual elements)? Is the package appealing to a broader range of lone parents?
6. Has the package had any impact on participant's attitudes and motivation to work which differs from the previous response to various strands?
7. Do you feel that the package offers a sequenced 'pathway' towards employment over time?
8. Has there been a change in customers' motivation and confidence, over and above that achieved through previous offers?
9. What do you feel works about the pilot? The number/variety of elements that are available? The flexibility that the pilot allows or the financial incentives?

4.2.4 Wave two ND+fLP Pilot: Lone Parent Personal Advisers

Overall

1. What are your roles and responsibilities? How long have you been a LPA?
2. Is the pilot allowing you to tailor interventions better to your customers needs?
3. What kind of a customer profile do you have, and how does this influence what is delivered?

Training

1. Was the training and guidance provided to you for the pilot adequate?
2. Are you able to continue to use the enhanced training? If not, why? Is it helping you in responding to your customers? In what way?
3. Has there been any follow-up to the training? If not, would it be useful? What would you like further training on?

Delivery

1. Since the pilot started, has any new guidance been issued? Have there been any changes in processes? If so, have they helped?
2. Have you had to make any changes in implementation or introduce any specific administrative measures?
3. Do you feel that you have any additional support to help you to deliver the pilot? What kind of support is being provided?
4. Do you feel the additional admin support you have been given is adequate for the pilot? Does it release time? How are you spending that time?
5. Do you feel that the additional administrative support is effective in aiding you to deliver the pilot? If not, how could this be improved?
6. Have you bundled different elements of the package towards different groups of customers? Why do you feel they will work especially well for these different groups?

Elements

Overall

1. Do you feel that the package of elements work well together to the address multiple barriers that lone parents face in returning to work?
2. Do you feel that some elements are more effective than others? If so, which ones and why?

3. Are there some elements that you do not use as often as others? If so, which ones and why? (probe for level of understanding, and any barriers faced in using some elements)
4. Are there any elements which you have found are not particularly relevant/effective? If so, how could these elements be improved?
5. Are you linking the package to any other service offers to enhance its value e.g. ADF/Jobtrails?
6. Are there any elements you feel should be included in the package to address the barriers lone parents face?
7. Do you feel the Pilot adds to your existing work-load? In what way/which specific elements?
8. Please explain the administrative elements associated with each strand of the pilot (probe IWC)? How does this influence the way in which you are able to deliver the pilot?
9. What other administrative functions take your time?
10. Is there any value in presenting a 'package' to lone parents or do you feel it is important to present individual strands?

Flexible Provision

1. What is your understanding of Flexible Provision? What is the availability of Flexible Provision for your offices? What kinds of training are being used for customers? Is Flexible Provision being used? What are the gaps?
2. Are you aware of the funds available? Are you aware of which providers you can purchase training courses from?
3. Has flexible provision been used in any way to overcome specific barriers/gaps?
4. Is there any way in which FP could be improved to be more effective?

More Voluntary Contact

1. What do you consider More Voluntary Contact to be in practical terms?
2. Are you able to undertake More Voluntary Contact? What have been the outcomes?
3. Have you been able to have More Voluntary Contact' with lone parents between WFIs? How has this helped?
4. How do you record your time spent undertaking MVC?

QWFIs

1. What effect have the QWFIs had on your workload? Does this impact on the delivery of other elements? What effect have they had on review meetings?
2. Have QWFIs had any impact? Have you seen an increase in the number of lone parents converting to NDLP?

Action Planning

1. How is the Action Planning process going? Are you doing anything differently? How have lone parents responded to it?
2. Has Action Planning proved to be effective? What effect has it had on the lone parent response?
3. While undertaking Action Planning, do you write it up at the same time as talking to the lone parent, or talk first then write up afterwards? What impact do you think this has?
4. Do you always print out the action plan and give a copy to the lone parent?

In Work Support

1. Are you delivering support to customers once they move into work? If so, for how long after they have moved into employment?
2. What activities are you undertaking for IWS?
3. How often are you in contact with customers once they have moved into work?

IWEF

1. Do you tell customers about the IWEF or do you wait for them to come to you with a problem first?
2. Have you received any guidance on communicating the existence of the IWEF to customers? If so, what?
3. Do you feel that customers knowing about the IWEF has lead to a higher take up of the fund, or an increased security of moving into work, knowing that there would be support if they needed it?
4. What has the take-up been for IWEF? What examples are there of what it has been used for? What has it been used for? Has it helped with issues related to tax credits?

Discovery Events

1. Have you participated in made many referrals to Discovery Events? How do you feel about them?
2. What is the reaction from lone parents?

Childcare

1. How do you refer customers to childcare provision? Is it easy and accessible?
2. Do you feel that the childcare offer available with the pilot is the right offer to meet the needs of lone parents? If not, what recommendations would you make to improve the support?
3. What is the uptake of Childcare Assist? Why? Do you feel it could be improved in any way?
4. Do you feel that lone parents have any childcare barriers that the pilot is unable to address? If so, what recommendations would you make to meet the childcare needs of lone parents?

Other

1. Are you able to effectively use the pilot elements with other offers such as ADF (Scotland – Jobtrials)? If not, why?
2. Have you tried to access other provision to overcome those barriers not addressed, and how effective has this been?

Staff

1. Do you feel you have sufficient resources (other than staff) and knowledge to implement the Pilot?
2. In what ways have the additional staff resources helped?

Marketing

1. What marketing materials are available? When are they being used?
2. Do you market the pilot as a package or push the individual elements?
3. Has the marketing been effective?
4. Do you feel the marketing effort and materials have been adequate for engaging customers and conveying the 'message'?
5. Has there been any demand for marketing materials to be made in any languages other than English (or Welsh)? Have you been provided with adequate marketing material (quantities, languages)?
6. Have any additional marketing materials been produced to localise the offer?
7. Have you undertaken any other form of marketing? What has been the impact/response to this?

Outcomes

1. How has the pilot impacted on your performance? Have there been any changes over the past months?
2. How have lone parents responded to the offer? Do they view it as a package? Has there been any noticeable difference in their response to this package in comparison to the elements offered individually before?
3. What do you feel are the benefits of the pilot?
4. Has there been a difference in the response of lone parents to the package? Has it appealed to a broader range of customers?
5. Has the 'package' had any impact on customer's attitudes and motivation to work, which seems to be different from their response to the individual elements?
6. Do you feel that the package is offering a pathway towards employment over time? Do you feel you can progressively offer them the support from the different elements of the package to urge them towards employment?
7. Has there been a change in customers' motivation and confidence, over and above what has been achieved through other offers?

4.2.5 Wave two ND+fLP Pilot: Administration Manager

Delivery and practical issues

1. What are your duties as part of the lone parent team?
2. How many administration staff do you manage? What are their central tasks?
3. How was the Pilot introduced to you? Were your duties clear to you? Do you feel you got sufficient guidance?
4. Have you received any additional guidance since the pilot has started?
5. Which tasks related to the Pilot are perceived as over and above normal administrative duties?
6. Were the additional resources provided through the Pilot adequate?
7. Was any training provided to the administrative staff? Was it adequate?
8. Have you experienced any issues with the delivery of the pilot?
9. Are any backlogs in any area? Is the work-load manageable?
10. If based in the District, how do you provide support to PA's in offices (if relevant)? Are there any coordination issues? Does the nature of the support to different staff members vary?
11. Do you see the Pilot as a package, or do you feel that it is a lot of separate interventions?

Outcomes and effectiveness

1. Do you feel the resources in the unit are adequate for delivering the Pilot?
2. Are the marketing materials proving to be adequate in guiding lone parents?
3. In your view how have lone parents responded to the pilot?
4. Are there any aspects which could be improved?
5. Has the pilot impacted on performance? How are you measuring performance?
6. Are you tracking the lone parents on the Pilot? If so, are there any interesting findings?

4.2.6 Wave two ND+fLP Pilot: Administrator

Delivery and practical issues

1. What is your previous experience in Jobcentre Plus? When were you integrated into the lone parent team?
2. Who is your line manager?
3. What are your duties as part of the lone parent team?
4. How was the Pilot introduced to you? Were your duties clear to you? Do you feel you got sufficient guidance?
5. Do you feel you have the confidence to carry out your new duties, or are there certain areas you feel you need mentoring and support in?
6. Do you feel the work in the lone parent unit is more complex than your previous duties?
7. Do you occasionally get drawn into other activities not related to lone parents?
8. Do you deal with any enquiries from lone parents? What sort of enquiries? Do you feel confident to do so?
9. Which parts of the Pilot package do you provide administrative support on?
10. Do you provide support for FTA or DMA action? What tasks does this involve?
11. What tasks do you have to undertake? (e.g sending out letters, completing forms and getting them authorised, sending them to finance, booking appointments for lone parent advisors)
12. Do you support the advisors by booking some interviews?
13. Do you do any administration for the In Work Credit? How are you finding it?
14. Do you do any work on the More Voluntary Contact?
15. Do you support the QWFIs? How? How are you finding it?
16. Has the volume of administration increased since the pilot began?
17. Who do you provide support to? Does the nature of the support to different staff members vary? If based in the District, how do you provide support to PAs in offices (if relevant)? Are there any co-ordination issues?
18. How do you feel that your role has supported the PAs? Have you experienced any issues liaising with the advisors on the pilot package elements?

Training

1. Were you provided any training? Was it adequate?
2. Overall, has the introduction and training provided given you confidence in your ability to deliver support to PAs and lone parents?
3. Have you received any additional guidance since?

The Package

1. Do you understand fully what the different elements of the package are?

Outcomes and effectiveness

1. Do you feel the resources in the unit are adequate for delivering the Pilot?
2. Are the marketing materials proving to be adequate in guiding lone parents?
3. In your view how have lone parents responded to the pilot?
4. Are there any aspects which could be improved?

4.2.7 Wave two ND+fLP Pilot: Children's Centre Manager (with jobpoint)

Delivery and practical issues

1. What services are provided here and for whom?
2. Who are the key partners in the delivery of these services? What are the coordination mechanisms in place between the various stakeholders involved? Do you feel these are adequate?
3. Are there any new services you are providing in collaboration with Jobcentre Plus or with other agencies?
4. Which services are provided in collaboration with Jobcentre Plus? How are you contracted for these services?
5. What are the coordination and management arrangements with Jobcentre Plus?
6. How was the pilot introduced to you (if relevant)? How do you perceive the pilot? What is different about the service offer? (if relevant)
7. Do you feel there are competing demands on your services?
8. What additional resources have been provided to you for implementing the pilot, and are these sufficient?
9. Has any training been provided to your staff for implementing the pilot?
10. Are you being constrained by resource availability currently?
11. Are there any monitoring mechanisms being put in place?

The Package

1. What are the main concerns of lone parents with regard to childcare?
2. What have been the constraints in childcare delivery previously?
3. Do you feel the childcare offer within the pilot meets the needs and demands of lone parents in your area? If not, what needs to be enhanced?
4. Are the financial incentives for childcare in the package adequate? (Childcare Assist, and ADF and IWEF)
5. How is the Jobpoint working out? How do you inform people that it is there? (probe for any marketing) How many people are using it? What sorts of cliental are using the jobpoint? E.g. lone mothers or other parents? Is the Jobpoint used more when a member of staff is present?
6. Have you experienced any problems with the Jobpoint? If so, how were they resolved? Who is your contact if there are problems?

7. Are there any clinics or additional services provided from the centre as a result of the Jobpoint being installed?
8. If 'clinics' are held in the Children's Centre, what has the response been?
9. If 'group WFI sessions' have been conducted in the Centre, how effective have these been? Have lone parents been responsive? What has been the specific role of the Centre in delivering these (has it just provided a venue)?

Outcomes and effectiveness

1. Do you see yourself as a partner in the pilot, or as a service provider?
2. Has the resourcing been sufficient and timely?
3. Is your staff sufficiently trained to deal with the service offer?
4. Are there any complementary services which you feel should be offered?
5. Has there been a greater level of interest from lone parents? Is the new service offer engendering greater confidence in and demand for the childcare facilities available?
6. Have the work focused elements delivered here had a positive impact?
7. Do you feel the offer is indeed an enhanced one?

4.2.8 Wave two ND+fLP Pilot: Discovery Event Provider

Guidance and delivery

1. Can you briefly describe what provision you have delivered so far. e.g. how many courses have you run, where were they held, how long are the courses, who are they aimed at, how many places?
2. How did those events go?
3. Are there any learning points/issues that have had to be addressed? How were these addressed?
4. How much communication do you have with Jobcentre Plus on the organisation and delivery of the events?
5. Has any aspect of the event changed since the first one was delivered? If so, what and what impact has this had?
6. Do you have flexibility to adapt the courses to meet the needs of the participants?
7. How many Discovery Events are you contracted to deliver? How many have you delivered so far? Have you got future dates agreed?
8. Is there any guidance on the type of participant who would benefit most from the event?
9. Where have the events been delivered and who determined the venue? Do you feel the venue worked well? If not, why?
10. Do you refer participants with any issues to specialised provision? Do you attempt to provide further support of any form?
11. When we spoke last time, there were some issues raised about the provision of childcare. Have these now been resolved?

Organisation

1. Do you feel the right participants have been referred to the event(s)? Do you have any role in the referral process?
2. How do you liaise with Jobcentre Plus in follow-up of customers who have been referred and not attended?
3. Have you had an appropriate number of referrals from Jobcentre Plus to the Discovery Events?
4. Have you done any recruitment/marketing yourself to get people to attend the Events?
5. If participants have not attended, are you aware of the reasons?
6. Do most participants complete the event? Please provide details of whether any have not and why?

Awareness of the pilot

1. Are you aware of other elements in the ND+fLP pilot? (Probe for levels of awareness around elements)

Outcomes and effectiveness

1. Who is responsible for monitoring outcomes? How are outcomes being monitored (probe for indicators and processes)? Did you receive any guidance on monitoring from Jobcentre Plus? Have you encountered any issues in monitoring outcomes?
2. Do you track what happens to participants following the events?
3. Are you clear on what outcomes are expected from the events you deliver? Have you had any feedback?
4. Have you been able to meet targets? If not, why?
5. What do you feel are the key issues for this customer group?
6. How adequate do you feel the design of the event is in addressing these issues (content, length, delivery modes)?
7. Do participants evaluate the events? What has the feedback been?
8. How have the participants reacted to the events? Are there any parts of the event which you think have particularly benefited clients and why? Are there any parts that you think have not been as effective?
9. Can you give examples of the type of client who you think has especially benefited from the event?
10. Can you give examples of clients who do not particularly benefit from the events?
11. Do you feel that anything in the way you have delivered the events represents innovative/best practice? If so, what?
12. How would you change the events?
13. Do you have any further comments?

4.3.1 Wave three ND+fLP Pilot: District Manager and Project Manager

Overall

Generally how have things gone with the pilot?

Overall, do you feel that the pilot has been effective in addressing the needs of lone parents in your district?

Resources and roll-out

Do you feel that the guidance received for the pilot was adequate? Is there anything that you would add to the guidance?

Do you feel that the time frame for the roll out of the pilot was adequate? Do you feel that you had enough time to prepare for delivering the pilot?

Besides the initial Enhanced Adviser Training, has there been any additional or follow up training delivered to staff? Has there been any follow up or monitoring to see if the Enhanced Training has been utilized?

What training has been provided to those staff that have started since the pilot has been running?

Do you feel that you had the appropriate capacity and resources to deliver the pilot effectively?

Have headcount issues impacted on the implementation of the pilot in any way? Has the headcount available to the pilot changed through delivery of the pilot? (probe increase or decrease in resources).

Has the pilot impacted significantly on workloads? Has this been manageable?

What proportion of your time has been spent on working with the pilot? What has the focus of your time been? (probe increase or decrease in time spent by Project Manager)

What kind of support have you received from head office? Has this been useful?

Delivery

How has the delivery of the pilot been structured – have there been any changes in roles and responsibilities? (probe effectiveness of centralised and decentralised models)

Have the district staff been able to work effectively with local offices in delivering the pilot? What has the structure of communication been?

Please describe any changes to the way in which the pilot has been delivered over the year? (probe changes in processes, rules etc.)

Which elements of the pilot have been particularly effective?

Which elements have LPAs and lone parents perceived as most important? Have LPAs promoted any elements with greater enthusiasm than others? Has this been related to preference or availability of resources and administrative complexity?

What gaps are there in the provision? What support would you like to see available?

Have there been any 'local' adaptations in delivery or content?

How have you marketed the pilot? What impact has this had?

Have you used any outreach activities to promote the pilot?

What partnerships have you established to aid delivery of the pilot and its elements? Have the partnerships worked well?

How has the management of the pilot worked? Has there been a steering group? How regularly has it met?

Has there been any knowledge sharing or best practise shared between offices? How has this been organised?

What have been the main forums for resolving issues related to the pilot? Can you give any examples of issues that have been addressed and worked through?

Do you feel that the pilot is now embedded and being delivered as a 'package'? Does any element of the pilot not sit well with other processes?

Which elements of the pilot do you feel work well together?

Outcomes and monitoring

What has been the take up of the various elements of the pilot? Do you feel that particular elements have been instrumental in achieving positive outcomes, or the pilot overall?

Have any specific measures been taken to address elements that have had low take up? If so, what? (probe Flexible Provision and Childcare Assist)

Have different offices been more successful in take up of different elements than others? If so, why do you think this is? Are there elements of good practise that have been shared?

Do you feel that the pilot is flexible to be adapted to meet the needs of all lone parents or does it work better for specific groups of lone parents? Are there any groups with specific needs that are not catered for with the pilot?

What monitoring of the pilot have you done as a district? Has this been useful to you?

What changes/efforts did you make as a result of the monitoring data?

Has there been any knowledge sharing with other pilot districts? If so, has this helped in adopting best practice or improving delivery? Please give examples.

To what extent do you feel that the lone parent team now has the tools and skills to effectively engage with this customer group?

For which lone parents do you feel the pilot is most effective?

Are there any groups with specific needs which are not catered for by the package? What are the specific gaps relating to this customer group?

Have there been any other pilots or initiatives in the district that may have affected the performance of the pilot.

Do you have any further comments or suggestions that you would like to make in relation to New Deal Plus for Lone Parents?

Thank you very much for your time

4.3.2 Wave three ND+fLP Pilot: Focus Group with Adviser Service Managers, CPM and ACPM

Introduction

Introduction of staff and the aims of wave three of the evaluation. This will cover a brief synopsis of waves one and two.

Wave three aims to:

- reflect back on the implementation of the pilot to consider what worked well and any areas for improvement;
- capture any learning and best practice;
- understand the effectiveness of each of the pilot elements and how they work together as a package; and
- consider overall outcomes and impacts achieved through the pilot.

The focus group will be split into two sessions: session one will think about the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot; and session two will cover what improvements could be made to New Deal Plus for Lone Parents. Each session will last approximately 45 minutes, and we shall be having breaks in between.

Explain confidentiality and anonymous reporting of findings

Get group to introduce themselves

Session One – Learning from the Pilot – Strengths/Weaknesses of ND+fLP (approx 45 mins)

1. Additional Resources (CPMs, LPAs, Admin support)
2. Delivery structures – centralised/decentralised models
3. Marketing
4. The package and its elements
5. The wider offer with partners and providers
6. Quality of engagement with lone parents
7. Outcomes (job outcomes; FTA rates; ability to support those lone parents furthest from the labour market)

Seven flip chart pages are spread around the room titled with the following headings. Participants are asked to share what they feel are the strengths and weaknesses of each one.

Group discussion: Identify common issues for both strengths and weaknesses. Establish who agrees/disagrees – identify if process or location variations (e.g. urban/rural).

Break

Session Two – Learning from the Pilot - How could ND+fLP be improved? (approx 45 mins)

Having identified the weaknesses of ND+fLP in the previous session – participants are asked to think about improvements that could be made

1. Jobcentre Plus/DWP policy
2. Local management
3. Delivery and the role of CPMs/LPAs/Administrators
4. The package and its elements
5. The role of partners and providers

Group discussion: discuss the improvements that have been suggested and the impact that they may have on the delivery of the pilot and the outcomes it may achieve.

Conclusion

Summary of discussion and identify the three key factors that work well, and the three key areas for improvement for New Deal Plus for Lone Parents

Thank you for your time

Facilitator notes

1. The pilot provided additional staff resources, how was the extra resource used?

Was the additional resource enough? Was the resource ring fenced? What difficulties have there been in ensuring resources were ring fenced? Has there been any increase or decrease in resource allocation?

2. Can you describe how the pilot has been delivered in your district?

What has been the management structure? How is information disseminated? What are the day to day roles and responsibilities? How are the management and coordination arrangements for the pilot working (e.g. regular meetings etc)? Note differences in centralised and decentralised model. Have there been any changes to the way in which the pilot has been delivered over the year? Has there been any changes in processes? Why did these changes come about? Does the pilot run more efficiently now?

3. What marketing/promotion of the pilot has there been?

What do you think of the chocolate box leaflets? Has there been any demand for the leaflets to be in any other language than English? What are the differences between the large and small leaflet, which is better and why? Has any other marketing been done? (probe: coffee mornings, DVDs, outreach, partnerships)

4. Are there any elements of the pilot that have proved difficult or less used than others?

Which elements are less used and why? Has anything been done to try and increase the use of this/these elements? To what degree is it not used due to lack of demand from lone parents, or LPAs not offering/being comfortable with the element? Which elements have been very effective in engaging lone parents and supporting their move into work?

Has there been any additional push or training to increase the use of particular elements? Which elements have received additional attention and why? What has been done to increase the take up, has it worked?

5. The wider offer with partners and providers

What partnerships have been developed? Have partnerships been successful in aiding delivery of the pilot?

6. Quality of engagement with lone parents

Do you feel that the pilot is flexible to be adapted to meet the needs of all lone parents or does it work better with specific groups of lone parents? Who does the pilot help most, and who does it help least? What about harder to reach customers – what support would be necessary to help them? What gaps are there in provision for customers?

7. How has the pilot impacted on the following
 - a. Job outcomes
 - b. FTA rates
 - c. Client confidence
 - d. Quality of engagement with lone parents
 - e. Ability to support those lone parents who are far from the labour market

4.3.3 Wave three ND+fLP Pilot: Focus group with Lone Parent Advisers and administrative support

Introduction

Introduction of staff and the aims of wave three of the evaluation. This will cover a brief synopsis of waves one and two.

Wave three aims to:

- reflect back on the implementation of the pilot to consider what worked well and any areas for improvement;
- capture any learning and best practice;
- understand the effectiveness of each of the pilot elements and how they work together as a package; and
- consider overall outcomes and impacts achieved through the pilot.

The focus group will be broken into two main sessions: session one will consider the strengths and weaknesses of different aspects of the pilot; session two will consider how the pilot can be improved to increase engagement and positive outcomes with lone parents. Each session will last approximately 45 minutes with a break in between.

Explain confidentiality and anonymous reporting of findings

Get the group to introduce themselves

Session One: Learning from the Pilot – Strengths/Weaknesses of ND+fLP (approx 45 mins)

1. Pre-pilot training and implementation
2. Additional resources
3. Marketing
4. The package and the elements
5. Quality of interaction with lone parents
6. Outcomes

Six flip chart pages are spread around the room titled with the following headings. Participants are asked to share what they feel are the strengths and weaknesses of each one.

Group discussion: Identify common issues for both strengths and weaknesses. Establish who agrees/disagrees – identify if process or location variations (e.g. urban/rural).

Session Two – Learning from the Pilot - How could ND+fLP be improved? (approx 45 mins)

Working groups: The group will be split into two groups; Lone Parent Advisers and administrative support

In your role, what do you think can be improved?

1. What can you do/what processes can be improved to make delivery of ND+fLP more effective and efficient?
2. What can Jobcentre Plus do to improve delivery of ND+fLP?
3. What can providers and partners do to improve ND+fLP?

Group discussion: Report back from working groups.

Conclusion

Summary of discussion and identify the three key factors that work well, and the three key areas for improvement for New Deal Plus for Lone Parents

Thank you for your time

Session one facilitator notes:

1. How effective was the pre-pilot training?

Was the pilot introduced clearly to you? Was the training you received prior to the pilot going live sufficient/effective? Do you feel that you received the training and information that you needed? Did the training change the way that you did things? Have you been able to apply the training? What questions/issues did you have after the training was delivered? What gaps in knowledge or skills existed?

2. The pilot provided additional staff resources for LPAs and administrative support. How was the extra resource used?

Was the additional resource enough? Was the resource ring fenced?

3. What marketing/promotion of the pilot has there been?

What do you think of the chocolate box leaflets? Has there been any demand for the leaflets to be in any other language than English? What are the differences between the large and small leaflet, which is better and why? Has any other marketing been done? (probe: coffee mornings, DVDs, outreach, partnerships)

4. What do you think of each of the elements?

Has the element been a success? What have been the barriers associated with the element? Do you think the element is effective in addressing the needs of the customer? What would they change about the element? Is the process of administering the element difficult? Have there been any elements of the pilot that have not worked as well, if so, why not? How would you make improvements to these elements? Are there any learning experiences that they want to share and examples of successes.

Write a list of all the elements on a flip chart:

Action Plans

In Work Credit

Work Search Premium

In Work Support

More Voluntary Contact

In Work Emergency Fund

Flexible Provision

Discovery Event

Childcare Assist

QWFIs for lone parents who's youngest child is 11-13 years

Jobpoint in Children's Centre (note how many know about this and Children's Centre work)

Were there any other offers or provision from outside the package used to enhance the offer? (probe for Job Trials, ADF etc.)

5. How has the pilot affected the way in which you interact with lone parents?

Do you feel that you are able to help them more than before the pilot? Are you able to spend more time with customers? Do you feel that you are able to address the individual needs of lone parents/are you able to offer the support that lone parents need?

6. How has the pilot impacted on the following

- a. Job outcomes
- b. FTA rates
- c. Client confidence
- d. Quality of engagement with lone parents
- e. Ability to support those lone parents who are far from the labour market

Session two facilitator notes

Questions for Lone Parent Adviser working group

1. Has the pilot affected your workload?

Do particular elements add more to your workload than others? Are there processes that could be streamlined/centralised to be more efficient? Does your workload impact on the quality of your engagement with lone parents? How does your workload impact on your ability to undertake In Work Support and More Voluntary Contact? What is the current status of QWFIs? Any backlogs?

2. To what extent have the admin support been able to help you in the delivery of the pilot and releasing your time for client engagement?

Which elements do the admin team provide you with support? How well does the relationship work with the admin team? Have there been any problems or barriers that have needed to be addressed? Do you feel that the admin team could provide more support? If so, how/which elements?

Questions for the administrative support working group

1. How has the pilot affected your workload?

What are the additional roles and responsibilities you have undertaken for the pilot? Do you feel that you have received the right training and have the right skills to undertake the tasks asked of you? Are there areas in which you would like additional training/support? Do you feel that there are additional tasks that you would like to undertake to help further support the LPAs?

2. How effective is your relationship with the LPAs?

Do you feel that you have enough and the right type of dialogue with the LPAs to be able to support them in the best way? Do you feel that you have conflicting demands on your time from different LPAs – how do you manage this? Is there any way in which you feel that this relationship could be improved?

3. How comfortable are you interacting with customers?

Do you feel that you have enough understanding of the pilot as a whole to confidently approach customers? Do you feel that you have the information you need to respond to customer questions and concerns?

4.3.4 Wave three ND+fLP Pilot: Discovery Event provider

Can you briefly describe what provision you have delivered so far. E.g. how many courses have you run, where were they held, how long are the courses, who are they aimed at, how many places?

How many Discovery Events are you contracted to deliver? How many have you delivered so far? Have you got future dates agreed?

How have the events gone? Have there been any learning points that have had to be addressed? Have these now been addressed?

How much communication do you have with Jobcentre Plus on the organisation and delivery of the events?

Has any aspect of the event changed since the first one was delivered? If so, what and what impact has this had?

Do you have flexibility to adapt the courses to meet the needs of the participants?

Is there any guidance on the type of participant who would benefit most from the event?

Where have the events been delivered and who determined the venue? Do you feel the venue worked well? If not, why?

Do you refer participants with any issues to specialised provision? Do you attempt to provide further support of any form?

There have previously been some issues raised about the provision of childcare. Have these now been resolved?

Have there been any other issues/barriers that have had to be resolved?

Organisation

Do you feel the right participants have been referred to the event(s)? Do you have any role in the referral process?

How do you liaise with Jobcentre Plus in follow-up of customers who have been referred and not attended?

Have you had an appropriate number of referrals from Jobcentre Plus to the Discovery Events?

Have you done any recruitment/marketing yourself to get people to attend the Events?

If participants have not attended, are you aware of the reasons?

Do most participants complete the event? Please provide details of whether any have not and why?

Awareness of the pilot

Are you aware of other elements in the ND+fLP pilot? (Probe for levels of awareness around elements)

Outcomes and effectiveness

Who is responsible for monitoring outcomes? How are outcomes being monitored (probe for indicators and processes)? Did you receive any guidance on monitoring from Jobcentre Plus? Have you encountered any issues in monitoring outcomes?

Do you track what happens to participants following the events?

Are you clear on what outcomes are expected from the events you deliver? Have you had any feedback?

Have you been able to meet targets? If not, why?

What do you feel are the key issues for this customer group?

How adequate do you feel the design of the event is in addressing these issues (content, length, delivery modes)?

Do participants evaluate the events? What has the feedback been?

How have the participants reacted to the events? Are there any parts of the event which you think have particularly benefited clients and why? Are there any parts that you think have not been as effective?

Can you give examples of the type of client who you think has especially benefited from the event?

Can you give examples of clients who do not particularly benefit from the events?

Do you feel that anything in the way you have delivered the events represents innovative/best practice? If so, what?

How would you change the events?

Do you have any further comments you would like to make about the discovery events?

Thank you for your time

4.3.5 Wave three ND+fLP Pilot: Interview with Children's Centre Manager or appropriate Jobpoint person

Services offered

What services are provided from here?

Who are the key partners in delivering these services?

What services are provided in collaboration with Jobcentre Plus? How are you contracted for these services?

You host the Jobpoint here, do you know anything more about New Deal Plus for Lone Parents? Do you feel you would like more information about the pilot?

The Jobpoint

How do you feel that the Jobpoint adds to the services you offer?

Are there restricted opening hours for using the Jobpoint, or is it available whenever the centre is open?

Has the Jobpoint being here been advertised? If so how and where?

Are there any demands on your time or resources to host the Jobpoint?

Have you been provided with any training that has been needed to host the Jobpoint or other services that you offer on behalf of Jobcentre Plus? If so, do you feel that the training has been adequate or would you have liked more?

Have there been any issues/problems relating to locating the Jobpoint here?

How effective do you feel that the Jobpoint has been in engaging parents to think about work?

Do you feel this is an appropriate location for the Jobpoint?

Other services

Do Jobcentre Plus staff regularly visit this location?

Do Jobcentre Plus staff hold regular office hours from this location (probe holding QWFIs). If so, what do you feel the benefit is of doing so?

Monitoring

Who do you feel uses the Jobpoint? (probe for use by lone parents).

How frequently do you feel it has been used, and by whom?

How are you monitoring services related to lone parents? Have there been any monitoring mechanism been put in place with Jobcentre Plus?

If clinics or outreach are held in the Children's Centre by Jobcentre Plus, what has the response been?

Overall

What are the main concerns of lone parents with regard to childcare?

Are there any complementary services which you feel should be offered?

Do you have any further comments or recommendations you would like to make about the Jobpoint location or the pilot?

Many thanks for your time

4.3.6 Wave three ND+fLP Pilot: Focus group with Lone Parent Advisers, TPPMs and OPUs

Introduction

The New Deal Plus for Lone Parents pilot offers Flexible Provision as a way of funding one off training for customers if it will help them move into a job or make them more employable. During this session we want to talk to you more about Flexible Provision, and the mainstream funding that is available for training in all Jobcentres.

The focus group will be broken into three sessions; session one will be looking at the choice of training funding source; session two explores the application processes and session three will identify the barriers and consider what improvements could be made to Flexible Provision and mainstream funding. Each session will last for approximately 30 minutes, and we will have breaks.

Explain confidentiality and anonymous reporting of findings

Get the group to introduce themselves

Activity One: Ballot Box (approx 30 mins)

Each attendee will be given a pack of slips of paper – each slip will have a training course/need written on it (for example, driving licence, yoga teacher, childcare qualification, basic skills,). Participants will be asked to put each slip of paper into the relevant ballot box, one labelled 'Flexible Provision', one labelled 'mainstream funding', the other labelled 'other or no funding', depending on what funding source they would use.

Group discussion: look at what training application was put into each box. Identify any mismatches. Have a group discussion on why they chose the source they did.

Break

Activity Two: Process charts (approx 30 mins)

Split group into two groups (TPPM and OPU in different groups) – one group will draw a process chart for Flexible Provision, the other for mainstream funding. The chart should identify all stages from when a customer identifies a training need through to when the customer attends their first day on the training.

Group discussion to look at the procedures exploring differences.

Break

Session Three: Barriers and Improvements (approx 30 mins)

Facilitator: Summarise from previous discussions what works and doesn't work with Flexible Provision and mainstream funding. Highlight the barriers that have been identified throughout the session.

Group: Identify how the barriers can be overcome or improved to aid the delivery of training to lone parents.

Use the flip chart – one titled 'Flexible Provision' the other 'mainstream funding'

Synopsis and Conclusion

Round up what has been covered in the discussions

Close and thank participants for their time

Activity one facilitator notes:

- Identify awareness of what each source can and cannot be used for. If both sources can be used – identify determining factors in choosing which one.
- Does the eligibility for each funding source differ?
- Are there any targets set or guidance issued for using one source of funding over the other? What impact does this have? Who has set the target – national, district, set my line manager?
- Are there budget implications?
- Examples of training that has/would be rejected from each source (TPPM and OPU can guide on this)
- What about associated costs such as travel and childcare? Can the funds cover these costs, or do alternative funding sources have to be sought for these? Is this a barrier to accessing the training?
- What are the barriers/issues with using Flexible Provision and mainstream funding? Consider timing of turnaround for applications

Activity two facilitator notes:

- Awareness of both procedures
- Which is easier and why?
- Are you more confident in using one source of funding than the other? If so, why?
- How long does it take to put together an application for Flexible Provision compared with mainstream funding? Does this influence your enthusiasm to use one funding source over the other?
- How could the process for applying for Flexible Provision and mainstream funding be improved?
- What issues continually come up with applications for Flexible Provision and mainstream funding applications? Note the typical errors or missing information on applications for both funding sources.

Appendix E

Observation templates

5.1.1 Wave one lone parent interview observation template

Interviewer name:		
Jobcentre district:		
Jobcentre office:		
Date of Interview:		
Length of interview	Start time	End time

Name of NDLP adviser				
Name of lone parent				
Age of Children				
Length of time had been employed previously				
Child accompanying lone parent	Yes		No	
Other family or friend accompanying lone parent	Yes		No	
If Yes, who				

Reason for visit to Jobcentre today:

	Tick all that apply/as appropriate √	Comments
Exploratory discussion		
First WFI		
Follow up visit		
Quarterly WFI		
NDLP – on the programme		
Other- details		

Preparation for interview

Preparatory activities	Tick as appropriate ✓	Comments
Check LMS		
Read previous notes		
Familiarise with customer and children's details		
Other		

Introduction

Is this a first visit?

Yes	No
-----	----

If first visit, does adviser introduce themselves to lone parent at the start of the interview?

Yes	No
-----	----

Does the customer have English language issues?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, check the following as appropriate.

	Tick as appropriate ✓	Comments
Customer brings interpreter (please specify who)		
Adviser uses Jobcentre Plus support – describe (translation facility, other adviser with language skills, other support)		
Adviser uses no support		
Note impact on interview:		

Does adviser explain/discuss the purpose of the interview/meeting.

Yes	No
-----	----

Does adviser explain mandatory WFI requirements (if applicable)?

Yes	No
-----	----

Does adviser highlight that customer will no longer be eligible for Income Support once youngest child is aged 16?

Yes	No
-----	----

Explore history

Does adviser explore/review any of the following?

	Tick if appropriate √	Comments
Customers goals		
Employment history		
Education		
Qualifications		
Transferable skills		
Experience		

Barriers

Does adviser discuss any relevant potential barriers or issues?

	Tick if appropriate √	Comments
Caring responsibilities		
Need for specialist provision		
Childcare		
Basic skills		
Language		
Incapacity		
Debt		
Other- specify		

Options

Which of the following does the adviser discuss/explore with the client?

	Tick as appropriate✓	Note Customer response:
Pilot Options		
Action Plan		
Childcare Assist		
Work Search Premium		
In-Work Credit		
Discovery Events		
In-Work Emergency Fund		
More Voluntary Contact		
In-Work Support		

Other forms of support/options offered?

		Comments and customer response:
Options	Tick as appropriate√	
Adviser Discretionary Fund		
Better off in work calculation (BOC)		
Childcare assistance		
Childcare subsidy		
Disability Employment Adviser		
ESOL		
Financial management or debt management		
Job grant (£250) for salary delays		
Job search		
Mentoring		
NDLP case-load		
Other assistance		
Referrals to specialist support/agencies-describe		
Training		
Training premium		
Other – describe		

Action Plan

Does the customer bring in an existing Action Plan for review?

Yes	No
-----	----

Is a new Action Plan made/existing plan discussed?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes tick all that is appropriate.

	Tick if appropriate √	Comments
Purpose of Action Plan explained to customer		
Is the Action Plan specific		
Time bound – step specific and time phased		
Realistic – potential barriers reviewed?		
Measurable		
Additional comments		
Copied for lone parent		
Just adviser signs		
Just lone parent signs		
Lone parent and advisor sign		

Does lone parent actively engage in preparing the Action Plan?

Yes	No
-----	----

Are the marketing materials given to the customer or previously distributed material discussed during the interview?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, what was the customer response?

Interested	Not interested
------------	----------------

If no please explore reasons with adviser after interview).

--

Re-evaluation

Does the adviser re-evaluate with lone parent earlier discussions, progress and any options taken up?

Topic/Options	Tick if appropriate √	Comments
Job search activity		
Revisit BOC		
Examine tax credits		
Job grant		
Adviser Discretionary Fund (ADF)		
Action Plan		
Other		

Are next step clearly identified and elaborated by adviser?

Yes	No
-----	----

Next appointment set up?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, when?

In next week	In next 2 weeks	In next month	In next 6 months
--------------	-----------------	---------------	------------------

After lone parent has left:

How did the adviser feel about the interview? Ask following interview.

Went well, LP is positive about programme	LP thinking it over not	LP not on board
---	-------------------------	-----------------

What immediate actions or notes does the adviser make for follow up themselves or by administrative staff?

Topic/Options	Tick if appropriate √	Comments
None		
Updates LMS		
Follows up on agreed actions		
Looks into childcare		
Looks into training		
Looks into a job		
Other		

Additional comments by reviewer:

Notes to reviewer –

Reflections once interview is complete.

Is there is any interactive dialogue?

Yes	No
-----	----

Is the interview correctly paced?

Yes	No
-----	----

Is the lone parent comfortable enough to ask questions?

Yes	No
-----	----

Is the adviser responsive to concerns?

Yes	No
-----	----

Note any other reflections not addressed above.

5.2.1 Wave two lone parent interview observation template

Interviewer name:	SJ	NS	JP	MH	SB
Jobcentre district:	Wales			Scotland	
Jobcentre office:	Welsh Office 1			Scottish Office 1	
	Welsh Office 2			Scottish Office 2	
	Welsh Office 3			Scottish Office 3	
	Welsh Office 4				
Date of Interview:	4 th June	5 th June	6 th June	7 th June	8 th June Other

Name of NDLP adviser					
Name of lone parent					
Age of Children	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-11 years	11-18 years	18+ years
Number of children of each age					
Length of time had previously been employed	0-6 months	6 months – 2 years	2-5 years	5+ years	
Child accompanying lone parent	Yes			No	
Other family or friend accompanying lone parent	Yes			No	
If Yes, who	Relative	Friend	Other		

Reason for visit to Jobcentre today:

	Tick all that apply/as appropriate √	Comments
Exploratory discussion		
First WFI		
Follow up visit		
Quarterly WFI		
NDLP – on the programme		
Other- details		

* The names of the offices mentioned in the observation templates and topic guides have been anonymised to protect the confidentiality of informants.

Preparation for interview

Preparatory activities	Tick as appropriate √	Comments
Check LMS		
Read previous notes		
Familiarise with customer and children's details		
Other		

Introduction

Is this a first visit?

Yes	No
-----	----

If first visit, does adviser introduce themselves to lone parent at the start of the interview?

Yes	No
-----	----

Does the customer have English language issues?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, check the following as appropriate.

	Tick as appropriate √	Comments
Customer brings interpreter (please specify who)		
Adviser uses Jobcentre Plus support – describe (translation facility, other adviser with language skills, other support)		
Adviser uses no support		
Note impact on interview:		

Does adviser explain/discuss the purpose of the interview/meeting.

Yes	No
-----	----

Does adviser explain mandatory WFI requirements (if applicable)?

Yes	No
-----	----

Does adviser highlight that customer will no longer be eligible for Income Support once youngest child is aged 16?

Yes	No
-----	----

Explore history

Does adviser explore/review any of the following?

	Tick if appropriate √	Comments
Customers goals		
Employment history		
Education		
Qualifications		
Transferable skills		
Experience		

Barriers

Does adviser discuss any relevant potential barriers or issues?

	Tick if appropriate √	Comments
Caring responsibilities		
Need for specialist provision		
Childcare		
Basic skills		
Language		
Incapacity		
Debt		
Other- specify		

Options

Which of the following does the adviser discuss/explore with the client?

Pilot Options	Tick as appropriate√	Note Customer response:
Action Plan		
Childcare Assist		
In-Work Credit		
Discovery Events		
In-Work Emergency Fund		
More Voluntary Contact		
In-Work Support		

Other forms of support/options offered?

Options	Tick as appropriate √	Comments and customer response:
Adviser Discretionary Fund		
Better off in work calculation (BOC)		
Childcare assistance		
Childcare subsidy		
Disability Employment Adviser		
ESOL		
Financial management or debt management		
Job grant (£250) for salary delays		
Job search		
Mentoring		
NDLP case-load		
Other assistance		
Referrals to specialist support/agencies-describe		
Training		
Training premium		
Other – describe		

Does the advisor use the term 'New Deal' when talking about the pilot?

Yes	No
-----	----

Action Plan

Does the customer bring in an existing Action Plan for review?

Yes	No
-----	----

Is a new Action Plan made/existing plan discussed?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes tick all that is appropriate.

	Tick if appropriate √	Comments
Purpose of Action Plan explained to customer		
Is the Action Plan specific		
Time bound – step specific and time phased		
Realistic – potential barriers reviewed?		
Measurable		
Additional comments		
Just adviser signs		
Just lone parent signs		
Lone parent and advisor sign		

Does lone parent actively engage in preparing the Action Plan?

Yes	No
-----	----

Are the marketing materials given to the customer or previously distributed material discussed during the interview?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, what was the customer response?

Interested	Not interested
------------	----------------

If no please explore reasons with adviser after interview).

--

Re- evaluation

Does the adviser re-evaluate with lone parent earlier discussions, progress and any options taken up?

Topic/Options	Tick if appropriate √	Comments
Job search activity		
Revisit BOC		
Examine tax credits		
Job grant		
Adviser Discretionary Fund (ADF)		
Action Plan		
Other		

Are next step clearly identified and elaborated by adviser?

Yes	No
-----	----

Next appointment set up?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, when?

In next week	In next 2 weeks	In next month	In next 6 months
--------------	-----------------	---------------	------------------

After lone parent has left:

How did the adviser feel about the interview? Ask following interview.

Went well, LP is positive about programme	LP thinking it over not	LP not on board
---	-------------------------	-----------------

What immediate actions or notes does the adviser make for follow up themselves or by administrative staff?

Topic/Options	Tick if appropriate √	Comments
None		
Updates LMS		
Follows up on agreed actions		
Looks into childcare		
Looks into training		

Other		
-------	--	--

Appendix F

Lone parent topic guides

6.1.1 Wave one ND+FLP Pilot: Lone parents not in employment (face to face)

Interviewer Name:		
Jobcentre District:		
Jobcentre Office:		
Date of Interview:		
Name of NDLP adviser		
Information to be collected from LMS record:		
Lone parent name		
Lone parent contact details (please take address)		
Telephone numbers (landline and mobile numbers where possible)		
Reason for visit today:		
	Exploratory visit	
	First WFI	
	Follow up visit	
	Quarterly WFI	
	NDLP- on the programme	
	Other-describe	
In last year what are the number of adviser meetings		

Resources

Which of the following sources of income are you currently receiving?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Income Support		Housing Benefit	
Child Benefit		Council Tax Benefit	
Disability Living Allowance		Free School Meals/Milk Tokens	
Employment		Working Families Tax Credit	
Savings		Loans from Family	
Childcare Tax Credit		Maintenance/other	
Credit cards or personal loans		Other	
Private Insurance			

How long have you been receiving Income Support?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
0-6 months		1 year-5 years	
6 months-1 year		On and off for 10 years	

Employment history

Have you worked before?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, what types of jobs have you held?

How do you feel about moving off benefits and going (back) to work?

Ready	Somewhat hesitant	Not ready
-------	-------------------	-----------

If you have concerns about returning back to work, what worries you most?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Childcare		Finding an appropriate job	
Skills		Being better off	
Caring responsibilities		ESOL issues	
Other please specify			

Plans and aspirations

If not looking for work: Is there any reason why you would rather not work right now?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Caring responsibilities		Not ready	
Childcare		ESOL issues	
Disability		Training issues	
Other please specify			

If looking for work: What sort of work are you looking for (occupation, hours, pay etc)?

Please specify _____

How are you looking for work? How have you found the process?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Jobcentre		Local newspaper and job postings	
Jobpoint		Friends/family	
Other, please specify			

What do you feel you need to help to find employment?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
More training		More Jobcentre support	
Childcare		There needs to be more jobs for LPs	
Other, please specify			

Are you receiving any support in finding employment? Who have you been able to get support from? If no, do you know where to find support?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Support from adviser		Support from training provider	
Support from family and friends		Support from other organisation	
Other, please specify			

Are there suitable job opportunities for lone parents in this area?

Yes	No
-----	----

Childcare

Do you have any concerns about using childcare?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, what are your concerns?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Cost		Feeling confident to leave my children with strangers	
Availability (hours)		Location	
Other, please specify			

Do you have family and/or friends nearby who help or can help you with childcare?

Yes	No
-----	----

If you have used childcare in the past, what types of childcare have you used?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Family/friends		Childminder	
Children's Centre		Playgroup	
Other, please specify			

Have you been offered any advice about childcare by your adviser? Was it helpful?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you feel more confident about the childcare options available to you? Why?

Yes after meeting with my adviser	The same as before I met with my adviser	I feel less confident after meeting my adviser
-----------------------------------	--	--

Meeting with adviser

Why did you come in for today's meeting?

Adviser asked me to or QWFI	I came in on my own to discuss something
-----------------------------	--

How often do you come in?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Fortnightly or more		Once a month	
Once every 6 months		Once a year	
Other, please specify			

How do you feel about coming in at this frequency?

It's a good frequency	It's ok	I prefer to come in less
-----------------------	---------	--------------------------

You have just had meeting with an adviser, what did you discuss?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Job search		BOC	
Childcare		Training	
Other, please specify			

Was today's meeting to follow up on anything specific?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did you get an Action Plan to take away with you?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did you agree to do something as a result of today's meeting? Why?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify _____

Were some things offered to you that you would like to think about? Why?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify _____

Were there some things offered that you are definitely not interested in? Why?

Yes	No
-----	----

If no, please specify _____

What kind of financial support have you been offered through Jobcentre Plus?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Job grant		Money for childcare	
ADF		Money for training	
Nothing		Work Search Premium	
Other			

How do you feel about the financial support offered by Jobcentre Plus?

It's useful	It's ok	It's not enough
-------------	---------	-----------------

Have you been offered any help with training?

Yes	No
-----	----

Are you happy with what you have been offered?

Yes	No
-----	----

Are there some things which you did not understand or could have been explained better?

Yes	No
-----	----

As a lone parent, is there anything which you feel you need which you were not offered?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify _____

Were you happy with the answers you received if you had any questions during the meeting?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you feel that there were a number of options you were offered from which you can choose the ones you need most yourself?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you feel more confident after this meeting about being able to find work that you would be happy with?

Yes	No
-----	----

How did you feel the meeting went overall?

It went well	It went ok	It did not go well
--------------	------------	--------------------

Do you think you will be coming back to Jobcentre Plus?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify why and when _____

Marketing material

Have you seen these booklets before?

Yes	No
-----	----

(Note to interviewer – if they don't have material – show them the booklets)

If yes, where did you get the booklets from?

If you got the booklets in a meeting with the adviser, did the adviser explain the purpose of the booklets to you?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Have you had a chance to read through the booklets?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do you find it useful in any way?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

If you picked up the booklets elsewhere, did it give you an idea of which options you wanted to follow up?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do the booklets make it clear which options are available and how to get them?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Was there anything missing from the information as provided, or anything you would like to know more about?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

If yes, please specify_____

Final

Has what you have been offered met your expectations?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you think there was anything missing in the support offered?

Yes	No
-----	----

What would you change? Is there anything which you feel should be done differently?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you have any other comments or suggestions which you would like to make?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Background:

RECORD THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Sex					
Age					
Ethnic Group (note if prefer not to state)	White -British -Irish -Welsh -Scottish -Other	Black or Black British -Caribbean -African -Other Black	Asian or Asian British -Indian -Pakistani -Bangladeshi -Other Asian	Chinese or Other Ethnic Group -Chinese -Other Ethnic Group	Mixed -White and Black Caribbean -White and Black African -White and Asian -Other Mixed
Age of children					
Do you/your children have a disability that affects the type of work you can undertake?	Lone parent			Child(ren)	
Housing tenure	Home owner	Renting public Renting private		Living with family	
Any care responsibilities other than own children					
Does anyone else share the upbringing of the children with you?					
What educational skills/ qualifications including vocational training do you have?					

6.1.2 *Wave one ND+fLP Pilot: Lone parents already in employment (face to face)*

Interviewer Name:		
Jobcentre District:		
Jobcentre Office:		
Date of Interview:		
Name of NDLP adviser		
Information to be collected from LMS record:		
Lone parent name		
Lone parent contact details (please take address)		
Telephone numbers (landline and mobile numbers where possible)		
Reason for visit today:		
	Exploratory visit	
	First WFI	
	Follow up visit	
	Quarterly WFI	
	NDLP- on the programme	
	Other-describe	
In last year what are the number of adviser meetings		

Resources

Which of the following sources of income are you currently receiving?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Income Support		Housing Benefit	
Child Benefit		Council Tax Benefit	
Disability Living Allowance		Free School Meals/Milk Tokens	
Employment		Working Families Tax Credit	
Savings		Loans from Family	
Childcare Tax Credit		Maintenance/other	
Credit cards or personal loans		Other	
Private Insurance			

Employment & pre employment support

What kind of a job are you currently doing?

Please specify _____

How long have you been in work?

Started the past week	A month	Under 6 months
6months-a year	Over a year	

How many hours a week, are you working?

Part-time 15 or under	Over 16 but not 35	Full-time
-----------------------	--------------------	-----------

How do you feel about going back to work?

Happy, it is good to be back in work	It's ok	I do not feel very good about it
--------------------------------------	---------	----------------------------------

Have you seen any benefits about being back in work?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Increased confidence		Better off	
More variety in the day		Learning new skills	
Other, please specify			

How did you get the job?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Jobcentre posting		Adviser	
Jobpoint		Friend/family	
Newspaper listing		Training provider	
Other, please specify			

What do you feel helped you most in finding the job?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Adviser		Training provider	
Support from family/friends		Previous work experience	
Other, please specify			

Did you receive any financial support when looking for work?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Job grant		Money for childcare	
ADF		Money for training	
Nothing		Work Search Premium	
Other			

What difference did the additional money make? (Probe around Work Search Premium, training premiums, ADF etc)

Made a big difference, helped me go back to work	Didn't make a difference either way	Was not enough
--	-------------------------------------	----------------

Is there any support you did not get that you would have liked?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify _____

Post-employment support

Has your adviser called you since you were in work?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify how often, what you discussed and if you found the conversations helpful

How often have you come to the Jobcentre since starting work?

Have not come at all	Once	Twice or more
----------------------	------	---------------

If you have come, what was the purpose of the visit(s)?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Process change of circumstance paperwork		Get ADF money	
Discuss childcare options		Get support/advice for new job	
Other, please specify			

Have you had any financial support whilst in work?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify which type of support

Tick as appropriate ✓			
IWC		Tax credits	
ADF		Other	

If you have received IWC, please answer the following:

Has it been helpful?

Yes	No
-----	----

How have you used the extra money?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Childcare		Buy clothes for work	
Pay bills between now and when I receive first salary		Other	

Are you aware that this support is only available for one year?

Yes	No
-----	----

How do you feel about this?

A year is enough	Do not care either way	It should be available for longer
------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------------

Have you had any issues with payments?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes please specify how these have been resolved?

Any further comments on the financial support you receive?

Have you had any problems or emergencies since starting work?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did the Jobcentre Plus help in any way?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you have any additional comments? (Explore if IWEF has been used in any way or whether adviser has been able to help in any other way)

Childcare

What types of childcare are you currently using? (Probe around formal versus informal childcare)

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Family/friends		Childminder	
Children's Centre		Playgroup	
Other, please specify			

How easy was it to find suitable childcare?

Easy	Not easy but not difficult	Difficult
------	----------------------------	-----------

Has anyone helped you arrange the childcare?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did you get any financial support with childcare just before starting work?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, how was it helpful? (Explore if Childcare Assist used)

Did you ever have any meetings with childcare providers or anyone else to help you find suitable childcare?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, who were these with? When did you have them? Who arranged it? (Explore referrals to providers or discussions with local authority)

Please explain_____

Do you receive any financial assistance for childcare payments currently?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you have any comments about the level of financial support you receive for childcare?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Do you have any current concerns regarding your childcare arrangements?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Meeting with adviser

Why have you come in to talk to the adviser today?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Your current job		BOC	
Childcare		To fill out paperwork for change of circumstance	
Other, please specify		To ask for financial assistance	

What did you talk about with your adviser today?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Your current job		BOC	
Childcare		Change of circumstance	
Other, please specify		Financial assistance	

Is there anything which you feel you need as a lone parent, which you were not offered by the adviser?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Are there things which you did not understand or could have been explained better?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Do you think you will be coming back to the Jobcentre? If so why? Do you know when that will be?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, do you know when that will be?

This week	In a fortnight	Next month
In 6 months	In a year	Never

Final

Has what you discussed today met your needs/expectations?

Yes	No
-----	----

Is there any other kind of support you feel you need while in work?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Would you recommend this programme to other lone parents?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you have any other comments suggestions which you would like to make?

BACKGROUND:

RECORD THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Sex					
Age					
Ethnic Group (note if prefer not to state)	White -British -Irish -Welsh -Scottish -Other	Black or Black British -Caribbean -African -Other Black	Asian or Asian British -Indian -Pakistani -Bangladeshi -Other Asian	Chinese or Other Ethnic Group -Chinese -Other Ethnic Group	Mixed -White and Black Caribbean -White and Black African -White and Asian -Other Mixed
Age of children					
Do you/your children have a disability that affects the type of work you can undertake?	Lone parent		Child(ren)		
Housing tenure	Home owner	Renting public Renting private		Living with family	
Any care responsibilities other than own children					
Does anyone else share the upbringing of the children with you?					
What educational skills/qualifications including vocational training do you have?					

6.2.1 Wave two ND+fLP Pilot: Lone Parent Not In Work Telephone Topic Guide

Interviewer Name:	SJ	NS	JP	MH	SB	
Jobcentre District:	Wales			Scotland		
Jobcentre Office:	Welsh Office 1			Scottish Office 1		
	Welsh Office 2			Scottish Office 2		
	Welsh Office 3			Scottish Office 3		
	Welsh Office 4					
	telephone					
Date of Interview:	4th June	5th June	6th June	7th June	8th June	other
Name of NDLP adviser						
Information to be collected from LMS record:						
Lone parent name						
Lone parent contact details (please take address)						
Telephone numbers (landline and mobile numbers where possible)	8.1. Home landline					
	8.2. Work					
	8.3. Mobile					
	8.4. Other					
Reason for visit today:						
	Exploratory visit					
	First WFI					
	Follow up visit					
	Quarterly WFI					
	NDLP- on the programme					
	Other-describe					
In last year what are the number of adviser meetings	First meeting			1-3 meetings		
	4-8 meetings			8+ meetings		

Resources

Which of the following sources of income are you currently receiving?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Income Support		Housing Benefit	
Child Benefit		Council Tax Benefit	
Disability Living Allowance		Free School Meals/Milk Tokens	
Employment		Working Families Tax Credit	
Savings		Loans from Family	
Childcare Tax Credit		Maintenance/other	
Credit cards or personal loans		Other	
Private Insurance			

How long have you been receiving Income Support?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
0-6 months		1 year-5 years	
6 months-1 year		On and off for 5+ years	

Employment history

Have you worked before?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, what types of jobs have you held?

How do you feel about moving off benefits and going (back) to work?

Ready	Somewhat hesitant	Not ready
-------	-------------------	-----------

If you have concerns about returning back to work, what worries you most?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Childcare		Finding an appropriate job	
Skills		Being better off	
Caring responsibilities		ESOL issues	
Other please specify			

Plans and aspirations

If not looking for work: Is there any reason why you would rather not work right now?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Caring responsibilities		Not ready	
Childcare		ESOL issues	
Disability		Training issues	
Other please specify			

If looking for work: What sort of work are you looking for (occupation, hours, pay etc)?

Please specify _____

How are you looking for work? How have you found the process?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Jobcentre		Local newspaper and job postings	
Jobpoint		Friends/family	
Other, please specify			

What do you feel you need to help to find employment?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
More training		More Jobcentre support	
Childcare		There needs to be more jobs for LPs	
Other, please specify			

Are you receiving any support in finding employment? Who have you been able to get support from? If no, do you know where to find support?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Support from adviser		Support from training provider	
Support from family and friends		Support from other organisation	
Other, please specify			

Are there suitable job opportunities for lone parents in this area?

Yes	No	Don't know
-----	----	------------

Childcare

Do you have any concerns about using childcare?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, what are your concerns?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Cost		Feeling confident to leave my children with strangers	
Availability (hours)		Location	
Other, please specify			

Do you have family and/or friends nearby who help or can help you with childcare?

Yes	No
-----	----

If you have used childcare in the past, what types of childcare have you used?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Family/friends		Childminder	
Children's Centre		Playgroup	
Other, please specify			

Have you been offered any advice about childcare by your adviser? Was it helpful?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you feel more confident about the childcare options available to you? Why?

Yes after meeting with my adviser	The same as before I met with my adviser	I feel less confident after meeting my adviser
-----------------------------------	--	--

Meeting with adviser

Why did you come in for today's meeting?

Adviser asked me to or QWFI	I came in on my own to discuss something
-----------------------------	--

How often do you come in?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Fortnightly or more		Once a month	
Once every 6 months		Once a year	
Other, please specify			

How do you feel about coming in at this frequency?

It's a good frequency	It's ok	I prefer to come in less
-----------------------	---------	--------------------------

You have just had meeting with an adviser, what did you discuss?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Job search		BOC	
Childcare		Training	
Other, please specify			

Was today's meeting to follow up on anything specific?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did you get an Action Plan to take away with you?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did you agree to do something as a result of today's meeting? Why?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Were some things offered to you that you would like to think about? Why?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Were there some things offered that you are definitely not interested in? Why?

Yes	No
-----	----

If no, please specify_____

What kind of financial support have you been offered through Jobcentre Plus?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Job grant		Money for childcare	
ADF		Money for training	
Nothing		Other	

How do you feel about the financial support offered by Jobcentre Plus?

It's useful	It's ok	It's not enough
-------------	---------	-----------------

Have you been offered any advice with training today?

Yes	No
-----	----

Have you been offered any advice with training previously?

Yes	No
-----	----

Are you happy with what you have been offered?

Yes	No
-----	----

Are there some things which you did not understand or could have been explained better?

Yes	No
-----	----

As a lone parent, is there anything which you feel you need which you were not offered?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Were you happy with the answers you received if you had any questions during the meeting?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you feel that there were a number of options you were offered from which you can choose the ones you need most yourself?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you feel more confident after this meeting about being able to find work that you would be happy with?

Yes	No
-----	----

How did you feel the meeting went overall?

It went well	It went ok	It did not go well
--------------	------------	--------------------

Do you think you will be coming back to Jobcentre Plus?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify why and when_____

Marketing material

Have you seen these booklets before?

Yes	No
-----	----

(Note to interviewer – if they don't have material – show them the booklets)

If yes, where did you get the booklets from?

Jobcentre Adviser	Pick it up myself in the Jobcentre
Children's Centre	Other, please specify

If you got the booklets in a meeting with the adviser, did the adviser explain the purpose of the booklets to you?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Have you had a chance to read through the booklets?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do you find it useful in any way?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

If you picked up the booklets elsewhere, did it give you an idea of which options you wanted to follow up?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do the booklets make it clear which options are available and how to get them?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Was there anything missing from the information as provided, or anything you would like to know more about?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

If yes, please specify_____

Final

Has what you have been offered met your expectations?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you think there was anything missing in the support offered?

Yes	No
-----	----

What would you change? Is there anything which you feel should be done differently?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you have any other comments or suggestions which you would like to make?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Background:

RECORD THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Sex	Male			Female	
Age	0-25	26-25	36-45	46-55	55+
Ethnic Group (note if prefer not to state)	White -British -Irish -Welsh -Scottish -Other	Black or Black British -Caribbean -African -Other Black	Asian or Asian British -Indian -Pakistani -Bangladeshi -Other Asian	Chinese or Other Ethnic Group -Chinese -Other Ethnic Group	Mixed -White and Black Caribbean -White and Black African -White and Asian -Other Mixed
Age of children	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-11 years	11-18 years	18+ years
Number of children of each age					
Do you/your children have a disability that affects the type of work you can undertake?	Lone parent			Child(ren)	
Housing tenure	Home owner	Renting public Renting private		Living with family	
Any care responsibilities other than own children	Relative	Friend		other	
Does anyone else share the upbringing of the children with you?	Relative	Friend		other	
What educational skills/qualifications including vocational training do you have?	GCSEs/O-levels		A-levels		
	NVQ		Degree		
	Basic skills		ESOL		
	Other				

'Thank you very much for taking part in this interview today. We would like to know about the Jobcentre services that you use in the future, and would therefore like to phone you in a few months and see how you are getting on. This will help us learn more about how to improve services for lone parents and whether certain programmes of support are helpful or not. If this is okay, could you please check the phone number I have for you is correct, and sign below to indicate we may call you.'

Signed..... Date.....

6.2.2 Wave two ND+fLP Pilot: Lone Parent In Work Interview Telephone Topic Guide

Interviewer Name:	SJ	NS	JP	MH	SB	
Jobcentre District:	Wales			Scotland		
Jobcentre Office:	Welsh Office 1			Scottish Office 1		
	Welsh Office 2			Scottish Office 2		
	Welsh Office 3			Scottish Office 3		
	Welsh Office 4					
	telephone					
Date of Interview:	4th Jun e	5th Jun e	6th Jun e	7th Jun e	8th Jun e	other
Name of NDLP adviser						
Information to be collected from LMS record:						
Lone parent name						
Lone parent contact details (please take address)						
Telephone numbers (landline and mobile numbers where possible)	8.1. Home landline					
	8.2. Work					
	8.3. Mobile					
	8.4. other					
Reason for visit today:						
	Exploratory visit					
	First WFI					
	Follow up visit					
	Quarterly WFI					
	NDLP- on the programme					
	Other-describe					
In last year what are the number of adviser meetings	First meeting			1-3 meetings		
	4-8 meetings			8+ meetings		

Resources

Which of the following sources of income are you currently receiving?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Income Support		Housing Benefit	
Child Benefit		Council Tax Benefit	
Disability Living Allowance		Free School Meals/Milk Tokens	
Employment		Working Families Tax Credit	
Savings		Loans from Family	
Childcare Tax Credit		Maintenance/other	
Credit cards or personal loans		Other	
Private Insurance			

Employment & pre employment support

What kind of a job are you currently doing?

Please specify _____

How long have you been in work?

Started the past week	A month	Under 6 months
6months-a year	Over a year	

How many hours a week, are you working?

1-15 hours (mini job)	16-30 hours (part-time)	30+ hours (full-time)
-----------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------

How do you feel about going back to work?

Happy, it is good to be back in work	It's ok	I do not feel very good about it
--------------------------------------	---------	----------------------------------

Have you seen any benefits about being back in work?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Increased confidence		Better off	
More variety in the day		Learning new skills	
A social network		Other, please specify	

How did you get the job?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Jobcentre posting		Adviser	
Jobpoint		Friend/family	
Newspaper listing		Training provider	
Other, please specify			

What do you feel helped you most in finding the job?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Adviser		Training provider	
Support from family/friends		Previous work experience	
Other, please specify			

Did you receive any financial support when looking for work?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Job grant		Money for childcare	
ADF		Money for training	
Work Search Premium		Nothing	
Other			

What difference did the additional money make? (Probe around training premiums, ADF etc)

Made a big difference, helped me go back to work	Didn't make a difference either way	Was not enough
--	-------------------------------------	----------------

Is there any support you did not get that you would have liked?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify _____

Post-employment support

Has your Adviser called you since you were in work?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify how often, what you discussed and if you found the conversations helpful _____

How often have you come to the Jobcentre since starting work?

This is my first time	Once	Twice or more
-----------------------	------	---------------

If you have come, what was the purpose of the visit(s)?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Process change of circumstance paperwork		Get ADF money	
Discuss childcare options		Get support/advice for new job	
IWEF		Other, please specify	

Have you had any financial support whilst in work?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify which type of support

Tick as appropriate ✓			
In Work Credit		Tax Credits	
Advisor Discretionary Fund		In Work Emergency Fund	
Other			

If you have received ADF, please answer the following:

Did you know about this fund before you went to the Jobcentre on that visit?

Yes	No
-----	----

What was the ADF used for

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Interview clothes		Travel arrangements	
Childcare		Other, please specify	

If you have received IWC, please answer the following:

Has it been helpful?

Yes	No
-----	----

How have you used the extra money?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Childcare		Buy clothes for work	
Pay bills between now and when I receive first salary		Savings	
Other			

Are you aware that this support is only available for one year?

Yes	No
-----	----

How do you feel about this?

A year is enough	Do not care either way	It should be available for longer
------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------------

Have you had any issues with payments?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes please specify how these have been resolved?

Any further comments on the financial support you receive?

Have you had any problems or emergencies since starting work?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did the Jobcentre Plus help in any way?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did you know about IWEF before you contacted the Jobcentre when you had your emergency?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you have any additional comments? (Explore if IWEF has been used in any way or whether adviser has been able to help in any other way)

Childcare

What types of childcare are you currently using? (Probe around formal versus informal childcare)

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Family/friends		Childminder	
Children's Centre		Playgroup	
Other, please specify			

How easy was it to find suitable childcare?

Easy	Not easy but not difficult	Difficult
------	----------------------------	-----------

Has anyone helped you arrange the childcare?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, who?

Jobcentre Adviser	Friend/Family
Other professional	Other

Did you get any financial support with childcare just before starting work?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, how was it helpful? (Explore if Childcare Assist used)

Did you ever have any meetings with childcare providers or anyone else to help you find suitable childcare?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, who were these with? When did you have them? Who arranged it? (Explore referrals to providers or discussions with local authority)

Please explain_____

Do you receive any financial assistance for childcare payments currently?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you have any comments about the level of financial support you receive for childcare?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Do you have any current concerns regarding your childcare arrangements?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Meeting with adviser

Why have you come in to talk to the adviser today?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Your current job		BOC	
Childcare		To fill out paperwork for change of circumstance	
Other, please specify		To ask for financial assistance	

What did you talk about with your adviser today?

Tick as appropriate ✓			
Your current job		BOC	
Childcare		Change of circumstance	
Other, please specify		Financial assistance	

Is there anything which you feel you need as a lone parent, which you were not offered by the adviser?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Are there things which you did not understand or could have been explained better?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Do you think you will be coming back to the Jobcentre? If so why? Do you know when that will be?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, do you know when that will be?

This week	In a fortnight	Next month
In 6 months	In a year	Never
Only when I next need help	Other	

Final

Has what you discussed today met your needs/expectations?

Yes	No
-----	----

Is there any other kind of support you feel you need while in work?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify_____

Would you recommend this programme to other lone parents?

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you have any other comments suggestions which you would like to make?

BACKGROUND:

RECORD THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Sex	Male			Female	
Age	0-25	26-25	36-45	46-55	55+
Ethnic Group (note if prefer not to state)	White -British -Irish -Welsh -Scottish -Other	Black or Black British -Caribbean -African -Other Black	Asian or Asian British -Indian -Pakistani -Bangladeshi -Other Asian	Chinese or Other Ethnic Group -Chinese -Other Ethnic Group	Mixed -White and Black Caribbean -White and Black African -White and Asian -Other Mixed
Age of children	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-11 years	11-18 years	18+ years
Number of children of each age					
Do you/your children have a disability that affects the type of work you can undertake?	Lone parent			Child(ren)	
Housing tenure	Home owner	Renting public Renting private		Living with family	
Any care responsibilities other than own children	Relative	Friend		other	
Does anyone else share the upbringing of the children with you?	Relative	Friend		other	
What educational skills/qualifications including vocational training do you have?	GCSEs/O-levels		A-levels		
	NVQ		Degree		
	Basic skills		ESOL		
	Other				

'Thank you very much for taking part in this interview today. We would like to know about the Jobcentre services that you use in the future, and would therefore like to phone you in a few months and see how you are getting on. This will help us learn more about how to improve services for lone parents and whether certain programmes of support are helpful or not. If this is okay, could you please check the phone number I have for you is correct, and sign below to indicate we may call you.'

Signed..... Date.....

6.3.1 Wave three ND+fLP Pilot: Lone Parent Not In Employment Telephone Topic Guide

GHK are conducting a survey on behalf of Jobcentre Plus to find out what you think about the package of options available for providing support to lone parents who might need help in finding work.

You may remember speaking to us back in (month of previous contact and location of Jobcentre office if face to face). You previously said that it would be okay for us to call you to follow up on some of the things we asked you before and see how you have been getting on.

All of your answers will be treated with confidence, any claims to benefits you receive will not be affected in any way, whether now or in the future. This survey will take about 10 minutes of your time, are you happy to take part?

Does the lone parent agree to be interviewed?	Yes	No
If no, please explain why not e.g. no longer on pilot, not happy to take part, cannot get in contact with customer etc.		

Background

Name of interviewer	SB	MH
Jobcentre Plus district	Wales	Scotland
Jobcentre Plus office	Welsh Office 1	Scottish Office 1
	Welsh Office 2	Scottish Office 2
	Welsh Office 3	Scottish Office 3
	Welsh Office 4	
Date of previous interview(s)		
Lone parent name		
Date of interview		
Lone parent contact details	Home landline	
	Work	
	Mobile	
Duration on ND+fLP		
Start date on ND+fLP		
Number of PA meetings		

If working at previous interview

When we last spoke to you, you were in work, can you tell me when you left work	
Can you describe your reason for leaving work	Personal circumstances changed and I had to give up work
	I did not like the people I worked with
	I was unable to get to work (transport issues)
	My hours changed and I was no longer able to work those times
	Other:

Future work

Are you currently looking to go back to work?	Yes	No
If no, why not	Children too young	
	I don't want to work	
	Other:	
How do you feel about going back to work?	Positive	Neutral
Do you have concerns about returning to work?	Yes	No
If yes, what are they? Is this something you feel JCP can help you with?		
If you are thinking about going back to work, why do you want to?		
What type of work are you looking for? Occupation, pay, etc.		
What hours do you want to work?	Part-time	Full-time
Note any conditions e.g. term time only, while children are in school etc.		

Has JCP offered you any training?	Yes	No
If yes, what type and do you want to take it up?		
What do you feel will help you most in finding a job		

Training

Have you attended any training to help you move into work?	Yes	No
If yes, what training did you attend and who organised the training?		
Do you think the training will be helpful for you to get a job?	Yes	No
If no, would you have wanted training?	Yes	No
If yes, what type?		

The Package

Which pilot options has the lone parent taken up? Be aware that the lone parent may not know the name, you may need to describe	In Work Credit		Work Search Premium Be aware this is no longer available, but they may have received it previously	
	In Work Support		In Work Emergency Fund	
	More Voluntary Contact		Flexible Provision	
	Discovery Event		Childcare Assist	
Do you feel that the support is helpful in getting you ready for work?	Yes		No	
If yes which ones were specifically helpful?				
If no, what else would you have wanted?				

Childcare

Do you have any childcare issues that need addressing before you could go into work?	Yes	No
If yes has JCP been helpful in resolving them?	Yes	No
If yes, please describe how		
If no, please explain how you would address the childcare issues		
Is there anything else you would have wanted with respect to childcare?		

Overall

Would you recommend the help you have received from JCP to other lone parents?	Yes	No
If no, why?		
Do you have any other comments you would like to make?		

Thank you very much for taking part in this interview today.

6.3.2 Wave three ND+fLP Pilot: Lone Parent In Employment Telephone Topic Guide

GHK are conducting a survey on behalf of Jobcentre Plus to find out what you think about the package of options available for providing support to lone parents who might need help in finding work.

You may remember speaking to us back in (month of previous contact and location of Jobcentre office if face to face). You previously said that it would be okay for us to call you to follow up on some of the things we asked you before and see how you have been getting on.

All of your answers will be treated with confidence, any claims to benefits you receive will not be affected in any way, whether now or in the future. This survey will take about 10 minutes of your time, are you happy to take part?

Does the lone parent agree to be interviewed?	Yes		No	
If no, please explain why not e.g. no longer on pilot, not happy to take part, can not get in contact with customer etc.				

Background

Name of interviewer	SB	MH
Jobcentre Plus district	Wales	Scotland
Jobcentre Plus office	Welsh Office 1	Scottish Office 1
	Welsh Office 2	Scottish Office 2
	Welsh Office 3	Scottish Office 3
	Welsh Office 4	
Date of previous interview(s)		
Lone parent name		
Date of interview		
Lone parent contact details	Home landline	
	Work	
	Mobile	
Duration on ND+fLP		
Start date on ND+fLP		
Number of PA meetings		

6.3.2 Wave three ND+fLP Pilot: Lone Parent In Employment Telephone Topic Guide

GHK are conducting a survey on behalf of Jobcentre Plus to find out what you about the package of options available for providing support to lone parents might need help in finding work.

You may remember speaking to us back in (month of previous contact and loc of Jobcentre office if face to face). You previously said that it would be okay for call you to follow up on some of the things we asked you before and see how have been getting on.

All of your answers will be treated with confidence, any claims to benefits receive will not be affected in any way, whether now or in the future. This survey take about 10 minutes of your time, are you happy to take part?

Does the lone parent agree to be interviewed?	Yes		No	
If no, please explain why not e.g. no longer on pilot, not happy to take part, can not get in contact with customer etc.				

Background

Name of interviewer	SB	MH
Jobcentre Plus district	Wales	Scotland
Jobcentre Plus office	Welsh Office 1	Scottish Office 1
	Welsh Office 2	Scottish Office 2
	Welsh Office 3	Scottish Office 3
	Welsh Office 4	
Date of previous interview(s)		
Lone parent name		
Date of interview		
Lone parent contact details	Home landline	
	Work	
	Mobile	
Duration on ND+fLP		
Start date on ND+fLP		
Number of PA meetings		

Training

Did you attend any training before you went into work?	Yes	No
If yes, what training did you attend and who organised the training?		
Do you think the training helped you to get a job?	Yes	No
If no, would you have wanted training?	Yes	No
If yes, what type?		

The Package

Which pilot options has the lone parent taken up? Be aware that the lone parent may not know the name, you may need to describe	In Work Credit		Work Search Premium Be aware this is no longer available, but they may have received it previously	
	In Work Support		In Work Emergency Fund	
	More Voluntary Contact		Flexible Provision	
	Discovery Event		Childcare Assist	
Do you feel that the support is helpful in getting you ready for work?	Yes		No	
If yes which ones were specifically helpful?				
If no, what else would you have wanted?				

Childcare

Did you have any childcare issues that needed addressing before you could go into work?	Yes	No
If yes has JCP been helpful in resolving them?	Yes	no
If yes, please describe how		
If no, please explain how you addressed the childcare issues		
Is there anything else you would have wanted with respect to childcare?		

Overall

Would you recommend the help you have received from JCP to other lone parents?	Yes	No
If no, why?		
Do you have any other comments you would like to make?		

Thank you very much for taking part in this interview today.

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