

**Pathways to Work Policy
Review**

Review of support for disabled customers and customers with a health condition

Evidence gathering exercise: Pathways to Work programme

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Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions is undertaking a review of the support we provide to disabled customers and customers with health conditions on ESA, IB or JSA. The Review represents a step towards the Government's vision for a system where each individual gets the help they need, tailored around their needs and circumstances rather than the benefit they receive.

As part of this process, we are reviewing the existing Pathways to Work programme which provides back to work support for ESA and IB customers. This evidence gathering exercise seeks to collate views on Pathways to Work from customers, representative organisations, service providers and employers.

About this exercise

Who it is aimed at

This exercise is aimed at customers of Pathways to Work, past and present, disability organisations, employers, Jobcentre Plus staff and current Pathways to Work providers.

Purpose of the exercise

As part of the Government's review of the support we provide to disabled customers and customers with health conditions, we are seeking views on the Pathways to Work programme and what future provision might look like.

Scope of exercise

This exercise applies to England, Wales and Scotland.

Duration of the exercise

The exercise begins on 4 January 2010 and runs until 29 January 2010.

The Government Code of Practice on Consultation recommends a minimum 12 week consultation period for public consultations, unless there are good reasons for a limited consultation period. In this case, we are not running a formal consultation process at this stage, and therefore have not set a 12 week deadline. Rather, we are gathering evidence on existing provision and will be engaging further with stakeholders once more detailed options have been formulated in early 2010.

How to respond to this exercise

Please send your consultation responses to:

Helen McDaniel, Pathways to Work Policy Team

Department for Work and Pensions

2nd Floor Caxton House

Tothill Street

London

SW1H 9NA

Email Helen.mcdaniel@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Please ensure your response reaches us by 28 January 2010.

When responding, please state whether you are doing so as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents, and where applicable, how the views of members were assembled. We will acknowledge your response.

Other ways of getting involved

We want to get views from as broad a range of people as possible about this issue. We have already involved people through a small series of engagement events in November and plan to hold further events early in 2010, offering more detail around our proposals as they are developed.

Queries about the content of this document

Please direct any queries about the subject matter of this consultation to:

Helen McDaniel

Department for Work and Pensions

2nd Floor Caxton House

Tothill Street

London

SW1H 9NA

Phone 0207 449 5363

Email Helen.mcdaniel@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

How we engage

Freedom of information

The information you send us may need to be passed to colleagues within the Department for Work and Pensions, published in a summary of responses received and referred to in the published consultation report.

All information contained in your response, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. By providing personal information for the purposes of the public consultation exercise, it is understood that you consent to its disclosure and publication. If this is not the case, you should limit any personal information provided, or remove it completely. If you want the information in your response to the consultation to be kept confidential, you should explain why as part of your response, although we cannot guarantee to do this.

To find out more about the general principles of Freedom of Information and how it is applied within DWP, please contact:

Central Freedom of Information Team
The Adelphi
1-11, John Adam Street
London WC2N 6HT

Freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

The Central Fol team cannot advise on specific consultation exercises, only on Freedom of Information issues. More information about the Freedom of Information Act can be found at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/freedom-of-information>

Feedback on the engagement process

We value your feedback on how well we engage. If you have any comments on the process of this exercise (as opposed to the issues raised) please contact our Consultation Coordinator:

Roger Pugh
DWP Consultation Coordinator
1st floor, Crown House
2, Ferensway
Hull HU2 8NF

Phone 01482 609571

roger.pugh@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Please make any suggestions as to how the process of engagement could be improved further.

If you have any requirements that we need to meet to enable you to comment, please let us know.

Evidence gathering exercise – Pathways to Work strategic health check

We will aim to publish proposals on the future of Pathways to Work provision in Spring 2010. The report will outline the action that we will take as a result of your comments alongside all other evidence we have collated.

Background

Customers claiming incapacity benefits (Incapacity Benefit or Employment and Support Allowance) receive back to work support from the Pathways to Work programme. Pathways to Work provides support for claimants of incapacity benefits and Employment and Support Allowance to help them return to work. Pathways to Work has a flexible menu of different support options tailored to the needs of each customer that can include Work-focused Interviews, help finding and applying for a job, training and help to manage a health condition or disability (Condition Management Programmes). Pathways to Work can also provide financial assistance (Return to Work Credit) for those who find employment.¹

On 13 October the Secretary of State announced a review of the employment support we provide to disabled customers and customers with health conditions. The introduction of ESA in October 2008 marked a new beginning in the way we support people out of work due to a health condition or disability. A new benefit requires a new system of back-to-work support so it is right that we keep Pathways to Work under review, to make sure customers get the right support at the right time.

Statistics and reports published on 27 October added to the suite of evidence on Pathways and will be taken into account as part of the Department's review of the employment support we provide to this customer group. In particular, the report on JCP Pathways points to a lower employment impact than results from the initial pilots suggested. It is clear, however, that customers and staff welcome the support Pathways provides and feel it makes a real difference in helping customers move into work.

As part of our evidence gathering for the review, we have undertaken a number of workshops with our delivery partners and external stakeholders, but would welcome evidence from a wider pool of organisations and individuals. Although the review covers support for disabled customers and customers with a health condition on both incapacity benefits and job seekers allowance, this document relates specifically to the support we provide to incapacity benefits within Pathways to Work.

In this document we outline themes from most recent evidence and are keen to gather your thoughts on current and future provision.

¹ Further information about Pathways to Work policy can be found at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/pathways-to-work/>

A vision for the future

- **Our current proposal** - that the focus of our policy development should be moving to a simpler, stronger, more personalised model of support where customers are given support based on need, not what benefit they are on. Our future support should place rights and responsibilities at the heart of the relationship between customer and personal adviser, and it must deliver value for money.
- **What we would like from you** – Your thoughts on what works for this customer group. We will use this information and all other evidence when reviewing the support Pathways provides. We want to build in the most effective policies and delivery models to help disabled people and those with health conditions back into meaningful employment.
- Our key principles and plans for future support are outlined in the White Paper published on 15 December. We will be publishing more detailed proposals in Spring 2010.

Research Summary

Pathways – previous and emerging evidence

- An independent study into the impact of the original pilots found an employment impact of around 7 percentage points. This means that people in Pathways areas were around 25% more likely to be in a job after 18 months than in non-Pathways areas.²
- A report published on 27th October found that when Pathways was extended to further Jobcentre Plus areas, no employment impact was found.³
- However these two studies are not directly comparable: the pilots study was based on IB **enquiries** (not all of whom would have gone on to make a claim) with the latter study was based on IB new claims.
- Customer feedback on the experience of Pathways remains positive

Qualitative evidence

- Research entitled “Provider-led Pathways: Experiences and Views of Early Implementation” was carried out by the Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University of York.⁴ It found that Pathways:
 - Is challenging people to think differently about their employment prospects;
 - is contributing to people’s progress and movements into work, by providing encouragement, financial support and access to other helpful provision; and
 - Some problems were identified that could be considered as ‘teething problems’ in that they were likely to diminish with increased knowledge and experience.

² For the full report, please see http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_435.asp

³ The full research report on the impact of Pathways can be accessed at http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_601.asp

⁴ The full qualitative report can be found at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep595.pdf>

Work Capability Assessment (WCA) performance

On 13 October the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced that the WCA was preventing many disabled people becoming trapped on out of work benefits and instead being offered support to get back into employment.⁵

The figures show that of the 193,800 people who made a claim for ESA between October 2008 and February 2009:

- 5 per cent who are the most severely ill or disabled people are going into the support group, and will not be expected to undertake any work related activity, instead being offered voluntary help to manage their condition.
- 36 per cent are found fit for work and not eligible for ESA.⁶
- 11 per cent are found eligible for ESA with work related activity (such as regular advisor interviews) to help them prepare to return to work in future.
- 38 per cent stopped claiming benefit before the assessment on them was completed
- 10 per cent were still being assessed as the statistics were compiled.

This means that the make up of the ESA customer group is changing, and more customers with health conditions will be actively seeking work in future. We need to ensure that the support we provide meets the needs of all customers.

⁵ These results can be found in full at http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/esa_wca.asp

⁶ Under the old IB system an estimated 17pc were found fit for work, however as the assessment was carried out after six months rather than three months, more of those with low levels of health problems had already returned to the labour market after only a short term claim.

Our thoughts...

Conclusions and response

- ESA is changing our customer base now going on Pathways.
- Pathways is less effective than we first thought.
- The programme hasn't been as successful against our most important objective as we had hoped – to help people into work.
- Although the cost per person is not high, the large number of customers makes Pathways one of our most expensive programmes with projected spending from 2008-11 of around £1bn.
- In line with the Government's vision for future delivery of support to our customers, we need to ensure that all customers receive the support they need, regardless of the benefit they are on.
- We therefore need urgently to explore options for reform. The Secretary of State has requested a review of existing provision.

Our questions to you....

- 1) In your opinion, what are the three most effective elements of existing Pathways provision?
- 2) Conversely, what do you feel are the three least effective aspects of the current Pathways programme?
- 3) What would you like to see in a revised Pathways to Work programme?

We will be considering all submissions alongside other emerging evidence when formulating options for future delivery of Pathways to Work. These questions have already been considered by stakeholders attending workshops at the Department for Work and Pensions in October 2009.