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Ethnic Minority Outreach:
An evaluation

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Abbreviations

CMHN	Community mental health nurse
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPN	Community psychiatric nurse
DI	Disability Insurance
DIS	Disability Insurance System
DSS	Department of Social Security
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
HCP	Healthcare Professional
ICPC	International Classification for Primary Care
MOC	Medical Observation Centre
OHCP	Other Healthcare Professional
OHP	Occupational health physician
OHSS	Occupational Health and Safety Services
OP	Occupational health care physician
PCA	Personal Capability Assessment
PCT	Primary Care Trust
RTW	Return to Work
SBA	Sickness Benefits Act
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
SSP	Statutory Sick Pay
TDI	Temporary Disability Insurance

Summary

The EMO pilot started in April 2002. As part of New Deal Next Phase, it was designed to be implemented through a range of projects located within communities, and to work with local Jobcentres and other providers or agencies to respond to a diverse range of needs through various provisions. In summary, these have been designated as:

- outreach based provision (approach 1);
- employer focused provision (approach 2); and
- positive action training (approach 3).

Projects were invited to design and submit bids which would address different aspects or combinations of these approaches, and to specify the ethnic minority groups which they anticipated working with.

PSI's evaluation covered the first two years of EMO, and involved quantitative analysis of MI data on participants and employers, and qualitative depth interviews with participants, providers and other stakeholders. Twenty EMO providers were sampled for the qualitative research. Interviews with project managers were carried out in early autumn 2002, winter 2002 and winter 2003. The evaluation included 148 initial depth interviews with clients, chosen to be representative of the range of people using the provision. Interviews with other stakeholders included front-line Jobcentre Plus staff, employers, and referral agencies.

For the five projects using Approach 2 methods, 271 employers were recorded on the database to March 2004. These were typically small businesses (50 employees or less). Projects developed a working relationship with 53 per cent of employers and remained in contact with 88 per cent of these. For more than half the employers, data on employment take-up was missing. Where recorded, 26 per cent of employers had taken on an EMO client.

For the 18 projects using Approach 1 and/or Approach 3 methods 3,962 participants were recorded on the database. 58 per cent were Asian or Asian British, 44 per cent Indian and 24 per cent Black or Black British. Data on benefit status, qualifications

and time since last employment, when entering EMO was missing for around half the participants. Where recorded, half the participants did not claim benefit and 31 per cent claimed JSA. Around half had no qualifications whilst nine per cent had a qualification at NVQ Level 4 or 5. Nearly half of participants had worked in the six months prior to EMO entry and only one in six had not worked for more than two years. 34 per cent of participants were recorded as referred to Jobcentre Plus, 12 per cent had an LMS record established, five per cent accessed Jobcentre Plus provision, seven per cent started training and 26 per cent started work.

In terms of the qualitative research, Pakistani and Indian participants together made up over a third of the sample, while one in four were Black, this group consisting almost equally of Caribbean and Africans. Nearly all of those defining themselves as 'Other' were Turkish or Kurdish. At first interview, over two-thirds of participants were unemployed. Of those in paid employment, half were working part-time. Around half of the sample was registered with Jobcentre Plus.

Individual work histories and profiles varied considerably, and ranged from those with high-level qualifications and recent work experience to people with few or redundant skills who had not worked for many years. Some participants who had worked for many years in poorly paid 'ethnic enclave' employment to cope with ESOL needs were anxious to change direction. Most participants had positive work orientations, but not all were prepared to take the first job available, as some wished to focus on longer-term goals. Participants had mixed feelings about Jobcentre Plus, identifying positive instances of support and guidance, but also expressing dissatisfaction with some elements of the service.

In order to sample individuals for the longitudinal interviews, and to understand their progress relative to their initial employment position, participants were divided into three broad groups, representing a continuum of distance from the labour market. **Group A, furthest from the labour market** included those who had come to the UK as adults, the majority having at least some ESOL needs, and some UK-born participants without work experience. **Group C, closest to the labour market**, consisted of people with current or recent work experience. **Group B, the intermediate group**, was heterogeneous, and included people with qualifications and few obvious barriers to work. None were UK-born and for the majority English was a second language, although many spoke English fluently.

In terms of distance travelled, those in **Group A** made tangible but often rather limited progress towards work, involving improvements in basic skills and self-efficacy. Only one person in this group entered employment. Those in **Group B** all moved closer to the labour market, and many found jobs. Only one person in this group who was actively seeking work did not find a job. **Group C** participants showed least change in their employability or orientation to work, since they were already relatively skilled and highly motivated to work. Most were in work, by the time of their final interview, although this was not always secure employment.

Group A participants were severely disadvantaged by their ESOL needs, especially where they were older, and had little formal education. EMO providers helped people begin to address these issues, and go on to engage with mainstream provision. **Group B** participants were often combining short-term jobs with training to help them realise longer-term employment goals. EMO projects provided training for some of this group, and helped others find work. **Group C** participants generally had marketable skills, but nonetheless benefited from EMO providers' specialist advice, especially if they had relatively little work experience.

Approach 1 and 3 providers engaged in a wide variety of strategies to recruit participants. Both innovative uses of technology (SMS texts, Internet, TV and radio advertising) and more traditional outreach techniques (via local markets and *melas*, job fairs, home visits) were effective in reaching those who had not previously made use of Jobcentre Plus services. Workers with community language skills were an important factor in success. Indian and Pakistani women made up the largest groups which had not previously been in contact with the jobcentre. Approach 2 providers offered a variety of services, including diversity training, consultancy on diversity issues, and subsidised work placements. Some projects not funded for approach 2 also engaged in similar activities, since they perceived these as essential to achieve other EMO targets.

Many approach 1 and 3 providers were working with people some considerable distance from the labour market and found it difficult to achieve job outcomes in a short timeframe, but reported rapid improvements in participants' confidence and soft skills. Over time, a pressure to achieve job outcomes meant that projects tended to prioritise those closer to the labour market. Similarly, by the second year of the pilot, approach 2 providers tended to be working with employers most receptive to diversity issues.

Projects, especially those new to working for Jobcentre Plus, reported a number of implementation problems in the first year, including difficulties with the paperwork, concerns regarding the eligibility of some clients, and staffing issues. While some of these problems had been resolved by the second year, others persisted throughout the initial two years. Providers reported varying relationships with local Jobcentre Plus offices. There were some strong and positive instances of co-operative working, but overall, awareness of the initiative was regarded as low, and projects had not always found it easy to resolve queries on specific issues.

Jobcentre Plus staff reported mixed views on working with EMO providers. Some providers described working alongside Jobcentre Plus staff to identify customers who needed additional support. Others had found it more difficult to establish good working relationships, sometimes due to differing role expectations. Referrals to Jobcentre Plus from EMO providers were seen to have fallen in the second year; in some cases this was due to improved direct access by clients. Most employers who had contact with a provider had positive experiences, but few had any sense of EMO as a distinctive initiative. Referral agencies had a variety of relationships with

providers. While some were working in close partnership, others were simply a venue for job fairs or a conduit for publicity. Agencies particularly valued services for groups with unmet needs, and access to vacancies at community sites. From the providers' point of view, working with trusted local organisations gave them access to communities they might otherwise have taken longer to reach.

EMO had a major impact in increasing ethnic minorities' awareness of employment and training opportunities, especially among Indian and Pakistani women. The language and outreach skills of EMO workers were crucial in reaching these groups. There was increased use of Jobcentre Plus services, but not all EMO clients were willing to register with Jobcentre Plus, and some were already registered, but not making full use of the services on offer, so that not all this work generated outcome payments. The Ethnic Minorities Flexible Fund may allow this valuable work to continue.

EMO helped people move closer to the labour market, but those with multiple problems remained at a considerable disadvantage. EMO also helped people into work, but it tended to be those out of work for the shortest periods who generated employment outcomes. For those facing significant barriers, finding work often took a year or more, and did not generate outcome payments. This requires addressing to provide incentives to work with the hardest to help.

There were some issues common to almost all EMO providers. These included capacity issues, implementation problems and issues relating to the administration and management of the pilot. Many of these have now been addressed, but some affected delivery for most of the initial two years. Approach 1 and 3 providers were anxious to continue working with people furthest from the labour market, but needed additional outcome measures to make this financially viable. Approach 2 providers felt that they needed links with clients, in order to attract employers. Those providing diversity and consultancy training, without a client base, found it harder to recruit employers, and this provision also sat oddly within a mainly customer-facing pilot.

Introduction

Background to the EMO pilot

The Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) Ethnic Minority Outreach (EMO) initiative was introduced in April 2002, with initial funding running for a two-year period. £15 million was earmarked to support the service. The initiative aimed to support jobless people from ethnic minority groups who needed help in making the transition into employment. Employment rates for individuals from ethnic minority communities are substantially lower than for the white population, and research has suggested that the New Deal has been less effective with ethnic minority groups than for white groups (Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2000; Moody, 2002; Bryson *et al.*, 2000). EMO was intended to contribute to a narrowing of this gap by engaging people, moving them closer to the labour market and promoting higher employment rates within ethnic minority communities.

During the first two years of the pilot, the EMO service was offered in the five regions where it is estimated 75% of working age ethnic minority adults live: Greater London, the West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, and the East Midlands., and to work with local Jobcentres and other providers or agencies to respond to a diverse range of needs through various provisions. In summary, these have been designated as:

- outreach based provision (approach 1);
- employer focused provision (approach 2); and
- positive action training (approach 3).

Projects were invited to design and submit bids which would address different aspects or combinations of these approaches, and to specify the ethnic minority groups which they anticipated working with.

Following the Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) call for projects to bid for EMO, 52 proposals were funded to start providing EMO in April 2002. Projects were asked to select a series of targets or outcomes to reach each year, by which their 'success' was measured. These were relatively standardised in comparison to the

diverse range of work being undertaken by local providers. They generally included indicators such as the numbers of clients entering paid employment, numbers of referrals onto accredited training, and numbers of clients subsequently registered with Jobcentre Plus.

Structure of the report

This report covers all aspects of the evaluation. Chapter 1 is a literature review. Here the labour market profile of ethnic minority groups is outlined followed by a discussion of area factors and discrimination that impact on labour market outcomes. Barriers to labour market participation for particular ethnic minority groups are then discussed followed by a review of international initiatives that are comparable to EMO.

Chapter 2 sets out the methods used to conduct the evaluation in some detail, paying particular attention to research issues pertinent to these client groups, such as addressing language needs, and the challenges of securing longitudinal participation from vulnerable groups in a labour market evaluation and from groups such as employers.

Chapter 3 introduces the projects sampled as case studies of the EMO pilot, setting out the range of different kinds of provisions and client groups that they covered, and exploring the issues they faced in implementing EMO.

Chapter 4 covers other agencies' perceptions of EMO. This includes employers whose experiences have impacted upon EMO projects and contrasts their experiences, against those of Jobcentres that maintained more formalised relationships with projects.

Chapter 5 provides a detailed descriptive analysis of the Management Information (MI) data. Here the profile of EMO participants is considered along with measures of EMO outcomes.

Chapter 6 provides further detail about the project participants, a description of participant characteristics is provided together with some background about their work histories and orientations to work, followed by an exploration of their use and perceptions of the Jobcentre Plus.

Chapter 7 examines the kinds of barriers that have made it difficult for participants to secure sustained employment.

Chapter 8 introduces the longitudinal dimension to the research, using the repeat interviews with clients to assess the impact of EMO on them, and the relative 'distance' which they have travelled towards the labour market over the course of the pilot.

Chapter 9 concludes and provides a review of the policy implications for the future development of EMO and similar programmes on the basis of our two-year evaluation.

1   Literature review

1.1   Summary

- This chapter consists of a literature review. Since there has been a comprehensive recent review of literature relating to ethnic minority groups and the labour market (PIU, 2002), this chapter does not set out to replicate this, but concentrates on specific issues as they relate to the design and policy intentions of Ethnic Minority Outreach.

- The review begins by briefly reviewing the general state of knowledge relating to ethnicity and labour market disadvantages, highlighting the persistence of disadvantage, but also the increased inter- and intra-ethnic diversity in trends over time.

- Area factors are important, both in the sense that certain geographical regions have suffered more than others from economic restructuring, and that ethnic minorities are clustered in these disadvantaged areas. The chapter discusses the 'spatial mismatch' hypothesis, and highlights the objective and subjective factors, including low skill levels, restricted housing mobility, strong community networks and experiences of racism elsewhere, which can lead groups and individuals to remain in such areas.

- A discussion of discrimination highlights its persistence despite the long history of anti-discrimination legislation, and the extent to which both direct and indirect forms of discrimination may serve to exclude people from non-white backgrounds, and to alter job-seeking behaviour over the life course.

- Certain groups are identified as having particular needs. These include people with ESOL needs, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, those with childcare or other family care commitments, people facing multiple forms of disadvantage, and ethnic minority graduates, who are widely recognised as failing to reap the full returns of their education.

- Employability and distance from the labour market are concepts which are of increasing importance, and which are highly relevant to EMO, with its focus on moving people closer to the labour market. The literature on these issues is briefly reviewed, highlighting the largely supply-side nature of most conceptions of employability.

- The chapter ends by briefly considering the rather limited number of initiatives similar to EMO undertaken abroad, and considers their impact on ethnic minority employment.

1.2   Introduction

The labour market profile of the ethnic minority population is well documented. A recent Cabinet Office report has provided a comprehensive review of earlier research outlining the labour market profile of ethnic minority groups; the factors shaping labour market disadvantage and the evidence from evaluation of mainstream labour market interventions aimed at promoting employment opportunities for the unemployed (PIU, 2002). The objective of this chapter is to review the existing literature selectively by concentrating on specific issues and examining the evidence as it relates to the Ethnic Minority Outreach initiative. This chapter begins with a brief outline of the labour market profile of ethnic minority groups in terms of economic activity and unemployment levels. The subsequent two sections focus on literature examining two particular issues that have been shown to impact on labour market outcomes; area factors and discrimination. This is followed by a review of literature on sub-groups of ethnic minority populations who face various barriers in gaining employment and occupy a disadvantaged position in the labour market; Pakistani and Bangladeshi women; groups with language needs; ethnic minority graduates; asylum seekers and refugees. Multiple disadvantage is briefly considered and the concept of 'employability' and distance from the labour market is discussed. The chapter concludes with a brief review of initiatives comparable to EMO undertaken abroad.

1.3   Ethnicity and labour market disadvantage

Research has shown, for many years now that compared to whites ethnic minority people occupy a less favourable position in the labour market. The four PSI surveys (Daniel, 1968; Smith, 1977; Brown, 1984; Modood *et al.*, 1997); analyses of the Labour Force Survey (Jones, 1993; Sly *et al.*, 1998; Owen *et al.*, 2000; Twomey, 2001) and the Census (Karn, 1997) have shown in detail the forms and degree of disadvantage suffered by ethnic minority groups.

While early research about ethnic minorities painted a simplistic, 'black and white' picture of inequality, evidence from the 90s has shown that this had given way to a more diverse picture. Overall, Chinese and African Asians seem to have achieved parity with their white counterparts, while Pakistani and Bangladeshi women remain the most disadvantaged. Indians and Black Caribbean, meanwhile, appear

to occupy a middle ground with the former being closer to the top end of the scale (Jones, 1993; Modood, 1997; Leslie *et al*., 1998; Berthoud, 2000).

All ethnic minority groups have higher unemployment rates than white people and overall, the unemployment rate for ethnic minority men and women is twice that for white people, and evidence shows that it has remained so throughout the last two decades. In 1999, it was around six per cent for white males and over 13 per cent for non-white males, and about five per cent for white females and nearly 13 per cent for non-white females (Leslie *et al.*, 2001). There are, however, wide variations between individual ethnic minority groups. Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Black Africans are over three times more likely to be unemployed than whites. Black Caribbean are around twice as likely. Indians and other Asians are slightly more successful, but are still around one and a half times more likely to be unemployed than whites. Among women, at around 24 per cent, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women had the highest unemployment rate (Twomey, 2001).

Ethnic minority groups also differ from whites in terms of levels of engagement with the labour market, and overall, they are less likely to be economically active. White men have the highest rates of economic activity (85 per cent) followed closely by Black Other and Black Mixed and Indian groups (82 per cent). For the other groups economic activity rates are, on average, around 75 per cent. Among women, Black Caribbean and white women have the highest rates of economic activity at 75 per cent and 74 per cent respectively. In contrast, activity rates for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are significantly lower at 31 and 24 per cent (Twomey, 2001).

The disadvantaged position of ethnic minority people and the disparity between labour market profiles of different ethnic groups partly reflects differences in social and demographic characteristics, such as English language skills, educational qualifications and age. The success of African Asian and Indian groups, for instance, has been attributed to their fluency in English and high educational profiles. It is also argued that compared to whites, ethnic minorities have a younger age profile and young people from all ethnic groups are more likely to be in full-time education and therefore inactive, and have a greater propensity to be unemployed (Modood *et al.*, 1997; Leslie *et al.*, 1998; Berthoud 2000).

Studies using econometric methods have shown that, after taking into account demographic and social characteristics, the disparity between ethnic minorities and whites remains. Two other explanations have been put forward for this difference; the spatial concentration of ethnic minorities in declining areas characterised by lack of opportunities and discrimination.

1.4 Area factors

The five urban areas of England in which EMO is delivered were selected as containing the great majority of the ethnic minority population. According to the

1991 Census, compared to less than a quarter of whites, over three quarters of ethnic minorities live in these major conurbations:

- 46 per cent in London;

- 13 per cent in West Midlands;

- 7 per cent in East Midlands;

- 6 per cent in West Yorkshire;

- 5 per cent in Greater Manchester.

Within these conurbations, ethnic minorities are also further concentrated at the ward level, with some differences between groups. While well over half of Black Africans and two-fifths of Bangladeshis lived in Inner London, only 1 in 14 Pakistanis and 1 in 10 Indians did so (Peach and Rossiter, 1996; Sly *et al.*, 1998; Dorsett, 1998; Twomey, 2001).

The 1991 Census also showed that different communities were concentrated in different parts of the country (Ratcliffe, 1996):

- Black Caribbeans   - West Midlands and Greater London;

- Indians   - Greater London, East and West Midlands;

- Pakistanis   - West Yorkshire and the North West;

- Bangladeshis   - Greater London and West Midlands;

- Chinese   - The least concentrated group. Found in Greater London, East Midlands*.*

1.4.1   The impact of economic re-structuring and deprivation

Largely as a result of the decline of, manufacturing in metropolitan areas of England and Wales, areas highly populated by ethnic minority communities came to be characterised by deprivation. These regions tend to be more densely populated, have a greater share of social housing, the lowest percentage of individuals in professional and managerial occupations, highest percentage in unskilled occupations, low levels of human capital accumulation, and higher levels of unemployment. Both Dorsett (using Department of Environment's 1991 deprivation index) and Clark and Drinkwater (using the DETR 1998 Index of Local Deprivation) found that average deprivation increases as ethnic minority concentration rises in an area (Dorsett, 1998; Clark and Drinkwater, 2002).

The impact of economic re-structuring on particular communities and regions is an under-studied subject and most existing research is based on data from the 1991 census. The geographical distribution of Britain's ethnic minorities is a product of the economic geography of a period of high immigration. Both men and women from the ethnic minority groups were over-represented in manufacturing reflecting the employment opportunities available to early migrants who first came to Britain to fill

labour shortages in textiles and clothing (Indians and Pakistanis), engineering, metal goods, chemicals and metal manufacture (Black Caribbeans and Indians and Pakistanis), and took residence in regions housing these industries. In 1971, compared to 43 per cent of all working males, 52 per cent of Caribbeans, 54 per cent of Indians and 72 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi men were employed in manufacturing. For women, compared to 29 per cent of all working women, 32 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, 37 per cent of Caribbean women, and 40 per cent of Indian women were found in manufacturing. Over the next two decades, migrants who found employment in these sectors watched those opportunities and the demand for their skills disappear; the number of men employed in manufacturing fell by 41 per cent and women by 39 per cent and it is argued that ethnic minorities were disproportionately affected by this decline. The destructive effects of restructuring extended to the second generation as the children of these workers found themselves in rapidly declining areas with few opportunities (Brown, 1982; Robinson, 1988; Jones, 1993; Ballard, 1996; Iganski and Payne, 1999).

The impact of restructuring on different parts of the country has not been uniform. A key feature of the change has been the decline of manufacturing and the rise of the service sector. The West Midlands, North West and Yorkshire and Humberside experienced the greatest decline in manufacturing, while the degree of the decline has been less severe in the East Midlands. The South East also witnessed a decline in manufacturing, but it has also been the main beneficiary of a surge in service sector jobs (Robinson, 1988; Ward and Cross, 1991).

To some extent, the impact of restructuring on different ethnic groups has varied depending on the location of their residential concentration, as well as on their skill and qualification profiles. Those living in the Greater London (e.g. Indians, African Asians and Black Caribbeans) and groups and individuals with higher skill profiles were better placed to take-up jobs in the rapidly expanding service sector, while Pakistanis, who overwhelmingly worked in textiles, have suffered most from the decline of traditional industries in northern towns (Ward and Cross, 1991; Jones, 1993; Modood *et al.*, 1997).

1.4.2 Geographical location and employment outcomes – 'spatial mismatch'?

The areas in which early immigrants settled have since become areas of relative decline, while the geography of ethnic minority populations has remained fairly static, leaving many ethnic minority groups concentrated in areas of high unemployment. It is argued that declining local economies and the lack of demand for labour in areas populated by ethnic minorities provide an underlying structural context for high ethnic minority unemployment rates (Robinson 1988; Ward and Cross, 1991; Modood *et al.*, 1997).

More recent studies have investigated the theory that there is a 'spatial mismatch' between jobs and ethnic minority populations (i.e. they live in areas where there are few opportunities available). Examinations of how the ethnic composition of an area

and local unemployment rate influences economic outcomes indicate that after taking into account social and demographic characteristics, the chances of being unemployed vary geographically and according to an areas' general characteristics (Fieldhouse and Gould, 1998; Fieldhouse, 1999; Owen and Green, 2000; Clark and Drinkwater, 2002). Fieldhouse (1999) found that in areas where ethnic minority concentration was high, the unemployment rate was also high for whites, suggesting that high unemployment in these areas was not simply a function of ethnicity, but more a problem specific to those areas.

The impact of ethnic composition of an area was found to be particularly noticeable for Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups, increasing the probability of unemployment and economic inactivity, whereas this was not the case for Indians and African Asians. The effect of local unemployment rates also had a stronger effect on Black ethnic groups, while Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups appeared relatively insulated from local labour market conditions (Clark and Drinkwater, 2002; Owen and Green, 2000; Fieldhouse and Gould, 1998; Fieldhouse, 1999). Fieldhouse and Gould have argued that, this may reflect a lesser degree of dependency upon the general labour market (e.g. for self-employed Indians), as well as the dependency of such groups on particular sectors of the economy (e.g. Pakistanis working in textiles), thus making the general levels of labour demand partly irrelevant. The geographical variance suggests that South Asians appear to have done worse in the West Midlands and in the North West and West Yorkshire, where they worked in declining sectors of the labour market.

The variation of the area effect between regions and ethnic groups has led researchers to conclude that area factors operate in more complex ways than the 'spatial mismatch' theory suggests. Owen and Green (2000) have suggested that structural aspects of local labour markets are likely to combine with more subjective variations in, not only human capital, but also in-group and individual-specific choices, preferences and perceived opportunities.

1.4.3   Geographical mobility and reasons for staying in an area

Some recent research has focused on the 'unwillingness' of ethnic minority groups to move or commute to areas that have benefited from de-industrialisation and job suburbanisation. Owen and Green (2000) found that white people commute to work further than those from ethnic minority groups and for longer. Chinese and Other ethnic groups appeared to have patterns more similar to those for whites, while Indian and Pakistani men had shorter commuting distances. Ethnic minority women as a group commute longer distances than white women, but Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have been found to be very distinctive in being most likely to commute very short distances to work. Using UK microdata, Thomas (1998) investigated the relationship between geographically restricted jobseeking and unemployment and found that a lower propensity to commute over long distances accounts for about 20 per cent of the differential between the average unemployment spells of ethnic minorities and whites.

Why is there an 'unwillingness' to move out of urban enclaves? It has been noted above that ethnic minority populations' first settlement choices were constrained by the location of employment opportunities available to them in manufacturing and most took residence in areas housing such industries. Other external constraints such as hostility from indigenous population in low ethnic concentration areas, discrimination in private rented housing and the location of local authority housing offered to migrants all played important parts in limiting the residency choices available to early migrants. Immigrants were housed in council estates in deprived inner city areas, which were gradually being vacated by whites. Hostility and discrimination in the private sector has been well documented in studies using 'discrimination testing' (Daniel, 1968; Smith, 1977; Brown, 1984). Although some ethnic groups, particularly Indians, have become more geographically diffused and are living in relatively prosperous regions, their historical geography has had a long-lasting legacy.

Comparing data from the 1981 and 1991 censuses, Robinson (1993) showed that ethnic minorities had become even more concentrated into urban areas during that decade. This highly concentrated geographical distribution may have intensified and continued for a number of reasons. It seems that following the decline of manufacturing, not all groups were prepared or able to move out of ethnic enclaves in pursuit of work elsewhere. Many of the new jobs required higher skills and qualifications, which could have been difficult to acquire by those made redundant from low or unskilled jobs. Older workers found it particularly difficult to respond to the shift in demand for new skills, as lack of qualifications or poor language skills may have led to a dependency on the ethnic labour market, leaving jobs in the mainstream labour market beyond their reach (Ward and Cross, 1991).

For many, potential loss of community ties and support networks would have been an important consideration. Members of ethnic minority groups may prefer to live close to people of a shared culture, tradition or religion. Living in areas populated by people from the same ethnic group also means having access to social and support networks (Borjas, 1985; Ward and Cross, 1991). Such networks may facilitate access to jobs in the ethnic labour market, which may be particularly important for those with poor language skills. Research has shown that immigrants who lack English language skills find it more difficult to find jobs outside of their enclaves (Carliner, 1995). Others may seek self-employment within this 'protected' market, providing goods and services sought by their own community (Borjas, 1986; Metcalf *et al.*, 1999).

Hostility from indigenous white populations may also discourage people from working in 'white' areas or towns. Bangladeshi young men in East London and Birmingham interviewed by Wrench and Qureshi strongly stated that the ethnic composition of an area is one of the key factors workers take into account in making employment decisions. Some indicated parts of London they would not even consider, relating incidents of racial harassment. These young men emphasised the importance of 'blending in' where one lives and works and said that they would not feel safe in some local areas (Wrench and Qureshi, 1996a).

Wrench also writes about the experiences of ethnic minorities who have moved out of high concentration areas into white 'new towns'. Interviewing ethnic minorities living in Harlow, a new town in Essex, Wrench (1997b) found that ethnic minorities face acute problems, including: racism at school and in employment; harassment on the street; lack of understanding or insensitivity to their needs by local agents (private and public); and lack of community support. Wrench concludes that areas of high white concentration could be unwelcoming environments for ethnic minorities and that the availability of jobs will not necessarily encourage them to move into those areas.

1.4.4   EMO and area factors

All EMO providers are based in major metropolitan areas with depressed labour markets. Evidence suggests that the impact of economic restructuring varies by region and also by ethnicity. It seems that providers in Yorkshire and Humberside, the North West and the West Midlands may be working in labour markets with fewer opportunities. By contrast, lack of demand may not be an issue in Greater London, where the expansion of the service sector appears to have compensated at least partially for the decline in manufacturing jobs.

A second issue is likely to be the skills profile of those who became unemployed following loss of jobs in manufacturing. Immigrants who took jobs in manufacturing tended to work as unskilled labour, and many lacked language skills and qualifications. Working and living in close-knit communities for a long time, many did not feel the need to acquire such skills and are not likely to have other marketable work-related skills. Furthermore, having lost their jobs at a relatively advanced age, some may not have the aptitude to undertake further training and those who have been out of work for a long time may also be psychologically detached from the labour market.

A further barrier for providers could be participants' 'unwillingness' to move out of areas where they have lived for decades and have established networks. Mobility may also be discouraged by expected and actual racism in 'white' areas.

1.5   Discrimination

It is often argued that ethnic minorities possess less favourable employment enhancing characteristics and this has resulted in their higher unemployment rates. A number of studies have used econometric methods to investigate the factors associated with labour market disadvantage for ethnic minorities. Studies examining the impact of supply side characteristics (e.g. age, qualifications) that could potentially influence employment outcomes, found that these characteristics accounted for some of the unemployment differences, but not all, and that differences between groups remained after taking such factors into account. This unexplained difference is termed an 'ethnic penalty' and is seen to provide indirect evidence of discrimination (Blackaby *et al.*, 1994 and 1997; Leslie *et al.* 1998b; Berthoud, 2000; Carmichael *et al.*, 2000; PIU, 2002).

1.5.1 Development of legislation and persistence of discrimination

Whilst the persisting disadvantage of ethnic minorities in the labour market suggests discrimination to be a major factor operating to the detriment of minorities, a number of studies have employed a direct approach to measuring discrimination. The extent of discrimination faced by Blacks and Asians when trying to acquire lasting jobs was first demonstrated by a series of discrimination tests in the 1970s. These tests, which involved people of different ethnic origins making trial applications for advertised vacancies, showed that a substantial proportion of employers rejected Black and Asian applicants (before interview) in favour of equally qualified whites (Smith, 1977; Brown and Gay, 1985).

The 1976 Race Relations Act outlawed racial discrimination in employment, on the grounds of race, colour, nationality and ethnic origin. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) was established to conduct formal investigations of discrimination allegations. The impact of the Race Relations Acts on discrimination in the job market was at first encouraging, but in the long term disappointing. Legal provisions have facilitated 'positive action' by employers on race equality, and some large employers, particularly in the public sector, have openly paid a good deal of attention to reviewing policy and practice to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination. However, PSI trials carried out in 1984 and 1985, in London, Birmingham and Manchester showed that, despite a decade of anti-discrimination measures, discrimination in recruitment persisted, with at least one third of private employers discriminating against Asian and African-Caribbean applicants (Brown, 1985).

The CRE introduced a device in the 1980s to stimulate voluntary adoption of anti-discrimination measures called the 'Code of Practice for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Promotion of Equal Opportunity in Employment'. The CRE's 1989 survey of employers found that only a small minority of employers were fully implementing the Code, with the proportion slightly higher amongst public sector and larger employers. Nevertheless, two thirds considered themselves to have had formal equal opportunity policies (Wrench and Modood, 2000). In 1992, the Equal Opportunities Review carried out a survey of its subscribers. A key finding was that employers made patchy use of the various types of positive action possible under the Race Relations Act. While eighty two per cent included messages in job advertisements designed to solicit more ethnic minority applications, around four-fifths had advertised in ethnic minority press, and a similar proportion had sought to target Jobcentres, schools and careers offices in ethnic minority areas. Only a third of employers noted that such encouragement measures had led to a significant increase in applications, and thirteen per cent thought these had had a net impact on minority representation in the workforce. By contrast, less than half organised pre-entry training, and about one in three provided in service training. Ninety per cent or more of the trainees had subsequently gained employment. It seems that positive action has been less widely undertaken, but it appears to be more effective than encouragement measures. Less than one in three employers said they had set equality targets to reflect the ethnic composition of the local population.

Following the MacPherson Report, the need to take further measures to tackle indirect and institutional racism has moved to the top of racial equality agenda and the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 placed the public sector under obligation to actively promote race equality. Nevertheless, the adoption of equal opportunities policies remains a voluntary measure for the private sector, which accounts for over 82 per cent of employment. The private sector is of particular interest not only because it has the largest share of employment in the UK, but also because studies carried out in the 1990s point to the hidden and indirect discriminatory practices that continue to plague the sector. Investigating the recruitment practices of the top 100 companies, Noon (1993) discovered that, faced with speculative applications from individuals of different ethnic backgrounds, companies with equal opportunities statements were more likely to treat candidates the same. However, any discrimination that occurred, favoured the white candidates. Cully *et al.'s* findings, which are based on an analysis of the DTI's 1998 Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS), confirm that adoption of formal equality opportunities policies go hand in hand with higher representation of ethnic minorities in the workforce (Cully *et al*, 1999).

Wrench (1996) argues that British employers are generally against legal pressures to introduce anti-discrimination policies, and there is a widespread misconception that equal opportunities policies and, more particularly, 'positive action' amounts to preferential treatment for ethnic minorities. Against a culture among employers to perceive any form of positive action or target setting as positive discrimination, CRE promoted the idea of 'diversity management' in the 90s, which aimed to mainstream equal opportunities policies and to reconstitute equal opportunities in the language of human resource management. It seemed that employers were more receptive to this idea. It represents a view that emphasises organisational efficiency and makes a business case for diversity. It is argued that an organisational culture should be fostered which enables all workers to operate and co-operate in ways which will lead to greater efficiency and increased productivity (Wrench and Modood, 2000).

More recent studies provide further evidence of discrimination in recruitment, despite decades of anti-discrimination legislation and policies. In a study carried out by the CRE in the North of England and Scotland, experiences of young people, aged 18-25, were explored. Applications submitted to vacancies for clerical, administrative and sales positions from prospective white and ethnic minority employees drew strikingly different responses. White applicants were nearly three times more likely than Asian applicants and almost five times more likely than Black applicants, to be asked for an interview (CRE, 1996a). Research investigating patterns of entry into and progress within the more professional occupations, such as accountancy, law and medicine also found evidence of differential treatment and practices favouring white applicants. In 1993, matched pairs of fake applications were sent to NHS hospitals for medical jobs and researchers found that they were twice as likely to shortlist candidates with Anglo-Saxon names rather than Asian names (British Medical Journal, 1 March 1997). These experiments also revealed that discrimination continued long after being banned, giving rise to concerns that equal opportunities policies were failing to eliminate covert discrimination (Wrench and Modood,

2000). Following up their earlier study six years later, Hoque and Noon (1999) similarly argued that existence of a formal code of practise is not always a sign of improving practices and that where a policy statement exists without the mechanisms necessary for enforcement it may constitute no more than an 'empty shell', which enables companies to hide behind enlightened rhetoric (Hoque and Noon, 2002).

1.5.2   Processes of exclusion and indirect discrimination

Other research has provided insights into processes of exclusion and indirect discrimination, such as relying on the family members of existing employees for recruitment. It has also shown evidence that employers are influenced by stereotyped perceptions of ethnic minorities; for example, they labelled Caribbeans as 'lethargic' (Wrench and Modood, 2000). Similarly, Shih (2002) investigated attitudes of employers in low skill sectors in Los Angeles and found that employers' perceptions of what makes a 'manageable and pliable' employee affected their recruitment decisions, demonstrating itself as a preference for Latino immigrants over African Americans.

Another form of indirect discrimination could result from the use of psychometric testing, which is increasingly being used by employers to assess an applicant's personality and aptitudes. Evidence shows that ethnic minority candidates obtain lower scores on such tests, giving rise to concerns that psychometric tests measure what a candidate knows, which depends on education and experiences, and therefore favours those with the 'appropriate background', rather than capabilities. Thus, attributes highly valued on psychometric tests may not be directly relevant to the job at hand (McHenry, 2000; PIU, 2002). In 1991, eight Asian train guards, who claimed that they had been discriminated against by British Rail's selection tests, won an out of court settlement and the case highlighted the discriminatory nature of tests used in recruitment (CRE, 1996b).

Research looking into the role of recruitment agencies, which have increasingly come to occupy an essential gate-keeping role in the labour market, has demonstrated that they routinely co-operate with employers, demanding exclusion of certain ethnic groups from the pool of applicants selected for interview. Some claimed to be 'protecting' their clients from rejection by not submitting ethnic minority clients to employers perceived to be 'racist'. The anticipation of discrimination may in fact perpetuate the process of exclusion, and could in itself be seen to constitute a form of discrimination (Wrench and Modood, 2000).

While ethnic minority people talk of their experiences and suspicions of discrimination, many may remain unaware of discrimination at the recruitment stage. Research has shown that some adopt what may be called a discrimination/racism avoiding behaviour, avoiding areas, employers or jobs which they perceive to be out of bounds or hostile. This restricted job-seeking may mean that their exclusion from certain jobs or areas continues without discrimination taking place (Wrench and Hassan, 1996; Wrench and Qureshi, 1996). The latest PSI study found that one in five ethnic minorities believed that employers discriminate, and one in twenty cited

personal experiences of discrimination. The difference between the extent of belief that discrimination takes place and the extent of actual experience has been attributed to the fact that most victims remain unaware of discrimination in recruitment (Modood *et al.*, 1997). The consequences of discrimination in the labour market for ethnic minority employees remain a relatively understudied issue. The PIU report (2002) draws attention to the cost of discrimination at the entry to the labour market, which could include detrimental effects on motivation, self-confidence and aspirations, as well as the formation of job-seeking behaviours that indirectly perpetuate exclusion and disadvantage.

1.6   Groups with specific needs

Next we turn to groups identified as facing severe labour market disadvantage, many of which are target groups for EMO providers. They examine the literature relating to the barriers each group face and highlight the diversity of needs that exist within ethnic minority groups.

1.6.1   Pakistani and Bangladeshi women

One of the groups targeted by EMO provision is Asian women, either by projects working specifically with women of South Asian origin or by projects providing services to the Asian community in predominantly Asian areas. The labour market experiences of Asian women have attracted much attention over the last decade. As the divisions within the broad category of 'Asian' or 'South Asian' have become more documented/explicated, the low economic activity rates amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have become the subject of much debate.

The overall labour market profile of ethnic minority women is as diverse as that of ethnic minority men, and follows a broadly similar pattern of differentiation. The first point of diversion is found in relation to economic activity rates. Women of Chinese, African Asian and Black Caribbean origins have economic activity rates closer to that of white women (about three quarters), with Indian women following closely behind (about 60 per cent). Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, who are lumped together in most studies because of small sample sizes, are found at the opposite end of the spectrum with less than one third actively engaging with the labour market. Thus, over a quarter of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women define their main activity as looking after the home. A similar pattern of differentiation is observed with regards to unemployment; six per cent of Chinese, nine per cent of white, 12 per cent of African Asian and Indian, 39 per cent of Pakistani and 40 per cent of Bangladeshi women are unemployed. A final overall difference is found between white and all other ethnic groups with respect to working patterns; ethnic minority women are on the whole more likely to be working full-time. Nevertheless, it is sometimes argued that these figures do not accurately reflect the actual rate of employment amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, as some may be 'homeworking' but would be unwilling to declare this to official sources (Owen, 1994; Modood *et al.*, 1997; Sly *et al.*, 1998; Twomey, 2001; Lindley *et al.* 2004).

Research exploring labour market experiences of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in small localities highlighted a number of factors that could impact on the decision to participate in the labour market. Evidence also suggests a picture of gradual change in the way in which women engage with the labour market.

1.6.1.1 Household income and women's employment decisions

Research shows that married women's employment decisions partly depend upon the economic position of their husband, and there is consistent evidence regarding the disincentive effect of having an unemployed partner (see, for instance, Gregg *et al.*, 1999, Davies *et al.*, 1992). Modood *et al.* (1997) argue that this is a contributory factor to the high inactivity rates of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, since rates of unemployment among men are high, leading women to avoid paid employment, which is likely to be poorly paid, because of the potential effects on benefits.

1.6.1.2 Fluency in English language and qualifications

Some of the difference between the economic activity rates of Pakistani and Bangladeshi and other women is explained by differences in human capital such as knowledge of English language and education level. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are less likely to have good language skills or higher qualifications. Women speaking English fluently and those with A-levels or higher qualifications are more likely to participate in the labour market. Particularly those not born in the UK and older women tend to have limited English, lack formal qualifications and many may not have any formal education in their own language. Young women born and educated in the UK, by contrast do not have a language barrier and, particularly those with higher qualifications, were found to have expectations quite different from those of their mothers (Modood *et al.*, 1997; Dale *et al.*, 2002a).

1.6.1.3 The primacy of family life

One factor that influences all women's employment is the structure of their family and married women with young children are less likely to be working. In 2000-02, among all ethnic groups, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women had the lowest proportions with no children. Compared to 32 per cent of Indian women, 17 per cent of Black Caribbean women, 25 per cent of white women, 47 per cent of Pakistani and 54 per cent of Bangladeshi women had a partner and a child under the age of 16. Although their family sizes decreased over the 1990s, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women also had the largest families (Lindley and Dale, 2004). Furthermore, the effect of marriage and children varies by ethnicity. For Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, the presence of a partner and children has a stronger effect on economic activity than for any other group and is in particular contrast to the behaviour of Black Caribbean women, who are the most likely to be working after having children. The proportion of those economically inactive increases from 19 per cent for young single women, to 42 per cent for partnered women, and to 82 per cent for partnered women with young children. (Dale and Holdsworth, 1997; Bhopal, 1998; Lindley *et al.* 2004).

West and Pilgrim (1995) argue that a crucial difference between Indian and Bangladeshi women is the extent to which they are able to take advantage of the employment opportunities available to them. While Indian women worked alongside their husbands in small family businesses and combined full-time working with family responsibilities, Bangladeshi women were not generally encouraged to work outside the home. While working in the restaurant trade has been one of the main routes of economic survival for their partners, self-employment in a restaurant was simply out of question for Bangladeshi women, and neither were they able to take up any other job that would take them away from home. Interviewing Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in Oldham, Dale *et al.* (2002a) found that most women saw the family as central to their lives and expected it to take priority over work, especially after getting married. Young women also seemed to accept without question that they would get married and have children.

1.6.1.4   Religious and cultural values

The priority given to family life partly reflects cultural and religious values relating to women's role in society. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis remain the most disadvantaged ethnic minority groups, and there is some evidence that unemployment probabilities are related to religious outlook. The relationship between ethnicity, religion and employment disadvantage is complex, but there appears to be a penalty associated with being a Muslim. For South Asian women the difference in unemployment rates was found to display a Muslim/non-Muslim pattern. The reasons are likely to include social networks, and cultural and religious preferences regarding employment, as well as anti-Muslim discrimination (Blackaby *et al.,* 1998; Brown, 2000; Lindley, 2002).

1.6.1.5   Second generation – negotiating identities

Nevertheless, there are also signs of a subtle, yet clear, change taking place amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. While young women in Oldham seemed to accept the primacy of family, they were also keen to emphasise that they did not see women's roles as being solely in the home and made a distinction between Islam and tradition. Some were absolutely clear that Islamic faith was not a deterrent to women's participation in the labour market. Traditional values were seen as more of a problem and they were keen to break out of these restrictions, while remaining devout Muslims. Particularly those with higher qualifications were planning to combine having a family and a career (Dale *et al.*, 2002a).

This suggests that younger and older women have quite distinct profiles, not only in terms of human capital resources relevant to employment, but also in terms of outlook, aspirations and expectations. Older women seem to lack what could perhaps be considered the essential requirements of engagement with the mainstream labour market (i.e. English language skills and qualifications); they also do not envisage a role for themselves outside the home. While this may partly reflect the acceptance of cultural values, most of these women also argued that paid employment was incompatible with their heavy domestic duties. Pakistani and

Bangladeshi women tend to have larger families and to be fully responsible for childcare and housework, sometimes without the support networks they would have found in their home countries. Furthermore, they are mostly from working class backgrounds and given the low skill and low paid sectors their partners worked in, could not afford many labour saving devices. Most simply said that they did not have the time to work (Brah and Shaw, 1992; West and Pilgrim, 1995; Dale *et al.*, 2000a).

For young women, the issue seems to be one of negotiating a way of achieving their goals of education and a career while meeting the expectations of their family and community. The pressure of the wider community cannot be overemphasised, being repeatedly mentioned by both older and young women. Even those parents who desired better prospects for their daughters felt the need to negotiate the expectations of the community and the 'freedoms' allowed to their daughter. For both parents and young women themselves, ensuring the integrity of family honour (i.e. 'izzat') seemed to be a pre-condition of any change in common practice and, in most cases, family and parents continued to have considerable influence on educational and employment choices (Fauzia *et al.*, 2003).

Younger women were more likely to highlight discrimination, both racial and religious, as a barrier, and related experiences that they felt undermined their aspirations. They felt stereotyped by career advisers and judged by recruiting employers some of whom made explicit comments about their religion. Some believed that perceptions of Muslim women worked to their disadvantage as employers could potentially be concerned about them not 'fitting in' (Thornly and Siann, 1991; Brah and Shaw 1992; Fauzia *et al.*, 2003).

1.6.1.6 *EMO and Pakistani/Bangladeshi women*

It seems that the challenge for EMO providers working with Pakistani and Bangladeshi women would be to recognise the diversity of needs across generations, and avoid the stereotyping young women report to be suffering in education and seeking employment. Provision made under approaches aiming to work on supply- side factors, such as providing ESOL and other training, enhancing work-related skills and generally encouraging engagement with the labour market and mainstream support programmes would seem particularly appropriate for older women. Younger women may also benefit from support that familiarised them with the employment market, developing networks, updating skills and confidence building.

In working with older and younger women, family and community pressures may indirectly impact on women's engagement with both service providers and the employment market, and more observable movements in the labour market may take some time to materialise. A further point for ESOL and training providers would be to consider providing women-only services, which would encourage participation by those wishing to observe the religious/traditional rules regarding female seclusion.

1.6.2   Groups with ESOL needs

Research has consistently shown that fluency in English is a factor explaining immigrants' labour market success. Those who lack fluency are significantly more likely to be disengaged from the labour market or unemployed and therefore unable to escape a continued dependency on the state. It is often argued that the ability to communicate in the host country's language is the most important form of location-specific human capital. Literacy and numeracy in English is a prerequisite for all jobs, including many unskilled occupations in the service sector that require communication skills. Those without good language skills are more likely to rely on narrow migrant community networks for information about jobs. Lack of fluency is also likely to affect individual's ability to benefit from further education and their ability to be involved with their children's education. There is a significant national waste of potential in failing to make the best use of people with professional qualifications and experience. In short, language skills are essential for full social and economic integration with the wider society (DfES, Schellekens, 2001).

1.6.2.1   ESOL needs and labour market performance

Until recently, lack of data has limited the investigation of the role of fluency in English in labour market disadvantage. The Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (FSNEM) has collected data on spoken language proficiency (evaluated by the interviewer) and made it possible for the first time to undertake a systematic investigation for England and Wales. Analyses of FSNEM show that language is largely an issue for foreign-born South Asian minorities. Among men, 58 per cent of Indians, 46 per cent of Pakistanis and 40 per cent of Bangladeshis were fluent. Among women, 46 per cent of Indian, 31 per cent of Pakistani and 20 per cent of Bangladeshi females were fluent. This compares with 66 per cent of African Asian women. Those fluent in English were more likely to be economically active and had lower unemployment rates. It also appears that for men the biggest impact is on unemployment, but for women it leads to inactivity or a withdrawal from labour market (Leslie and Lindley, 2001).

Analyses using econometric methods have shown that fluency in English increases employment probabilities by about 15-17 percentage points. Incorporating language ability data from the Family and Working Lives Survey (FWLS) and used for the first time, Dusttman and Fabbri also investigated the effects of writing and speaking ability (self-assessed) separately, and found that the effect of writing fluency is slightly higher. While writing abilities were associated with a 13 percentage point increase in employment probabilities, speaking ability alone increased this probability by only five percentage points (Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003).

Settled ethnic minority communities are not the only group who may lack English language skills. Asylum seekers and refugees who have arrived more recently form another group beset by poor language skills, which simply exacerbates the many settlement, housing and financial problems they experience. Unemployment is much higher amongst refugee groups, and lack of English language skills has been found to be an important contributory factor (Bloch, 2002). Investigating the

current provision of ESOL, Schellekens interviewed 178 ESOL students in five areas of England and Wales and found that only five per cent were in employment and all of those were working in unskilled labour, including one participant with a degree in veterinary science who was employed as a cleaner. These ESOL students identified insufficient English language skills as their major barrier to work and they felt excluded both from work and the wider social environment (Schellekens, 2001).

1.6.2.2 Acquisition of language skills

Several factors have been shown to have a bearing on fluency: sex, age on arrival, and ethnic density in the neighbourhood. Immigrants who arrived at a younger age and males are more likely to be fluent; years spent in the country also have a positive effect (Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003). Modood *et al*. (1997) also found evidence that those who live with people from their own ethnic group are less likely to speak English well. This is not a surprising finding, since language fluency improves by exposure. Those living and working mainly amongst their own ethnic group will not have the opportunity to acquire language skills. The effect of ethnic density, however, varies – while density has no effect on African Asians, it has a large effect on Bangladeshis, suggesting that African Asians may have had high levels of fluency before their arrival in the UK. Women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, and particularly those aged between 45-64 living in close-knit communities, were the least likely to be fluent in English. These women are likely to have arrived in England as dependants at an advanced age, and may never have had the need, opportunity or motivation to acquire English language skills (Modood *et al.*, 1997).

1.6.2.3 Current ESOL provision

While all research into disadvantage in the labour market points to the importance of English language skills for employment outcomes, two recent studies identified a number of limitations with current ESOL provision. These included: the lack of a national curriculum and quality monitoring systems; inadequate training for ESOL teachers; lack of bilingual tutors; lack of provision for learners with a range of educational backgrounds, particularly for those already highly educated in their first language; and lack of women-only provision. ESOL learners also indicated that teaching material was not always challenging enough and mixed ability classes did not work particularly well. Accessibility was highlighted as an issue by those unable to attend day time or evening classes and by women needing childcare. Many students said they had received insufficient guidance on which course to attend, and were confused about fees and funding. Some also asked for more emphasis to be put on oracy, compared to writing and reading skills, and suggested that the range of topics covered should include a wider selection of life and work situations. Finally, long waiting lists for places, particularly in inner city areas, highlighted the need to extend existing provision (Schellekens, 2001).

Schellekens, who also interviewed employers, found that employers expected fluent communication skills for all jobs, apart from menial jobs such as cleaning. 66 per cent of ESOL students interviewed had language skills up to NVQ level 2, while

employers' expectation would correspond to a level 3. She concluded that there was a gap between the level of general language provision offered and the skills required to make the transition into education, training and jobs.

1.6.2.4   EMO and groups with ESOL needs

Evidence suggests that EMO participants with ESOL needs may have a range of education and skill profiles, and are likely to include both the highly educated and those illiterate in their own language. While there would be a need to accommodate such differences in teaching English, the employment support needs of this group would also be expected to vary. It seems that individually tailored services may serve this group best and EMO provision is likely to fill an important gap by reaching out to those unable to access mainstream provision.

1.6.3   Ethnic minority graduates in the labour market[1]

Educational profile of ethnic minorities is one of the most frequently explored characteristics in the search for an explanation for their comparatively disadvantaged position in the labour market. Research has shown that while qualification differences account for some employment differentials, there remains a disparity between the unemployment levels and occupational attainments of equally qualified whites and ethnic minorities. While the acquisition of qualifications improves employment prospects for all, evidence suggests that ethnic minorities receive poorer returns to their investment in education (Jones, 1993; Modood *et al*, 1997; Heath and McMahon, 1997). Given this picture of poor labour market performance, despite not targeting them as a group, some EMO providers found ethnic minorities with higher education qualifications among their clients.

1.6.3.1   Qualifications and unemployment

Earlier studies of education levels among ethnic minorities showed a polarised picture of minority populations with high proportions with no qualifications and a small proportion with the highest (i.e. degree level or higher) qualifications (Brown, 1984). More recent studies, however, indicate a clear drive among, particularly second generation, ethnic minorities to enter higher education (Modood *et al*, 1997). Evidence suggests that since the early 1990s, ethnic minorities were equally well represented in higher education, compared with their white peers (Connor *et al*, 1996; Barnes *et al*, 2004). In 1997/98, 13 per cent of first degree students in higher education were from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is higher than their share of the population (8.3 per cent) in 1998 (Owen *et al*, 2000). In 1999/2000, this increased to 16 per cent of all undergraduate students, compared to their share of 10 per cent in the population (Barnes *et al*, 2004). There are differences between groups, with African Asians, Indians and Chinese being slightly over represented, and Pakistani and Bangladeshi women underrepresented at degree level (Barnes *et al*, 2004; Owen *et al*, 2000).

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[1] While EMO did not set out to target graduates, there was an agreement that they would not be turned away where they did seek to make use of available services.

Figures for 2000 indicate that compared to 14 per cent of whites, 19 per cent of ethnic minority groups of working age have a first or higher degree (Barnes *et al*, 2002). However, research investigating the labour market disadvantage of ethnic minorities has shown that higher educational qualifications do not necessarily lead to occupational attainments (Jones, 1993; Modood *et al*, 1997; Carmichael and Woods, 2000). Evidence from studies using econometric techniques show that despite the considerable equalisation of educational profiles between whites and ethnic minorities, disparities in occupational attainments remain, and moreover, ethnic penalties paid by those educated in the UK are of similar magnitude to those paid by their parents, the first generation immigrants more likely to have been raised and educated overseas (Blackaby *et al*, 1997 and 1999; Heath *et al*, 2000).

Modood *et al* analysed the unemployment rates of those with A-level or higher qualifications. They have found that, compared to twelve per cent of Indian, African Asian and white men with A-level or higher qualifications, 17 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi, and 23 per cent of Caribbean men were unemployed. The differences were found to be even greater for those aged under-35. Compared to 15 per cent of white men, 20 per cent of Indian and African Asian, 34 per cent of Caribbean, and 37 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi men with A-levels or higher qualifications were unemployed. Looking at all age groups for females – seven per cent of white, 12 per cent of Indian and African Asian, 16 per cent of Caribbean and 18 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women with A-levels or higher qualifications were unemployed. For the under 35s, 13 per cent of whites, 15 per cent of Indian and African Asians, 24 per cent of Caribbeans and 43 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were found to be unemployed (Modood *et al*, 1997).

Using data from the First Destinations Survey for 1998/99, Owen *et al* investigate the employment profile of graduates six months after the completion of their courses. This may be rather soon after graduation to provide a reliable estimate of long-term labour market outcomes, but the figures are interesting for indicating significant disadvantages for ethnic minority students at early stages of career development. Six months after graduation, higher percentages of white students than ethnic minority students were found to be in permanent employment. Among men, Black-African, Bangladeshi and Chinese students and, among women, Pakistani and Chinese students were the least likely to be in permanent employment. In terms of unemployment levels, once again overall, ethnic minority students were more likely to be unemployed. In the case of Black Caribbean and Black Other graduates, the unemployment rate was almost twice that for whites, and for Pakistani and Bangladeshi graduates even higher than this. Compared to the average for all graduates, Black African graduates have the highest unemployment rate, with 17 per cent unemployed at the time of the survey. For Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi men, the rate was around 13 per cent, and for Pakistani men 11 per cent. While Indian, Chinese and Asian-Other students have the lowest rates, their unemployment rate is still higher than the male average of 7 per cent (Owen *et al*, 2000, pp.68).

Berthoud (2000) also demonstrated that, in terms of earnings, ethnic minorities with degree level qualifications had lower pay compared to their white counterparts,

suggesting that the employment undertaken by ethnic minority graduates may not be commensurate with their qualification levels. Similarly, Hogarth *et al* (1997) investigated the labour market position of graduates and found the earnings of ethnic minorities to be lower than that of white graduates. This difference could not be accounted for by differences in subject or institution of study.

1.6.3.2   *Processes of discrimination*

Ethnic minorities are less likely to have the social networks that play a crucial role in getting on to the career ladder following graduation. Social networks formed through family and wider community links may be more significant in some sectors or industries than others. Some employers may choose to recruit through informal channels that are well known to them or to avoid recruitment costs, and this kind of practice disfavours ethnic minority candidates.

Studies examining the progress of graduates into higher professions such as law, confirm the importance of contacts in obtaining the first job after graduation, which can be a key factor determining later progress. King *et al* (1990), for instance, found that in searching for trainee positions, ethnic minority law graduates sent twice as many applications and received fewer interviews, and that family background and contacts in the profession were important factors in obtaining positions. Following the progress of a cohort of law students, Shiner (1997) confirmed the importance of work experience for career progression, and the crucial role of family links in obtaining a trainee job. Investigating the experiences of ethnic minority architecture students, Barnes *et al* (2004) found a difficulty of finding professional practice placements, which form an integral part of architectural education. A lack of institutional support in arranging work-practice was repeatedly emphasised by the students interviewed. Crucially, the professional practice stage was identified as a key time when students may drop out of their architectural training. Students who managed to gain some work experience had often done so by working the community links that they had, and while this had been instrumental in helping them complete the required professional practice, it had also constrained their professional development and restricted them to working on the margins of the profession.

Ethnic minority students, with the exception of Chinese and Other-Asian students, are concentrated in the post-1992 new universities. After controlling for a number of salient factors such as age, entry qualifications, and number of exam sittings, analysis of admission rates show that they are less likely to gain admission to traditional universities (Modood and Shiner, 1994). It is suggested that, at least for Black students, who are more likely to be mature students and to study part-time, this may reflect the suitability of new universities to their circumstances, where part-time study is more prevalent. Research, however, also shows that employment outcomes differ according to the type of university attended (Owen *et al*, 2000). Ethnic minorities in the new universities may not even hear about some employer's

vacancies, or by virtue of their place of study, would be at a disadvantage when they apply.

Employment outcomes were also found to be related to degree class, and once again evidence suggests that white students are more likely to gain first class or upper second class degrees. Black students, meanwhile, have the greatest percentages obtaining lower second class degrees. Partly, these results are also likely to reflect socio-economic background and prior qualifications. Black students are more likely to be mature students, while the other groups in higher education have an age profile broadly similar to that for white students, with the other exception of Chinese who are significantly younger than all other groups. Compared to just over a third of whites, over half of Black undergraduates are aged 25 or over. Black students are also more likely to have 'non-standard' entry qualifications than all other groups, which is consistent with their mature student profile, as mature students would be expected to have come through non-standard routes. They are also significantly more likely than other groups to study part-time (Connor *et al*, 1996; Owen *et al*, 2000; Barnes *et al*, 2004). Poor degree results may also be indicative of insufficient academic and pastoral support by institutions. Barnes *et al* (2004) demonstrated the alienation felt by many ethnic minority students studying architecture, and highlighted a lack of communication and pastoral and financial support, both during academic study and in professional practice placements.

Psychometric tests, used widely to test applicants for suitability, by measuring knowledge and experiences that depend on one's background rather than the ability to the job at hand, can work to the disadvantage of ethnic minority candidates, as they are more likely to have had experiences that do not conform to expected patterns (McHenry, 2000). In fact, published evidence shows that ethnic minorities, on the whole, perform badly at psychometric tests (PIU, 2002). Commenting on a case brought against British Rail by Asian job applicants, one psychologist said *'If I designed a system to discriminate against Asians, I could not have done it better'* (PIU, 2002).

Evidence presented in section 1.3 indicated a persistence of discrimination in recruitment, particularly in the private sector (Noon, 1993; Hoque and Noon, 1999; CRE, 1996a; British Medical Journal, 1997). Ethnic minority graduates seeking employment in higher professions such as law, medicine, architecture and the higher education sector all reported instances of discrimination. One in four of those applying for jobs in higher education and one in three of ethnic minority pupil barristers reported experiences of discrimination or harassment on grounds of ethnicity (Carter *et al*, 1999; Shiner *et al*, 1995). Instances of discrimination and abuse were also reported by architecture students on professional practice placements and many commented on how this eroded their confidence and intensified their sense of being an 'outsider' and of not fitting in (Barnes *et al*, 2004).

1.6.4 Multiple disadvantage

The review of the profiles of sub-groups among the unemployed ethnic minorities not only reveals particular needs and employment profiles, but also illustrates the multitude and complexity of barriers faced by some of them.

Research has shown that people with multiple problems face particular barriers to employment. Berthoud (2003) has demonstrated that the risk of unemployment rises with the number of problems faced. Those with six barriers to employment have a 90% risk of being unemployed. Certain combinations of barriers also raise the risk of unemployment beyond that which would be attributable to simple additive or cumulative effects. For instance, older Pakistanis and Bangladeshis with low qualifications and skills have an even higher risk of non-employment (82 per cent) than might have been predicted by those three characteristics (71 per cent).

People facing multiple barriers to work require support that is personalised, intensive, and responsive to individual circumstances and motivations. Statutory provision, such as the New Deal, may fail to meet these needs fully. Given the current buoyant state of the UK labour market, many multiply disadvantaged people do manage to find jobs at entry level, but often fail to sustain these jobs, or make progress over time. Lakey *et al.* (2001) found that people in this situation often benefited from opportunities to engage in work trials, whether paid or unpaid, and from the provision of in-work support, at least during the initial stages of employment.

The client base of EMO providers includes ethnic minority groups with multiple barriers to employment. Older migrants of different ethnic origins who are also likely to lack formal qualifications or refugees with language needs, overseas qualifications and no UK work experience are some of the groups likely to face multiple disadvantage. This is an issue with significant implications for participants' future employment prospects and also for the work of EMO providers with such clients.

1.7 Employability and distance from the labour market

A key objective of this evaluation is to understand EMO clients' position in the labour market, the barriers they face in obtaining work and the role of EMO provision in helping them to overcome these barriers and move into employment. In establishing participants' position in the labour market, this study utilises the concept of 'employability' and attempts to measure their distance from the labour market, both at time of initial contact, during, and at the end of a period of exposure to EMO services.

The recent interest in employability has been driven by two contemporary developments:

- the changing nature of the contract between employers and employees with employability developing as a replacement for job security;

- the changing nature of public employment policy with increasing emphasis placed on skills-based solutions to economic competition and work-based solutions to economic deprivation.

Within this changing public policy context, politicians define objectives of various labour market or education and learning programmes as enhancing the employability of participants (HM Treasury 1997; DfES news release, February 1998).

Whilst the term employability has existed in the literature for some time, it is used in different contexts and with various meanings. Although there is relatively little literature directly on employability, studies looking at career guidance, skills development, education and unemployment provide some relevant material. Some key themes emerge from a review of the literature in terms of what employability means. The term is used to refer to individual's ability to take responsibility for their careers, be able to obtain and sustain employment, and to develop the skills necessary to move between jobs (Handy, 1989).

A number of attempts have been made to define and explicate aspects of the term more systematically. Dench (1997) suggested that employability consists of:

• Core skills: divided into personal characteristics (e.g. integrity, reliability, motivation, judgement) and attributes (subdivided into thinking, interactive, business and self-management skills).

• Vocational skills: skills transferable within occupations.

• Job specific skills: skills/knowledge with a narrower application.

Industry in Education (1996) distinguishes between five sets of skills and qualities:

• Knowledge and understanding describes the basic knowledge and ability to think, understand and reason.

• Aptitudes and personality trait is about individual capabilities and preferences.

• Knowledge based skills are those based on knowledge such as literacy and numeracy and also higher skills such as computing.

• Practical skills refer to more artistic and craft skills.

• Personal qualities are about a person's underlying values, attitudes to work and social skills.

Hillage and Pollard (1998) argue that employability is essentially about what people have to offer employers (their knowledge and skills), how they use what they know, the way they present their knowledge and skills, and the context in which they seek employment. Their attempt to develop a more comprehensive, refined and clear definition also claims to combine the demand and supply side elements that together constitute employability. Hillage and Pollard identify four key components to the term employability:

• **Assets** comprise of individuals' knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is possible to further distinguish between: baseline assets, such as basic skills and personal attributes (e.g. reliability, integrity); intermediate assets, such as occupational skills, generic or key skills (e.g. communication and problem solving skills), and

key personal attributes (e.g. motivation, initiative); and high-level assets that contribute to organisational performance (e.g. self-management, team working).

• **Deployment** consists of a linked set of abilities including career management skills (i.e. being aware of occupational interests, abilities, opportunities available and having the ability to develop a strategy to get to where one wants to be); job search skills (i.e. finding suitable jobs, access to formal/informal networks) and having a strategic approach (i.e. being adaptable to labour market developments, willingness to be mobile).

• **Presentation** centres on the ability to demonstrate employability in an accessible way (e.g. presentation of CVs, interview techniques).

• **The personal and labour market context** refers to the external circumstances which affect the ability to realise one's employability potential (e.g. personal circumstances such as caring responsibilities or external factors such as change in labour market demand).

This use of the concept has been criticised for putting the responsibility with the individual for being unemployed (Robinson, 1997). The interaction between the various elements of employability is also relatively underemphasized and not explored in any detail. Similarly, while there have been attempts to measure employability, there is a limited discussion of the issues and problems of measurement in the literature.

A key objective of the EMO initiative is to help unemployed ethnic minority people move closer to the labour market and into employment. This evaluation is concerned with understanding aspects of individual's employability, the barriers they face in searching for employment and the impact of EMO providers' role in supporting them making the transitions from an unemployed to an employed position. The research has a longitudinal element that follows a sub-sample of participants over the course of a 10-15 month period. Evaluation of individual's initial position in the labour market and the distance they travelled over the course of this period considers both objective and subjective components of employability. Issues of definition and measurement are discussed in relation to case studies and discussed in detail in Chapter 9. There is no mention of which models work best.

1.8   Initiatives comparable to EMO undertaken abroad

In considering the extent to which initiatives comparable to EMO have been implemented in other industrialised countries, it is important to bear in mind the overall labour market context. Both the size of ethnic minority communities, and the types of policies adopted in respect of employment and other social rights, vary considerably across countries and regions. In addition, measures may be targeted specifically at ethnic minority groups, or, more usually, at disadvantaged groups within the labour market. For instance, in the United States, a variety of programmes for adults facing labour market disadvantage have been made available in different

states under the auspices of the Employment and Training Administration, with Workforce Investment Act funding. The only groups which are the subject of targeted initiatives are those identified as 'Indian or Native American'[2]. Additionally, affirmative action[3] provides a number of mechanisms including quotas, targets and set asides for employment. For the award of contracts, the establishment of numerical and non-numerical preferences and the development of targeted programmes, which affect private and public sector policies.

The Scandinavian countries have traditionally been very ethnically homogeneous, and so have only fairly recently developed specific initiatives in respect of ethnic minority workers, while other countries, such as Germany and Austria, have a long history of employing migrant workers (third country nationals) in specific industries or sectors, without them necessarily acquiring the rights of citizenship.

The poor employment prospects of ethnic minority groups have given rise to policy concern in a number of other OECD countries, and a review of the 15 EU member states and Norway (Wrench, 1996) found that racial prejudice was widespread, and that in some countries the unemployment rate of minority groups was four times that of the indigenous population. Additionally, some traditional practices, such as offering jobs to the children of employees, resulted in indirect discrimination against those from ethnic minority groups. Case studies of each of the countries in the review are available at (www.eiro.eurofound.ie), but the policies described are by now rather dated.

Within the EU, the debate has been shaped by Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000, implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (*Official Journal L 180, 19/07/2000 P. 0022 – 0026),* and by the European Employment Strategy, which requires member states to submit annual action plans. A large number of training and employment initiatives relevant to ethnic minority groups have also been funded under the auspices of the European Social Fund (ESF), including in the UK. A recent review of active welfare and employment policies in the EU (Ditch and Roberts, 2002) includes many examples of good practice in local employment schemes, although few of these appear to relate directly to ethnicity. Wrench (1997) has described a Belgian project that set up training courses for unemployed miners, and actively sought to recruit a high proportion of immigrant workers, at the same time recruiting those members of the indigenous workforce viewed as most 'tolerant' towards those of a different ethnic group. In addition to technical and skills training, the courses provided cultural and language training with the aim of building up a multi-ethnic workforce.

In Sweden, legislation prohibiting racial discrimination in employment was not introduced until 1999, and the first case was decided in December 2002; the newly created post of Integration Minister is largely concerned with the under-employment

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[2] See: http://wdsc.doleta.gov/dinap

[3] See: http://www.number-10.gov.uk/files/pdf/us.pdf

of migrant workers with high-level skills. Norway is currently introducing new measures, and considering legislation[4].

Revised legislation was introduced in the Netherlands in 1998, requiring employers to plan and implement measures to monitor and increase the proportion of ethnic employees in the workforce, but by late 2000 was seen to have been largely ineffective. A subsequent job creation scheme, introduced in 2000, and extended until 2004, aimed at increasing opportunities for ethnic minority groups in small and medium-sized enterprises, was evaluated more positively, although it was deemed to have had less impact on unemployment rates than the upturn in the economy as a whole[5]. 60,000 people from ethnic minority groups were employed in the first two years of this scheme; almost two-thirds remained in these jobs in 2002 (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2003).

A training project for unemployed immigrants undertaken between 1997 and 1999, partly funded by the ESF and evaluated by the Danish National Institute for Social Research, and providing training to 190 participants, was deemed a success, with 70% of those who took part moving into employment or further training[6]. The Danish Employers Confederation have recently made a commitment to parity of treatment for issues of racial equality and gender issues, and a commitment to improving the position of workers from ethnic minority groups was included in the 2002 National Action plan.

In the USA, there is widespread recognition of the continuing disadvantage faced by those from ethnic minority groups (Holzer, 2000). However, the programmes offered are generally targeted on geographical areas, and/or on certain key stages of the life cycle, such as the transition from school to work, rather than being made available to people of a particular ethnic origin. Publicly funded measures include the Job Corps and Youth Corps, which provide around a year of residential training. An initiative called Bridges to Work has also sought to address spatial mismatch issues by providing transport. One very successful organisation, which has been running since the 1960s, is the Centre for Employment and Training, which has 12 sites, all based in areas with significant ethnic minority populations. The East coast sites have served mainly African Americans, while those on the West coast and in Northern California serve respectively the Hispanic and Asian communities. This centre is funded equally by the public sector and by private corporations, and the training is tailored to meet the demands of local labour markets[7]. Another programme which is generally regarded as very successful is the STRIVE programme[8],

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[4] www.eiro.eurofound.ie

[5] http://www.eiro.eurofound.ie/2001/01/inbrief/NL0101119N.html
    http://www.eiro.eurofound.ie/2002/08/feature/NL0208102F.html

[6] www.eiro.eurofound.ie/2000/05/feature/DK0005179F.html

[7] www.cetweb.org

[8] www.strivewnewyork.org

established in 1985, and now with branches in 20 US cities and a London branch in the UK. This is a non-profit programme, which focuses on the acquisition of soft skills to enhance employability, and claims to have found jobs for 75 per cent of those graduating from it, with 70 per cent remaining in work after two years. Although not targeted at ethnic minority groups as such, but more generally on those facing significant labour market disadvantage, the nature of the geographical areas served means that minority groups are well represented as users, and the images on the website also make this clear.

In addition to programmes aimed at addressing labour market disadvantage faced by established communities, a number of countries make specific provision for the integration of newly arrived immigrants. These include Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Finland. The proposed changes to German immigration legislation impose a legal commitment to take part in integration measures, which were formerly voluntary (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2003).

2 Design of the EMO pilot and its evaluation

2.1 Summary

- This chapter describes the design of the EMO pilot and its evaluation. The initiative ran from April 2002, and is ongoing. PSI's evaluation covered the first two years of its operation, and involved quantitative analysis of MI data relating to participants and employers, and qualitative depth interviews with participants, providers and other stakeholders in the pilot.

- 20 EMO providers were sampled, to provide a range of different types of provision, all five areas involved, and a range of communities. Projects were not evenly distributed across the five areas, but reflected the overall allocation of funding by area.

- Interviews with project managers were carried out at three stages, in early autumn 2002 (familiarisation) winter 2002 (phase 1) and winter 2003 (phase 2).

- The evaluation included 148 initial depth interviews (66 in autumn 2002 and 82 in spring 2003) with EMO clients, chosen to be representative of the range of people using the provision. Participants were sampled via projects, and were contacted in languages other than English where providers indicated that this was appropriate.

- Longitudinal interviews were carried out with a selection of participants, reflecting different positions in terms of their distance from the labour market.

- Interviews with other stakeholders included front-line Jobcentre Plus staff, employers, and referral agencies.

- The evaluation was methodologically challenging, as it required a large number of interviews to be carried out in a variety of languages, and also involved several waves of longitudinal interviews. These methods improved response rates, and enabled a detailed examination of how projects developed over time, and the progress made by participants over the course of the evaluation.

2.2   Research approach

In May 2002, the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) was commissioned by the DWP to undertake independent research, providing an evaluation of the EMO initiative. PSI's research ran for the first two years of the EMO pilot provision and looked at its implementation processes, delivery and referral mechanisms, programme flexibilities, key stakeholders' opinions, client outcomes, the performance of the programme and its impact as a whole on the participants involved. In doing this, it has identified weaknesses in the process, and drawn out examples of good practice. In particular, by using a qualitative approach to examine clients' outcomes, it has provided more holistic information than can be obtained through statistical information on outcome figures. Perhaps most centrally, it has developed an assessment of the programme's capacity to move jobless individuals from ethnic minority groups closer to the labour market and into work.

In order to address the aims of the evaluation, PSI's research adopted a layered case study approach, employing a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods to tackle the key questions. The quantitative evaluation involved analysis of statistical information through descriptive summaries of Management Information (MI) data. The aim of this analysis is to identify the number of people accessing EMO and their characteristics and outcomes. The analysis considers separately, projects that adopted an employer-based approach (Approach 2), where the unit of observation within projects is an employer, and projects focused on individual participants (approaches I and III) where the unit of observation within projects is a participant. The analysis covers all participants in EMO with an MI record between April 2002 and March 2004.

A sample of 20[9] case study projects, drawn from across all five regions was utilised for the qualitative evaluation. Linked to these, a series of depth interviews were conducted to examine the experiences of key stakeholders over the course of the provision. These interviews are described in more detail below. The project also has a longitudinal element, following projects, in addition to two sets of participants from a range of ethnic minority communities in the 18 months after becoming involved in projects, to consider how their participation in the EMO programme has affected their labour market positioning and job readiness. This integrated longitudinal methodology enabled the evaluation to build the results of early stages of the research into subsequent parts of the project and to allow for maximum interrogation of data.

This report provides the final analysis from PSI's evaluation, incorporating and synthesising longitudinal data from all sets of stakeholders, together with final analysis of DWP administrative data and a detailed labour market analysis.

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[9] One of which left the evaluation after a short period, as it was no longer delivering EMO.

2.3   Timetable

Implementing the evaluation necessitated making some changes to the original proposed research timetable in order to best complement the way the pilot was working on the ground, and to maximise good research practices. For example, familiarisation took place in August/September 2002 (rather than June/July 2002), due to delays in receiving information on the successful bids. This meant that the first wave of interviews with project managers was a month later than scheduled (November rather than October), in order for the case study sampling process to be conducted.

There were three main stages or phases to the evaluation: stage one in October/November 2002, stage two in April/May 2003 and stage three in November/December 2003. Although these constituted the main periods of fieldwork, representing critical times in the histories of the projects, smaller numbers of interviews were also conducted outside these periods (such as longitudinal interviews with clients and interim visits with Jobcentre staff, employers and other agencies).

One issue that was not considered in drawing up the initial timetable for the research was the impact of religious and cultural festivals (from Eid, Ramadan, and Christmas, to Chinese New Year). This meant that it was not always possible to interview particular project staff or participants from these projects, at exactly the time specified, and required researchers to be extremely flexible in arranging fieldwork. EMO providers also noted a marked seasonality in participants' use of services.

2.4   Familiarisation

'Familiarisation' consisted of interviews with 23 project managers, covering all five regions in which EMO had been made available. A small number of additional projects were contacted by telephone. Selection of projects took place in consultation with the DWP and ensured that a range of areas, modes of delivery, provider types and client groups were included. It was also to some extent affected by project managers' availability for interview during the familiarisation phase, and practical issues, such as delays in receiving details of successful bids.

The rationale for the evaluation commencing with this focus on EMO project managers was that this group had a pivotal role in the implementation of the programme and in aiding the evaluation. In the familiarisation stage, project workers/managers were asked for core information that helped to facilitate the further stages of the research, including interviews with clients and a range of other stakeholders. Familiarisation visits also covered organisational background, project approach and specific outreach needs, local circumstances, staffing issues, and issues raised by implementing EMO. A flexible topic guide was used by the research team to ensure that certain key issues were covered, and short reports were produced on each familiarisation visit, which were imported into NVivo and analysed alongside transcripts and other research materials (see analysis section below).

The familiarisation stage of the research performed several functions. First, it enabled researchers to become familiar with the issues that the implementation of EMO services was raising for local providers, the different ways in which the service operated in practice, and the significance of varying local contexts. These factors informed the development of topic guides for successive stages of the research. Second, it provided a rationale for case study sampling, since having developed an overview of a range of different sorts of provisions in various parts of the country, and serving a diverse range of client groups, the evaluation was better placed to identify the twenty case studies that would provide an optimum cross-section of local provision. Third, the familiarisation stage played an important role in informing providers about the evaluation and establishing trust and good working relationships between the research team and local EMO providers, which was to prove vital in effecting later stages of the research.

Despite the slight delay in the timing of the familiarisation visits, not all projects were fully up and running at this stage. For example, some had experienced difficulties recruiting suitable staff, others had come across delays in contracts being signed, and several had issues in terms of identifying suitable client groups with which to work. A further important issue raised at the familiarisation stage was that the categorisation of projects into approaches one, two and/or three was sometimes contentious, and that while projects may have been funded for one approach (although they had applied for funding for several), in practice they sometimes felt that they were in fact delivering more than one approach, and that not to do so would jeopardise the success of the project.

2.5   Sampling of projects for the case studies

The final sample of EMO providers was decided in consultation with the DWP, on the basis of an internal report on the familiarisation phase. Important criteria were that a range of delivery models (one, two and/or three), types of providers and interventions, size of organisations, areas, and ethnic minority client groups were included. Less quantifiable criteria, such as the types of issues encountered in implementing EMO, were also important and the sample included a range of projects, from those who had experienced particular difficulties during set up, to those for whom running the project had raised unexpected issues, and projects which had found the process relatively straightforward and which were running projects broadly as envisaged in their bids. In the event, it was decided not to sample four EMO providers in each of the five areas, as had originally been proposed, but, as it became clear that funded projects were not evenly distributed across all areas (some areas had as few as two projects whilst others had six or seven) it was preferable to sample in relation to the numbers of projects in each area (although all five regions were represented). Concentrating more heavily on particular areas enabled the research to draw out inter-project cooperation and competition, difference and similarity.

2.6   Identification of research subjects

The case study design of the evaluation entailed research with a number of key stakeholders associated with local projects. These were identified in the proposal as programme participants, providers (specifically, project managers), local partnerships, Jobcentre Plus front-line staff, referral agencies, local partners, and employers working with outreach providers. The research on the ground revealed that the conceptual divisions between these categories of stakeholders were not always as clear-cut as had been envisaged, and that certain groups were more central to local EMO relationships than others. This knowledge was one of the elements that informed the sampling strategy. For example, the distinction between local partners and referral agencies was not found to be particularly helpful, since these were often coterminous, and additionally local partners were likely to be sampled on the basis of being local providers. Furthermore, there was little evidence that local partnerships supporting EMO were in operation by the first phase of fieldwork, despite concerns from providers that these were something that would support their work. For sampling purposes all stakeholders that were working with projects but were not employers or Jobcentre Plus staff were defined as 'other agencies'.

Project managers provided the first point of contact in terms of developing the portfolio of stakeholder interviews for each case study. The key stakeholders to be interviewed in relation to each project were programme participants, project workers, Jobcentre front-line staff, and, where appropriate, employers and other agencies. Project managers were asked to provide PSI with lists of recent or current clients (see below) covering a range of criteria, and in addition, during interviews some time was spent discussing projects' relationships with other local stakeholders, in order to identify the most suitable ones to be interviewed as part of the case studies. Suggestions for stakeholder interviews were subsequently collated, in order for PSI researchers to identify a range of different type of stakeholders (as opposed to conducting similar interviews in each area). Several approach 2 providers had difficulties recruiting employers initially and so were unable to provide employer details in the first phase of the research. Many of the employers contacted were unwilling or unavailable for interview, which led to lower numbers of employer interviews than planned in the original sample.

It had originally been planned to sample participants directly via their MI data. In the event, this was not practicable, for two reasons. First, delays in receiving the initial data, and its limited coverage, meant that fieldwork would have been severely delayed, and would not have covered all providers. Second, in order to write to participants with ESOL needs in the appropriate language, it was necessary to obtain information from projects themselves. In order to reduce the possibility of selection bias (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003), projects were asked to provide a list of participants, from which to sample; for reasons that are discussed below, the actual sampling process was more complex than this, and may therefore not be fully representative of all groups in the evaluation.

2.7   The interviews

Staff at PSI carried out all the interviews with project managers, building on the individual relationships that had been established during the familiarisation stage of the research. By the phase one stage of the evaluation, project managers frequently facilitated further interviews with outreach or project workers, to enable the researchers to gain further insight into local provisions and the issues raised by EMO. All of these interviews took place at local project premises. Staff at PSI also organised and conducted all the interviews with Jobcentre Plus staff, employers and other agencies.

With the exception of the pilot interviews, which were conducted by PSI staff, interviews with clients who had participated in the EMO projects were conducted by a team of freelance interviewers trained and briefed by the research team at PSI, and who were based across the country. Freelancers were purposefully matched as far as practicable to clients on the basis of ethnicity and gender, in order to maximise interviewees' comfort, enhance rapport, and promote clients' ongoing participation in the evaluation. Freelancers rarely worked on more than a handful of projects, in order to maximise their knowledge of the particular provisions which clients were likely to be experiencing.

Client interviews took place in a range of locations. The majority of people were happy for external interviewers to visit them in their homes, but where this was not feasible, interviews were arranged at project venues, or more rarely, in a suitably private public venue. The important issue here was that interviews took place wherever clients felt most comfortable. £20 was paid as a gift to EMO participants for taking part in the research, a technique that is particularly effective for gaining access to low-income groups. All interviews were taped, with informants' permission, assigned unique anonymised identifiers, and transcribed verbatim. At the end of each interview, clients were asked whether they would be willing to take part in follow-up interviews.

A central concern in this research was anonymity because the evaluation engaged with some sensitive and potentially damaging issues. It worked with a client group that was potentially both vulnerable and/or suspicious of Jobcentre Plus services, and which may have been fearful of future sanctioning. Project workers were also unlikely to disclose sensitive material if subsequent reports identified them, for fear of jeopardising relationships and the prospect of future funding. We have therefore, in all instances, protected participants' anonymity, and where individual or project details are particularly unique and identifiable, they have either been disguised, or are not referred to in reports. Pseudonyms have assigned to all participants, double checked against other informants' real names, to ensure that none are duplicated. Stakeholders are identified only by the type of organisation they represent (EMO provider, employer, etc.). Projects are also not linked to areas in order not to make them less identifiable although this has implications for the extent to which area factors can be drawn out.

2.7.1 Interviews with project managers

First phase interviews with project managers were conducted by the PSI research team in November 2002.

Topic guides followed a standardised format, All interviews covered information relating to developing interventions, meeting outcomes, targeting clients, working with Jobcentres and other local providers, employers or agencies, staffing issues, and general issues concerning the pilot and concept of EMO, such as changes to proposed client group and particular problems which clients were facing. However, the topic guide also allowed for unique features of the projects and projects' experiences to be explored and followed up, and entailed a degree of flexibility in line with the rather different sorts of experiences which outreach based, employer-focused and positive action training projects were likely to have.

Project managers were revisited for further interviews during the third wave of fieldwork (November 2003 to January 2004), to help identify how things had changed over time, allowing the evaluation to explore experience and outcomes over a longer period of the EMO programme. This provided an opportunity to recap on their experience of working on the EMO pilot, and supplemented more informal (telephone) contact that had taken place in the intervening period.

2.7.2 Interviews with EMO clients

Prior to the first phase of interviews with EMO clients, project managers were asked to provide PSI with lists of approximately ten clients who had recently been involved with or who continued to take part in their EMO project. In providing these lists, projects were asked to identify a range of different types of clients (where this was appropriate – some projects, for example, worked only with a particular ethnic or gender group) in terms of ethnicity, involvement in the project, and various other demographic criteria, such as gender and age. PSI subsequently wrote to these clients with a standardised DWP introductory letter, emphasising the independent nature of the research and the £20 gift for taking part, and asking clients to return an opt-in form providing their contact details and interview needs (such as a female interviewer, or an interviewer with particular language skills). Project managers had already indicated where clients had strong ESOL needs, and for these individuals, introductory letters and opt-in forms were translated into their first language. Where projects felt that providing lists of their clients breached confidentiality agreements, introductory letters and opt-in forms were distributed directly by project managers or outreach workers to clients, who asked interested participants to return them to PSI in the prepaid enveloped provided. This method enabled project managers to allay any concerns clients had about taking part in the evaluation, and to differentiate it from any Jobcentre-related activity.

A supplementary sampling strategy, used those cases where the response to the initial letter was very low, was for an interviewer to visit providers and recruit participants on-site. For a variety of reasons, including delays in provision being

delivered, not all projects were represented in the first phase of fieldwork with participants; this was addressed in the second phase.

The interview schedules relating to clients have been an unusual feature of the research, combining a number of closed quantitative questions which built up comparable longitudinal information (which provided an extra dimension to the analysis of 'distance travelled' in later stages of the research), with more traditionally qualitative questions that promoted flexibility and detailed probing. Thus, while this method has produced in-depth qualitative information about clients' experiences of EMO, the closed questions have provided a comparable framework across an extremely diverse range of provisions. Interviews generally lasted around one to one-and-a-half hours, and covered personal characteristics, education and training, language issues, labour market status and employment and non-employment history, barriers to paid work, involvement in and perceptions of EMO projects, distance-travelled measurements, contact with and experiences of Jobcentres, and plans for the future.

The first phase of fieldwork with EMO participants took place in October/November 2002, approximately six to seven months after local projects had commenced their EMO programmes. A second stage of interviews with 'new' clients, comparable to the one described above, was conducted in April/May 2003. Whereas the first stage took in 66 clients, at the second stage 82 programme participants were interviewed. A series of longitudinal interviews with sub-samples of both phase one and phase two clients were conducted over the course of the 18-months of fieldwork (see section 2.6.3 below).

2.7.3   Longitudinal interviews

The longitudinal element of the qualitative research was designed to shed light on how long after entering the programme participants continued to access EMO provision, and why they did so, or why they ended their involvement, as well as mapping any changes in their employment situation over time. Such approaches are beginning to be used more widely in government evaluations, but remain uncommon (Molloy *et al.*, 2002). There is a dearth of literature on qualitative longitudinal research. What there is highlights the centrality of change in the focus of the analysis (Thomson *et al,* 2003) and for this reason the method provides an important tool for exploring the effects of policy intervention on the lives of clients and understanding the mechanisms through which outcomes take place and the routes that participants take to reach these points. Qualitative longitudinal data provides a dynamic picture of people's lives and experiences in that it reveals the stages of the process of change and thus the factors that impact on those social processes that may not be revealed in a single snapshot interview. This method also had more strategic use for the EMO evaluation in that unlike the projects own monitoring systems which are only able to pick up immediate outcomes, it provides a way to track clients who are no longer in touch with the EMO service (Canny et al 2001). In doing so it is able to explore outcomes for clients that may have been a result of EMO intervention but which

occurred after contact had ended. For the evaluation, longitudinal clients were sampled from both phase 1 and phase 2 client interviews based on initial analysis of the data. Thirty were sampled at phase 1 and thirty five at phase 2. The aim in the sampling was to capture groups at different distances from the labour market in order to trace their trajectories (see chapter 9). Longitudinal interviews were conducted five to six months after the first interview and again five to six months after that. A small number of phase 1 longitudinal clients were also interviewed a fourth time.

The problem of attrition in longitudinal interviews is increased with groups who may lead transient or chaotic lifestyles as contact details change and the lack of established social networks make people harder to reach. (Harocopos and Dennis 2003; Ward and Henderson 2003) This was an issue for the evaluation given the numbers of asylum seekers, recent migrants and students in the sample. In order to try to reduce this, it was seen as crucial to build rapport and trust with the client and as far as possible individual freelancers carried out all the interviews with a given client. This arrangement provided a valuable degree of continuity in relationships, and the trust which interviewees have been able to establish makes it more likely that clients would stay in the evaluation for its duration. In addition, having conducted a relatively small number of interviews each, freelancers developed an in-depth knowledge of 'their' clients, which provided a substantial advantage in terms of the quality of longitudinal interviews, which aimed to establish the degree of change or movement in participants' circumstances since their last interview.

Most follow up interviews were around five months apart some were slightly more and other slightly less depending on how difficult the interviewers had found it to reach their clients. Some clients were unavailable for one round of follow-ups (for instance because of illness or the topic guides for the longitudinal interviews was based on the initial phase 1/phase 2 interview guide. Factual information on participants' circumstances such as housing was collected at each interview in order to track changes in their personal circumstances. Participants were asked about their current or potential employment and participation in the EMO provision, and other education and training. Participants who had left the project continued to be asked about their experiences of the project at subsequent interviews to gauge if their feelings about the provision changed as they moved on. The scale questions were included at each round and participants were also asked about their hopes for the future in order to explore how these were fulfilled or not, or whether they changed over time.

2.7.4   Interviews with other stakeholders

Interviews have also been conducted with front-line Jobcentre staff, local employers (both as participants under approach 2 projects, and as employers of project participants), and with a range of agencies working with local projects during phases one, two and three of the research, to investigate how they have been affected by EMO provision, and how they would like to see it developed. Topic guides for all these groups were necessarily flexible in order to cope with huge

variety that existed within the stakeholders groups particularly in relation to their experiences of EMO. Topic guides for employers also needed to take into account the differences between the two types of employer.

The aim was to interview one or two staff members in the key Jobcentres in each location. Those sampled were Jobcentres that the projects identified as the ones they had developed some kind of working relationship with. Interviews with Jobcentre Plus staff were conducted at both phases of the research and the second phase interviews were concerned with filling any gaps that may have been left at phase one, particularly where a project was slower to engage with Jobcentres, and also going back to previous Jobcentre staff members in order to explore how things had changed over the course of the pilot. District Programme Quality Management Team (DPQMT) staff were also included in the second wave of interviews, as it became clear that they had a key role in the pilot.

The other agency interviews varied enormously. Some were working closely with projects. Others simply provided desk space for a weekly outreach surgery or referred clients occasionally. A small number accepted clients from the project although there were fewer in this category possibly because they had less contact with the project. Interviews were conducted at both phases although it was not felt necessary to visit the same organisation more than once. Some had links with more than one project in an area.

Employers' interviews were also very diverse, and included employers who had little knowledge of EMO but had simply taken on a member of staff who had been an EMO client. Others had attended a diversity training provided by the project or received some consultancy from an EMO approach 2 project worker. Again interviews were conducted at both phases, and as with other agency interviews, it was not felt necessary to repeat interviews except where projects highlighted that this might be important.

2.8   Interviewing issues

2.8.1   Recruiting and retaining the client sample

Certain groups of research respondents are recognised as being harder to reach than others. While ethnic minority groups are sometimes included in this category, their prior contact with the projects meant that this was less of an issue in this research. The client sample is, however, likely to under-represent those with more severe problems, who are less likely to have been included in the project's initial sample, and less likely to respond to the original contact letter. Without the adoption of a secondary sampling strategy, the sample of participants would have been severely biased in this respect. As discussed below, using translated letters and offering interviews in minority languages have both been important strategies in reaching the wide range of ethnic minority communities represented here, and in allowing those with ESOL needs to be represented.

Attrition is a problem for all longitudinal research. As discussed above, this particularly affected recent arrivals, including asylum seekers and overseas students, and they are therefore under-represented amongst the longitudinal sample. Overall, the use of the same interviewer for repeat contact helped to ensure that problems of attrition were minimised (Molloy *et al.*, 2002). In addition to the topics discussed in the interviews, interviewers often recorded changes in participants' appearance and demeanour, which were also indicative of the benefits of their involvement with EMO. It was also notable that respondents spoke more freely with interviewers on repeat visits, because of the trusting relationship that had been established.

2.8.2   Language needs and their implications for the research

One third of all participant interviews were conducted in a minority language. Interviews were carried out in seven minority languages; Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Cantonese, Mandarin, Turkish, Somali. Over one third of participants reported having difficulties of various degrees in English language and one third felt unable to conduct the interview in English. Thus, meeting the language needs of participants was essential for ensuring equality, inclusiveness and representativeness. It was possible to offer interviews in minority languages when requested by participants. In the great majority of cases these interviews were carried out by bilingual freelance interviewers with qualitative research skills and experience. These interviewers also translated the transcripts into English. Interpreters were used in only seven initial interviews. All longitudinal interviews conducted in a minority language were carried out by bilingual interviewers. In a few interviews conducted in English, mainly with asylum seekers and Asian women, participants' competence was not as good as initially indicated and the quality of data gathered in these interviews would have been better had the interview been conducted in the participant's first language.

While working with interpreters or bilingual interviewers has become an integral part of research into ethnic minority issues, language issues are rarely problematised in social research (Bradby, 2002). There has been some recent interest in the implications of working with interpreters (Edwards, 1998, Temple and Edwards, 2002), but there is a dearth of literature on working with bilingual interviewers and therefore with translated transcripts (Bradby, 2002).

The majority of interviews for this project were conducted by bilingual interviewers. In contrast to working with interpreters, this has the advantage of working with interviewers qualified and trained in qualitative research and also familiar with issues around ethnic minority disadvantage, characteristics which have been fundamental to establishing interview rapport and in producing high-quality transcripts. Moreover, the interview setting, as it does not involve a third party sitting in, remains a normal one-to-one qualitative interview. One positive outcome of working with trained interviewers has been the achievement of high quality interviews. However, only one of the interviewers was a qualified interpreter and translator and while some of

the others had experience of such work, they were not formally trained in translation.

In order for the interview process to be transparent for researchers, there is a need for detailed field notes discussing language issues as an aspect of the interview and for annotated transcripts. There is therefore a need for a full briefing on these issues at the start of the project, as translators will otherwise tend to provide 'clean/edited' transcripts. These were all an integral part of PSI's research process.

2.9   Analysis

All transcripts and fieldwork notes were imported onto QSR NVivo, a software package that facilitates the coding and analysis of qualitative data. A comprehensive coding framework was developed which enabled the key themes from all sets of stakeholder interviews to be integrated together. Given the extensive variables created by the huge variety of client groups and the wide range of stakeholders this coding frame was necessarily complex but it also had to be navigable. It had to accommodate the various respondents and their views on a wide range of issues. Not only was there data on the EMO pilot, but these different groups all commented in various ways on the clients, the Jobcentre and in some cases employers as well as more conceptual issues such as 'distance travelled' and barriers to work.

Key demographic information on the clients, such as age, gender and ethnicity, was recorded in document attributes on NVivo. These provided a useful search facility for basic counting operations. Attributes were also used to record changes in the 'scale' questions relating to employability and 'distance travelled'.

The analysis for the first interim report focused on early implementation issues for providers, describing the ways they were working and the client groups they were dealing with. In addition, it provided a baseline picture of EMO participants and their position in relation to the labour market.

The second interim report focused on the first year of the pilot, exploring the developing relationships between EMO providers and other stakeholders (such as employers and Jobcentre Plus staff) and provided the first feedback on longitudinal interviews with the first cohort of participants.

With the dataset now complete, analysis for the final report was able to make maximum use of NVivo in creating sets (by area, by provider, by phase, by stakeholder type etc) and running searches for particular issues. It explores the issues that have arisen for all stakeholder groups over the life of the pilot. Longitudinal interviews with project workers explore how and why their delivery of the pilot changed over time, while those with clients enable a detailed exploration of their progress towards, or within the labour market.

3 The EMO providers

3.1 Summary

- This chapter describes the work of the 20 providers involved in the evaluation, discusses their experiences of implementing EMO, and provides examples of innovative and effective practice across all three approaches.

- Projects, especially those new to working for Jobcentre Plus, reported a number of implementation problems in the first year, including difficulties with the paperwork, concerns regarding the eligibility of some clients, especially those with existing LMS records, and staffing issues. While some of these problems had been resolved by the second year, others persisted throughout the two-year pilot.

- Providers reported varying relationships with local Jobcentre Plus offices. There were some strong and positive instances of co-operative working, but overall, awareness of the initiative was regarded as low, and projects had not always found it easy to resolve queries on specific issues.

- Approach 1 and 3 providers engaged in a wide variety of strategies to recruit participants. Both innovative uses of technology (SMS texts, Internet, TV and radio advertising) and more traditional outreach techniques (going to local markets and *melas*, running job fairs, offering home visits) were effective in reaching those who had not previously made use of Jobcentre Plus services. Workers with community language skills (e.g. Somali, Arabic, Punjabi) were an important factor in success. Indian and Pakistani women made up the largest groups which had not previously been in contact with the jobcentre.

- Approach 2 providers offered a variety of services, including diversity training, consultancy on diversity issues, and subsidised work placements. Examples of good practice included the use of social events to build employer networks, developmental work, including the establishment of a chamber of commerce in an area where this was previously lacking, and tailoring raining to meet the needs of senior management. Some projects not funded for approach 2 were also engaging in similar activities, since they perceived these as essential to the success of their other EMO targets.

- While many approach 1 and 3 providers were working with people some considerable distance from the labour market and found it difficult to achieve job outcomes in a short timeframe, they reported rapid improvements in participants' confidence and soft skills. Over time, a pressure to achieve job outcomes meant that projects tended to work with those closer to the labour market, rather than those hardest to help.

- In the same way, by the second year of the pilot, approach 2 providers tended to be working with employers most receptive to diversity issues, rather than those which were more resistant, where the work did not generally result in meeting outcome targets.

3.2   Summary of EMO approaches and client groups

This chapter describes the work of the EMO providers, and the strategies they adopted in engaging clients and employers. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the EMO approaches for which the 20 projects in the evaluation were funded, the services delivered and the main client groups served.

Table 3.1   Summary of EMO provision

Approach and staffing	Services offered	Main client groups and issues faced
Approach 1 and 3 One worker Plus freelancer trainer	Outreach with ESOL, IT and job search training. Also runs job fairs.	Chinese, mostly 40+, ESOL needs, already with LMS records.
Approach 1 and 3 One worker and part time administrator. Trainer provided by local college	Outreach with ESOL, and beauty courses and job search support.	Women, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds, many with ESOL needs.
Approach 3 Two managers, several trainers and a full time administrator	Training provider running wide range of courses including ESOL, NVQ and IT.	Mainly African-Caribbean, Afghans, Iraqis, some German and Polish in second year. ESOL needs. Complex problems.
Employers only (approach 2) One manager one worker	Providing diversity training workshops to medium and large professional sector employers. Runs job fairs	NA
Approach 1 One manager one outreach worker	Outreach and signposting to training and Jobcentre Plus services.	African-Caribbean and Asian. A mix of hard to reach and well educated but with little job experience.
Approach 1 and 3 One manager several trainers	Outreach. High level IT training and basic IT training.	Mostly Indian background (Punjabi), mostly men in one site. Graduates male and female
Approach 1 Small EMO team	Radio programme, phone-in advice. Listener's club. Jobsearch.	Mixed age range, gender and ethnicity. Asian, African-Caribbean women, also Irish and Jewish people.

Continued

Table 3.1   Continued

Approach and staffing	Services offered	Main client groups and issues faced
Approach 1 EMO staff team with manager and several outreach workers	Outreach in a range of different communities with emphasis on job outcomes.	Mainly African or Caribbean, mixed gender, mostly under 40.
Approach 1	Internet job search. Job fairs,	Mostly 25-30, mostly men, many Caribbean. Some with ESOL needs.
Approach 1 One outreach workers managed by general EMO manager and shared administrator	Outreach within a particular community signposting and support for Jobcentre Plus and employment,	Turkish and Kurdish, mostly in 30s, with ESOL needs. Around 10% very hard to reach.
Approach 1 One outreach worker managed by manager and shared EMO administrator	Outreach within a community signposting and support for Jobcentre and jobsearch. Organises work placements.	Somali men and women many with ESOL needs, wide age range from teenagers to 50+.
Approach 2 ,3. 2 project workers, managed by manager and supported by information officer.	Diversity workshops for employers. Positive action work placements for clients. Developed a pre-employment support programme in second year.	Employer focused (approach 2). But also clients (placement scheme). Mixed in terms of age, skill level, gender. Mostly Pakistani background, relatively job-ready.
Approach 1 One project worker, self managing and without admin support at start. 3 project worker changes in 2 years.	Signposting to Jobcentre Plus services and other local training providers. Works with local CAB.	Mixed age range. Established local Pakistani community, plus recent arrivals (Iran, Iraq) with leave to remain. Particularly focused on women (partly a feature of staffing).
Approach 1 Manager and 2 outreach workers attached to partner organisations. Joined by a pt administrator in second year.	Signposting to Jobcentre Plus, promoting employment. Outreach local community organisations. Surgeries at Jobcentres.	Asian women, Chinese men, African-Caribbeans. Mostly under 50.
Approach 1. Manager and 8 peripatetic outreach workers. Admin support added in second year.	Outreach, signposting to JC, basic skills & ESOL training, confidence building. Help with childcare.	Women (mainly Pakistani & Bangladeshi). Older with ESOL needs and often depressed. Younger, much closer to labour market.
Approach 1,3, but stopped 1 in second year. Large organisation with a training and general managerial staff, but 1 EMO project worker.	Training including ESOL and basic computing. Delivered in house and in external venues.	Asian women and male refugees. Ex-textile workers. Moderate, not severe ESOL needs.

Continued

Table 3.1   Continued

Approach and staffing	Services offered	Main client groups and issues faced
Approach 1, 3. Large organisation with careers and employment advisers in place. 1 outreach worker, joined by another in the second year.	ESOL and basic computing training. Support with job search and careers advice. Outreach and signposting to Jobcentre Plus. Work placements.	Asian, mostly from Pakistan. Around 10% with significant ESOL needs.
1,2,3	Outreach, jobsearch job fairs, referrals to training	Mostly Indian background. ESOL needs among recent arrivals and older workers. Former textile workers.
1,3 One EMO worker	Outreach, jobsearch, ESOL, training	Mostly Indian background, many women, some asylum seekers. ESOL needs.

3.3   Implementation issues

The first year of EMO implementation was marked by a late start to many projects due to the late signing of contracts that led to delays in recruiting staff, and problems in obtaining the relevant paperwork. Although first year targets were adjusted to take account of this, many projects struggled to reach them. The sections below discuss issues that remained problematic throughout the two years of the pilot for the 20 providers in the sample.

3.3.1   Administration of EMO

A point made almost universally across projects was that the EMO forms that inputted into the MI data require simplification, and that providers, particularly those new to working for Jobcentre Plus, would have benefited from training in how to complete these prior to starting work on the pilot. Although there had been a 'walk through' this occurred before some workers had been recruited and certainly before those in post had really had a chance to use the forms and understand what they were required to do. Where there had been problems, these did not always become apparent immediately, which meant that poor practice could continue unchecked for several months:

Provider: *'I spoke to District and I say that 'some of our outcomes don't match what* [data processing company] *have been holding onto' and the thing is, they've held onto information and not told anyone about it. And that's been really unfair on, on people like ourselves who're thinking 'Well the forms have been sent off, they've not asked any questions, so it's alright.'*

Interviewer: *'Yes.'*

Provider: *'And when District have asked for it from them, they've gone 'Well, we've got about fifteen hundred pages of these people' and they've not told anyone where we're going wrong.'*

By phase two of the fieldwork most providers had got to grips with filling in and processing the forms although there were still problematic areas in these processes for some projects. However, some project workers still did not understand the necessity for the large amount of forms and resented the proportion of their working week devoted to this. A small number of providers explained that delays in relaying information by the company responsible for data processing meant that project workers were having to produce an extra set of paperwork every month to keep District informed of their progress. Several providers had suggestions for ways the form filling could be simplified, including the use of a single form for all approaches, colour-coding forms by approach, and allowing for the recording of changes in a client's personal details.

Several more experienced providers commented on the low rate of payment provided for EMO outcomes, relative to other Jobcentre Plus funding streams. One, which had been highly effective and *'doubled'* its target outcomes, commented that there was a need for a mechanism to draw down additional funding promptly in such circumstances, since they otherwise felt that *'it's not in our best interests, and it's certainly not viable for us to continue with EMO'*. A provider in another region had stopped work on EMO shortly after achieving its initial targets, for similar reasons.

Difficulties caused by the target for people registering with Jobcentre Plus (establishment of LMS record) were widespread for projects throughout the evaluation, whether because those they worked with were already registered (or had been so in the recent past[10]) or because people were unwilling to engage with Jobcentre Plus services.

There is an issue about whether EMO type projects should be funded to work with ethnic minority groups 'disengaged' from Jobcentre Plus even if they are already registered at a Jobcentre and in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. The issue arose most starkly for one provider. This project spent much time in dispute with Jobcentre Plus about whether its older Asian male clients, who already had LMS records, were eligible for EMO. This was a group in the local community adversely affected by industrial decline and with ESOL needs. They were in need of a great deal of support in order to move closer to the labour market. It was ruled at the local level that this project could not work with people already registered with Jobcentre Plus and count them as contributing towards their LMS target. The project was very critical of what it saw as a failure to recognise that there is a substantial constituency of ethnic minority people who are disengaged from the system and not involved in New Deal

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[10] A change in the definition of a recent LMS record, from 18 months to 6 months, part-way through the pilot, helped some, but not all, projects.

programmes. It felt very strongly that these problems stem in part from ambiguity in the design of EMO and resented having to work with a more limited definition of eligible target groups. Arguing that this definition is removed from the realities of the needs of a disadvantaged section of the local community, the project continued to work beyond the EMO framework:

> *'..there is something fundamentally misaligned about a programme that targets groups of people and then systematically disregards the lack of take-up within the system. There is almost a smoke and mirrors arrangement there. It is very easy to talk about 5,000 new people but it is much more challenging and actually much more constructive to look at what is happening to 70,000 people and I don't know but I suspect that what's true of this area is not unique. If you look at areas like Hackney, they would probably find very similar scenarios.'*

This provider also reported that the graduates they had been working with were deemed ineligible for the EMO programme, though it was not clear why this should be the case, as other projects had not been penalised in the same way, and the policy was to accept graduates where they came forward as EMO service users. Several projects found that graduates living locally gravitated towards them for support, indicating a support gap for at least some ethnic minority graduates in the British labour market.

Small providers and those not supported by other funding streams had considerable difficulties meeting basic start up costs. This was the case for employer facing provision that needed good quality publicity material that would be appropriate for professional employers and also for organisations working with a range of minority groups with ESOL needs who faced high costs from translating material. The issue also appeared in relation to meeting basic staffing needs at the start of the project. Some of these were small organisations who had not worked with Jobcentre Plus before and may have had a limited understanding of what would be involved. Training providers who were keen to recruit highly skilled staff to deliver their provision found that this was difficult and some attributed this to the short-term nature of the funding, saying: *'it's hard to get the quality of people you'd like for a two-year contract'*.

3.3.2   Staffing issues

The size of EMO providers varied considerably, from those with only three members of staff to those with over 100 employees. Typically, the total staff group was between five and twenty. The number of staff funded by EMO, and the deployment of EMO funding within organisations, also varied. One common model was the employment of an additional worker, managed by another member of staff, sometimes with dedicated administrative support, with a specific EMO brief. Another model was a small team of between two and five workers, including some dedicated outreach workers, some administrative time and some management. A far less common approach was for EMO funding to support a proportion of staff time across the board. There are certain advantages and disadvantages associated

with these different designs, which will become apparent in the discussion that follows.

Almost all providers, including those that had budgeted for some administrative support, felt that they had underestimated their needs, and would have liked more dedicated staff time for this work. The following comment was typical:

> *'I've never had so much hassle in terms of producing so many reports, there's so much paperwork it's just unbelievable, the bureaucracy's incredible. You spend half your time, when I should be out in the community doing my work, doing paperwork, outputs, and for each individual there's about five or six pieces of paperwork that I have I chase up. It's just unrealistic, to be honest with you.'*

A key skill needed by outreach workers is the ability to go out and engage with the individuals and communities served by the project. This was highlighted by the workers themselves, and by their managers. Those who have these communication and community work skills are not always natural administrators, however, and it was important for structures to be put in place to ensure that work done was appropriately documented. One project worker explained that this was why they had decided on a central office, although the outreach work was conducted at several sites:

> *'There's still one administrative base, which works quite well, because it means there is no bouncing round between, 'cause often people have said '[…]' when you have outreach workers working in the community it's hard to get in contact with them. It's hard to get returns, it's hard to get information back and all the rest of it.'*

The lack of such structures could potentially be very damaging, as one provider found to their cost. Having given an outreach worker a great deal of autonomy to get the job done, it fairly soon became apparent that this was not happening:

> [worker] *'…didn't get one output during all her . . .time… I think what it boiled to, that she was spending a lot of time on outreach but not on behalf of* [project]*, other places, other things… it came to a head when we were asking for her timesheets and when we got them it was simply 'Can't remember', 'Out of the office'… And when we did get it in, when you had just blanks of dates, so that then escalated into 'OK, we have to give you a warning regarding the paperwork and the tracking'. And then two days after the warning she went off sick. So that was frustrating, because then you have to wait for the process to go through.'*

The worker was eventually dismissed, but not before nine months of project funding had elapsed, and management procedures were subsequently tightened considerably. As later discussion of relationships with Jobcentre Plus will demonstrate, there was also a need for clear management structures between providers and Jobcentre Plus, but these had in many cases not become well established until the second year of operation.

Several projects had changes in their staffing over the two-year evaluation period. In some cases, projects have added additional workers to meet the developing needs of their provision. One provider completely restructured the staffing of the provision after the first year bringing in a new manager and recruiting five new outreach workers to replace the original single worker, who had left.

These types of development in staffing were easiest for well-established projects with additional sources of funding, which saw EMO services as complementary to their existing provision. Others reported being tied more tightly to the original design of their bid, especially during the first year, and unable take on more people even when they needed to. The alternative was to start refusing clients' requests for support, which many did not wish, or feel able, to do:

> 'When you write a bid, you know, you write a bid and you look at what you want to do, but as you go more into debt you realise that 'Oh, actually you need to be doing ABCD to really…' Maybe we do need to say no, but… we wouldn't say no, we're about helping individuals.'

Several projects also noted that it had been hard to fill posts or find good quality outreach workers. Again, projects with less financial capital were at a disadvantage here, as they could not provide temporary support for additional staffing needs from other sources of funding.

A number of projects have had high levels of staff turnover during the two years of the pilot. As one would expect, these issues have been more problematic for projects which have adopted the 'one EMO worker' model, since not only has there been a need to rebuild relationships, but this also tended to create a hiatus in the work while a replacement staff member was recruited. In addition, valuable skills and experience have often not been transferred, as this worker explains:

> 'They left [previous two project workers]*, and then I came … So I had no one to sit down with and talk. Maybe to watch someone doing what they do, that would have really helped. Because I came in and I really didn't have much help, there was nobody here. A lot of people in the office didn't really know how the work was done, only* [previous project worker] *really knew.'*

One obvious advantage of having a larger staff team is the ability to meet community needs by recruiting both male and female staff from a variety of backgrounds; another is being able to provide a portfolio of skills, as one project worker explained:

> 'We've got [first female worker] *coming forward who's very good at building gateways with employers, just started to do that straight away. Obviously* [male worker] *is good at the outreach with the* [specific ethnic minority] *community, and* [second female worker] *has come from a management background, so she's actually very good at managing caseloads, very organised and she has a bigger caseload maybe than others. Gets people job-ready and then on to* [first female worker] *when she's fully trained. So there is a certain degree of specialisation, but they've all got their own caseloads which they're going to be accountable for.'*

Project workers in teams also benefited from receiving peer support, whether formally or informally. One project with a team of outreach workers had a close-knit structure, and met regularly to review targets and discuss individual cases, as well as meeting informally for shared lunches on a regular basis. One project worker described the practical mutual support he and his team enjoyed as a key factor in the success of the project:

> *'I mean I've been lucky in that I've got a team of people that back me up … I have support, information support and support from the all outreach workers and so on, even though it's a big office. When they've been out on their visits, they've got my information, they've got my support, permission, details, and therefore I have got support from them when I need it.'*

Workers operating on their own have faced a great deal more pressure, particularly where the initial take-up was low, and there were problems in meeting targets. Being a lone worker also means that there is no cover for training, annual leave or sickness, which can add to the pressures and prevent workers from accessing sources of information and support, as this worker highlighted, *'There's a meeting tomorrow in London but again I can't go, I just can't leave the project on its own'*.

One project, which had a single EMO worker, lost three successive members of staff during the two years of the pilot. Not only did this result in this provider failing to achieve their EMO targets, it also had a knock-on effect on other local providers, who were hoping for cross-referrals and had planned their provision on this basis.

Conversely ,where EMO funding was used to support a proportion of each worker's time across an existing staff team, an obvious possibility was that it would fail to deliver anything distinctively different from existing provision, as appeared to be the case in this project:

> *'...the EMO basically, financially, has enabled a number of things to continue, financially that is how it's been used because we were doing this already and it wasn't a case of let's do something completely new which is not needed. We were trying to meet the community needs already but we're doing it under different funding. Now, when funding ceases it'll be a case of let's have a look for another source of funding.'*

3.3.3 Relationship to Jobcentre Plus

Lack of awareness of EMO in local jobcentres, reported at the first round of interviews, persisted into the second year of the pilot, mainly due to high levels of turnover within local offices. Providers drew a distinction between the contract managers (DPQMT) who were generally regarded as knowledgeable and experienced (one was described as *'brilliant'*, *'beyond fantastic')*, and the front-line staff who tended to know little about the pilot, and whose response to the clients referred was described as being *'ad hoc'* . One provider commented that *'a lot of the interfaces that should be there are lacking, somehow',* while another, from a different region, said that, over a year after EMO had begun:

> *'…you'd go into the Jobcentre, and say 'Hi, we're* [name]*, we're delivering the EMO provision, and they'd be like, 'what's that?''*

By autumn 2003, many project workers still felt that *'EMO isn't very well known inside the Jobcentre, never mind outside'* and saw this as a factor which continued to limit the scope for referrals.

Others, however, had established relationships which they described as *'Very good, very, very strong'*. The arrival or departure of Jobcentre Plus staff members who took an interest in EMO was crucial here.

A lack of clarity about the interpretation of guidance, and confusion about who had the authority to resolve queries, were issues mentioned by several providers. A related issue, and an important one, was that projects in different regions, and sometimes within the same Jobcentre Plus district, received conflicting interpretations of key policy issues, such as eligibility for outcome payments. A suggestion made by one provider was for a dedicated telephone helpline, which could supply EMO providers, and staff working in Jobcentres, with authoritative advice on the interpretation of the guidance.

Some projects wanted more involvement from Jobcentre Plus staff in actually delivering EMO. Several projects were keen for Jobcentre staff to come and visit their provision and see what services they were providing although one provider who ran an introductory session for Jobcentre Plus staff noted that they could tell the ones that were actually interested and likely to use the services *'because they asked lots questions at the end'*. One member of Jobcentre Plus staff who was the designated point of contact for all providers in the area had provided a good deal of support to EMO outreach sessions in community venues in the first year of the pilot. He explained that while he remained willing to do this where necessary, he had moved away from this model of working over time, both because being out of the office meant that he was unavailable to take referrals from other providers, who were forced to leave messages for him *'building up a backlog'.* He also preferred this because he was able to offer a better service to clients in the office, where on-line support for job search and training was available, and because he felt it reinforced the policy intentions of EMO:

> *'They like it* [when I go to centres] *but we try not to encourage that because the whole idea of the project is to encourage them to engage with the Jobcentre services. And I don't have access to LMS when I'm there. The job points, which I then can't show how to use the vacancies, that sort of thing. So we try and discourage it if we can.'*

One approach 2 project which was working closely with the local chamber of commerce was keen to have Jobcentre Plus staff attend a 'business breakfast' meeting and *'do a pitch for the new Deal',* but had been unable to arrange this, not because of any lack of willingness, but because staff were constantly changing.

Not all providers wanted to have this close an association with Jobcentre Plus. One provider described a Jobcentre Plus contract manager wanting to visit an outreach site, but having to avoid this because this would have damaged the relationships which had been built up

In the second year of operation DPQMT's became much more involved in monitoring the running of EMO projects. Some providers had found this difficult. One had received a written report, following an inspection visit, which she described as *'not flattering'*, and which felt like *'a slap in our face'*. The majority found it very supportive and helpful particularly in comparison with the perceived lack of support in the first year.

Some projects felt that they needed more input from local Jobcentre Plus staff in order to help their provision run as intended, but this was often hard to organise, as this worker recognised:

> *'If they want to promote the idea of Jobcentre Plus provision then I think they have to come into the community centres themselves rather than me being there on my own, we need like a joint initiative… Usually the issue is that they work 9 to 5 and it's very difficult for them to get time out, come to the community centre.'*

As seen above a recurring theme for approach 1 and 3 providers was the knock on effects of Jobcentre Plus not having adequate information and guidance in place at the start of the EMO initiative. When asked about the greatest difficulty encountered in implementing the initiative, one project worker stated *'the employment service not knowing its own programme'* and went on to say:

> *'Communication has been poor on an official level, on an informal basis at the meetings. OK, we've had conversations, but very little paperwork has come through, apart from FAM reports and er, audits, things like that. There's been no updates, newsletters, things like that'.*

This project worker was not alone in taking a step back to take a critical look at the Jobcentre Plus system. For example a project worker in another area felt that Jobcentre Plus had certain fundamental problems of staff morale and job segregation that needed to be addressed before it could truly make progress with a programme like EMO. Implicitly, the under-representation of ethnic minority staff at senior levels in the Jobcentre Plus system was one of the problems that needed to be addressed. Again, to draw on the words of the project worker:

> *'…the only way people are going to start using the services is when they can see the reflection of their community right the way through the food chain and not* [just] *on the shop floor front. That* [i.e.. the front-line staff] *is not where the problem is, it's part of the problem and that's where the high stress levels lie, but on boardroom tables… and they don't like to be told that.'*

3.4   Approach 1 and 3 providers: working with participants

3.4.1   Recruitment

EMO providers engaged in a wide variety of recruitment strategies. Some have involved the use of well-established outreach techniques, but working with new client groups or venturing into new geographical locations. Others were more innovative, using technologies such as TV, radio, the Internet and text messaging. While, as one project worker noted, *'It's not rocket science. It's about getting out there'*, the research has highlighted the importance of having an in-depth knowledge of ethnic minority communities, and subgroups within them, as well as being sensitive to cultural issues (such as the timing and impact of religious festivals, the affiliation of particular mosques, and gender matching, not only in relation to individual participants, but in traditionally gender segregated environments such as coffee shops and mosques) and having the means to meet language and other needs.

Most providers used some form of promotional material, such as a leaflet or flyer, which project workers have distribute to publicise their services. These were translated into appropriate languages for the communities served. While more experienced providers were aware of the need to do this, and had anticipated the time and costs involved, this was something that some newer projects had not budgeted for, and which had slightly delayed their *de facto* start-up dates. The change of branding, from Minority Ethnic Outreach to Ethnic Minority Outreach, during the pilot, also had time and cost implications for providers, who had to produce new publicity materials.

In some areas, notably London, Leicester, and Yorkshire and Humberside, there are well-established annual *melas* where local Asian communities congregate. These events, which are primarily an opportunity for people to socialise and enjoy themselves, also act as an informal marketplace for local businesses and community organisations, and these have been an obvious place to publicise EMO, with providers handing out leaflets or taking a stall.

Job fairs have been another way of introducing EMO to both participants and employers, and of enabling participants to take advantage of local job opportunities. Providers in Leicester and the West Midlands have organised job fairs which have each attracted several hundred people. Some EMO providers have also organised launch events for their provision. The networks established at events such as launches and job fairs were generally seen as having been as important as what happened on the day itself, and organisations have used attendance lists for follow-up calls and to create mailing lists for future events.

Other projects, particularly those working with groups at some distance from the labour market, have found it necessary to engage in what might be described as a 'softly-softly' or oblique approach to outreach. Rather than foregrounding employment issues in their publicity, they arranged events that they expected to be

popular, and used them as a means of introducing employment initiatives to people who might otherwise not have heard about them. An example was a provider working with Asian women, which held an open day and invited a number of alternative health practitioners and beauty therapists to attend and give 'taster' sessions, alongside stalls proving information about training opportunities in the area. Although the beauty treatments provided the initial 'draw', this event had encouraged women to make contact with local training providers. Similarly, another project had arranged an event at a music venue to attract young people, with high-profile speakers and a debate on drugs and gun culture, and education and employment issues were introduced only once participants' interest was engaged.

Some of the most effective forms of outreach, in terms of engaging people not already using services, have been those which were low-key and involved meeting people in their ordinary activities. This requires an intimate knowledge of local communities and areas, and has involved workers visiting community centres, temples and mosques. In the case of community centres this has often taken the form of a regular weekly surgery.

Less formal outreach sites, which have also proved effective, are the coffee shops frequented by Kurdish and Turkish men, a market popular with Asian women, and a street where Chinese families shop together on Sundays. One Somali worker is also known to approach potential clients from her community on the bus as she travels around the area. This personal contact could create some pressures on project workers, who sometimes felt as if they were never off-duty. One project worker said *'you have to be switched on twenty four seven'*, and her comments were echoed by a worker in another region:

> *'Your work doesn't stop, I could be going to* [city centre] *with my colleague and they'll be coming up to you. You could be in a supermarket with your family and they're coming up to you.'*

In one area, potential clients known to the project worker were contacted by door-knocking, and this proved a highly effective recruitment strategy. Another project manager had decided that this was not an appropriate way of making contact on a government-funded initiative. This was a source of some frustration to the project worker, who was aware of a number of potential beneficiaries who would not respond to written communications, but would have been likely to respond to a direct personal approach.

Some outreach and training providers have been able to market their services using Asian TV networks, while another was thinking of placing advertisements on their local Asian radio station. One outreach provider is responsible for producing a weekly radio programme on employment issues. This has features on local EMO providers, provides information on Jobcentre Plus and local training providers and offers phone-ins and a helpline. Another provider noted that mobile phone ownership is very widespread, and not confined to those in higher income groups, and they were therefore trying to set up a system where clients could register to

receive direct text message notification of Jobcentre Plus vacancies. This provider was also offering web-based job-searching facilities, but argued that the move to use computer technology by Jobcentre Plus tends to exclude those on low incomes who still do not have a home PC, or access to the Internet at home.

Having recruited an initial tranche of participants, many providers were confident that, provided that they delivered a good quality service, much of their future recruitment would be by word of mouth. One provider whose training courses were very popular argued that this was the only form of marketing they had ever needed:

> 'We've never had to advertise, all the stuff we've ever done, we've never had any form of advertising it's all been through referrals and networks.'

Projects argued that building and maintaining a good reputation was vital, particularly in reaching the hard to reach groups who would not usually make use of these types of provision. They needed to provide a consistently high quality service that provided support over and above the targets set by EMO provision if they were to keep their profile in the community and continue to attract hard to reach minority groups.

Location could be an important aspect of service take-up. Several projects had chosen to share premises with organisations they knew to be working with their target group, in the hope of attracting a ready 'drop-in' trade. One project felt that being sited on a popular free local bus route was an asset and had sought to capitalise on this by creating an eye-catching frontage. For other providers, issues to do with the location or ambience of their building were one reason why they preferred to offer surgeries at community centres. For instance one worker based in a large training centre argued that the building would be *'intimidating'* to the clients she was seeking to attract. Another organisation also offered home visits in order to overcome the reluctance of some Indian and Pakistani women to visit unfamiliar places on their own.

A provider in an area which is home to a great many ethnic minority businesses and community organisations argued that it was important for the office space and marketing materials to create an inclusive, neutral and professional image in order to attract a cross-section of the community, and particularly if the organisation was to have credibility with employers:

> 'Anyone that comes in [it] has the same effect. Whether it's European, or what have you. They have the same 'oh great', we play jazz, we don't want to offend nobody or have wall to wall… reggae music, you know what I mean… Even though we're in a half Black community, because we certainly wouldn't be working with [major employer] and these other agencies if it was a 'Roots Café', you know, Rastafari thing, do you know what I mean!'

Some providers developed additional services, or changed the way their provision was delivered, over the course of the pilot. One provider offering ESOL classes incorporated more practical exercises, such as buying things in a shop or using public transport, in response to discovering that these were new experiences for many of

their clients. They had also added an additional level of ESOL training, as people were keen to continue learning beyond the lower intermediate level. Other providers had begun to offer more in the way of employment preparation, interview practice and so on.

3.4.2   Client groups

As the chart 3.1 illustrates, some EMO providers had designed bids aimed at a particular client group, while others had a geographical catchment area, albeit one that tended to create a particular ethnic profile by reflecting residency patterns. However it was not always appropriate to have overly defined client groups. The Somali outreach worker, who recruited in a number of Muslim organisations and mosques that were attended by a whole variety of ethnic groups, found it difficult to explain to white Muslims who were with Asian or Somali friends that they were not eligible for the services she had to offer. Another provider made a similar point about doing outreach work on mixed estates and only being able to offer services to half the people on the estate. He felt that outreach services should be aimed at the community not at particular groups within the community. Other providers particularly those offering training, rather than outreach, were expecting to work with a range of ethnic groups. Over the two years of the pilot they had developed links with particular groups who became their main users. Several projects found themselves working with groups that they had not anticipated in their original bid.

Many providers felt that they were successful in reaching groups who would not have otherwise used services, and that the 'arms-length' arrangement EMO providers have with Jobcentre Plus allowed people to explore their options without necessarily having to commit themselves to anything immediately:

> '...people who are quite isolated in a sense that maybe they have been out of work for a long time, and they are really hesitant about going back to work, or want to, but are not really sure. There is a lot of that.'

However, providers also argued that their valuable work in recruiting and encouraging participants could be undone once they had to introduce the EMO forms. A provider in one area said of his clients that they *'do not want to have this thing attached to Jobcentres'*, and his comments were echoed by a provider in another area:

> 'A lot of people just don't want to go there, you know. As soon as you mention Jobcentre Plus, they sort of breathe and they go' Oh no!''

The importance of specific provision in providing 'safe' and culturally acceptable forms of access to training and employment was highlighted by those offering women-only services, especially if these were close to where women lived. In some cases, husbands and other family members were described as reluctant for women to undertake training at college premises, but far more comfortable with community-based provision which respects cultural norms:

> 'Don't even mention the word college. Their husbands won't drive them down

> *there. That's biggest problem. It's such a 'culture' thing. They'll send them here because it's run by women, it's for women. And the tutors are women. They can trust them, that's fine, then they don't have to worry.'*

Most projects saw their overall numbers increase over time, as their services developed and they became better known and developed a profile and relationship of trust within the community. A few noticed a decline in use of their services by particular groups, for instance when a referral source dried up. One provider was concerned to notice a drop in use of all their services, not only those funded under EMO, by ethnic minority groups, for reasons which were not clear. As discussed above, a decline in the use of outreach services could also be a sign of success, as more clients accessed Jobcentre Plus services independently. A significant group of providers had met their targets and found they were no longer able to claim for new clients and this caused them considerable problems. They either had to stop signing clients up and put them on a waiting list, with the risk of alienating potential clients and jeopardising their reputation, or continue to work with clients and maintain their reputation in the long term, although not receiving any funding for doing so.

The majority of projects continued to work with a broadly similar client base during both years of the EMO pilot. Some projects had noticed a change in their client base, and in typical patterns of need, in their second year of operation. In terms of recent arrivals to the UK, this was influenced by patterns of inward migration. Groups working with the Chinese community noted that there has been a general increase in immigration from China in recent years, and another provider noted that in their area there had been an increase in immigration from Portugal by people of Indian ethnicity. Projects which had worked with refugees and asylum seekers in 2002-3 often found that there was less demand from these groups in 2003-4, while others found that they were working with these groups to an increasing degree as time went on. This was because of several factors, including changes in dispersal policy, patterns of secondary migration which saw refugees moving to larger urban centres once granted leave to remain, and policy decisions about whether or not refugees and asylum seekers were eligible to receive services under EMO funding[11]. One provider, whose first-year caseload featured many recent arrivals to the UK, found that clients in the second year were more job-ready, and that it had become easier to achieve rapid outcomes, especially in a tight local labour market. The project was also more focused on achieving job outcomes, to meet their targets, in the second year of operation. These two factors had reduced their emphasis on training:

> *'A lot of clients come here that are job ready, that can go straight into work, whereas last year it wasn't like that. We were focusing predominantly on the training side. But now that we're focusing on both, the client group that we're reaching, some of them are job ready so you can turn them around within a week or two. You can get them into employment… And as well as that, those that are coming in just for ESOL we're able to put them into factory work.'*

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[11] Although the initiative was not intended for these groups, not all providers were initially aware of this, and many worked with these groups, especially in year 1.

Others providers had consciously chosen to work with groups closer to the labour market, or to develop closer links with employers, sometimes in response to concerns about reaching targets. One provider which had many participants with ESOL needs, used its links with local ethnic minority businesses to source new vacancies in order to increase their job outcomes, and had been able to negotiate an approach 2 target for this. The same provider had also struggled to meet its target for clients registering with Jobcentre Plus (establishing LMS record) and had started to run workshops for people facing redundancy, who would not be existing clients of Jobcentre Plus. A provider in another region also explained how they had also come to concentrate on *'transition points'* where they would *'intercept people'* before they registered with Jobcentre Plus. While this provider felt that this was not consistent with EMO policy intentions, and had raised this with Jobcentre Plus, they had reluctantly adopted this strategy, as they otherwise compared badly with local providers who were generating outcomes in this way:

> *'It's not a secret. It's something that was discussed in the provider meetings with Jobcentre Plus staff. And it was 'OK, that's fine'. I think, those outputs, I didn't think were personally correct. 'Cause I thought it was meant to reach disadvantaged* [groups] *and having people falling through the net. But an output is an output… We've got to raise our numbers. So I made the point and then just carried on like everybody else.'*

These strategies were an obvious example of 'deadweight', since many of these people could have been expected to find work without additional assistance, but were a direct result of the way the outcome targets had been designed.

Some projects with a commitment to work with all groups needing their services continued to do this even where they were unable to claim outcomes in respect of this work. One project worker echoed several workers across the evaluation as a whole when she explained:

> *'One of our operational objectives is to assist everybody who walks through the door… Regardless of their issues or which contract or which pot of money we can claim from. Because a lot of work we do we cannot claim it, we cannot write it down, it's not applicable. When you start to work with asylum seekers you cannot claim it, and it's just one of those things.'*

Although word of mouth was an increasingly important strategy for many providers as the EMO provision bedded down and they became better known in the second year of operation, outreach workers emphasised that it was still important for them to visit community venues, as otherwise clients would assume that the service was no longer running. While one project worker acknowledged that *'my first year's clients are bringing in more clients than any other community centre',* she continued to make regular visits, saying *'I have to keep the relationship, and I have to show myself, advertise'*. Similarly, another project, which had invested heavily in television advertising, continued to do so, even when *'we were having queues to the front door and outside'*.

Some providers noted that they had a slightly changed relationship with clients over time. One, which had initially seen clients on a drop-in basis, had moved to a system of appointments as demands on the service had risen. Similarly, some projects that had originally offered a holistic service to clients, were now focusing on employment and training issues, and *'signposting'* to other services. Others continued to offer help with issues such as housing problems, feeling that this was important to maintain trust. This was particularly important in smaller and close-knit communities, such as the Somali and Turkish communities, where a worker's reputation was crucial.

Some projects found that it was necessary to have a financial incentive in order to encourage take-up by their target groups. In one case, it had been possible to arrange reimbursement of travel costs from another source. Although EMO funding did not allow for the provision of financial incentives to participants, one project was able to make these available via co-financing arrangements with local providers funded from other sources such as the European Social Fund or the Learning and Skills Council. The worker explained that this was more an issue of providing an incentive for husbands to allow their wives to attend. This provider, in common with another provider, working with Asian women, had also identified a need for childcare, which was reducing take-up of their approach 3 training, but had been unable to find complementary provision. Another provider, which was running both EMO and lone parent pilots, noted that the incentives available in the latter made it much more attractive to clients.

3.4.3   Effects of EMO on clients

Although the evaluation has highlighted the fact that more people than originally anticipated were already in touch with Jobcentre Plus, and in particular that many already had LMS records at the stage where they first came into contact with providers, increased use of Jobcentre Plus services has nevertheless been a major outcome for EMO participants. Groups registering with their local Jobcentre for the first time have included lone parents and partners of unemployed men registering with the New Deal. In addition, recent arrivals with no recourse to public funds but with the right to work, and people from communities (particularly the Chinese community, but also among some disaffected Caribbean men) where benefit receipt is stigmatised, and non-claimants have remained largely unaware of the range of training opportunities available to them, have registered. In these situations, EMO project workers have played an important role in making clients aware of the services on offer.

Project workers have also noticed large changes in participants' 'soft skills', such as confidence and self-presentation, even after only a short involvement in the project, as one project worker explained:

'We get people coming onto the course who are very shy, and by the end of two weeks their confidence and their speech… when I go back to see them, like on my fourth, on my final visit, the way they're handling themselves, it's totally different, so they've got more confidence, better focused, better presented. They're more work-like, so it does have a big impact on their confidence.'

Providers working with those furthest from the labour market have noted that although it is possible to achieve job outcomes for this group, this is a longer process, and does not generate rapid results, meaning that they were not eligible for outcome payments, triggered only by job entries within 13 weeks of initial contact with the provider. One project worker went through her caseload in detail, demonstrating that there was an average 10-12 month gap between people first coming into contact with EMO and entering paid work. Another project worker commented '*I don't think the work we do with those is recognised at all*' and went on to question the intended target group for the initiative, which she had understood initially as being about the hardest to reach, but in common with other projects, had found that paid outcomes were generated primarily by concentrating on those closer to the labour market:

We have got quite a lot of stuff [on] outcomes, but whether they were truly the people that it was for in the first place is another matter. We have helped everyone we've worked in some way… there are people that [worker] is still working with now, who she started to work with some time ago, and they are not ready to go out to work.

3.5 The Approach 2 projects

Work with employers was an important and innovative element of the EMO pilot. Four projects funded for approach 2 were included in the sample of providers. Two of these providers were only offering services under approach 2 whilst the other two were working with a combination of all three approaches.

The nature of the provision the projects planned to offer employers under approach 2 took a wide variety of forms. These included:

• Diversity training/workshops for employers.

• Strategic workshops for senior executives of companies.

• Subsidised work placement schemes.

• Engaging employers and acting as a recruitment/matching service.

• Diversity and equal opportunities policy consultancy for employers.

• Job fairs.

As the previous section has highlighted, there was some overlap between the work done by non approach 2 providers who developed a strong employer interface as a strategy to help them meet job outcomes for their clients and the employer services provided by approach 2 providers. Some of the strategies engaged in by non approach 2 providers such as job fairs, acting as a recruitment intermediary between employers and EMO clients and providing work placements, were very similar to the work undertaken by the providers funded for approach 2. These activities are also discussed here as they highlight the ways in which successful strategies cut across project approach.

The employers' perspectives on the services received and the outcomes of their contact with EMO providers are explored here to provide a context to and response to the work of the projects. 15 employers were interviewed, four of whom were employers of clients from approach 1 and 3 projects not themselves clients of approach 2. The list below provides an overview of the type of employers interviewed:

- SME private sector   Small local estate agents with high numbers of asylum seekers and migrants using their service.

- SME private sector   Small local pharmacy.

- SME private sector   Medium size city centre accountancy and management consultancy firm.

- SME voluntary sector   Small organisation working with professional business networks to encourage diversity.

- Large private sector   Engineering company with offices across the UK and partner company in the US, specialising in transport infrastructure.

- Large private sector   Automotive manufacturing company head office and plant

- SME private sector   Solicitors with offices in several large UK cities in the south.

- Medium voluntary sector   Charitable organisation working with disabled people.

- SME private sector   Cleaning contractor and cleaning supplies distributor.

- Small voluntary sector   Community nursery (voluntary sector).

- Small voluntary sector   Organisation working with young people.

- Small voluntary sector   Voluntary sector umbrella group.

- SME private sector   Dental laboratory.

- SME private sector   Solicitor's firm (sole practice).

- SME private sector   Clothing manufacturer.

- SME private sector   Commercial agency providing packing work for large retailers.

3.5.1   Engaging employers – developing successful recruitment strategies

The approach 2 providers brought to the EMO pilot a range of different ideas and strategies for engaging with employers. They also had different levels and types of experience of working in this area with some already embedded in the local business community whilst others had a background in diversity and equal opportunities policy. One provider in particular already had a very high profile amongst employers in the area having worked with local businesses for many years. Others acknowledged that for them there was a need to build up relationships with employers and familiarise themselves with the issues. The nature of their experience and position in relation to business networks shaped their initial strategies and to a certain extent their initial successes.

Over the course of the pilot it became apparent that not all the services projects had planned to offer were viable or effective, particularly within the limited budget and timescales of the EMO pilot. This meant that a considerable amount of developmental work was undertaken by projects in order to find innovative ways to meet targets quickly, and to overcome the difficulties they experienced with the initial implementation of the project and meeting employer related targets.

In the initial stages of the pilot several of the providers, including those with experience of working with employers, expressed surprise at just how difficult it was to engage employers and convince them that their business could benefit from diversity training and advice. They described indifference or even open hostility on the part of some employers to the idea of engaging with diversity issues:

> 'It's a very difficult subject to sell in the fact that… one employer he's just 'what's in it for me?' literally. He says 'Why should I leave this office, what am I going to get out of it?'

One project, with a network of employer contacts, noted that whilst employers expressed an interest in diversity training, it was much harder to persuade them to actually sign up for the courses. The initial difficulties these providers faced generating interest in diversity services was compounded by the tight timescales imposed by the pilot. A provider which had received the contract very late felt under pressure to implement the first diversity training programme very quickly but only managed to recruit four employers. As the worker noted, employers are busy people; *'we're talking about people who are booking three months in advance'*.

The project then rearranged their 2 day training in a schedule of four half day sessions booked in a selection of slots over a three month period in order to be as

flexible as possible for the employers. However, they still had a low take-up and there appeared to be a tension between what the project workers viewed as the minimum number of days required for diversity training and what employers were prepared to accept. The project workers explained: '*I think we've offered them things on a plate really. We've been as flexible as we can without literally falling backwards*'. The employers, on the other hand, felt two days was excessive:

> '*I went back to our HR department who are based in Head Office and asked whether it was appropriate training, whether I should be committing two days to it and the answer was really no… I mean a day's seminar, probably. Half a day, yes. Two days, too much.*'

The initial lack of interest from employers meant projects were forced to rethink their strategies. A provider offering consultation on diversity policy had originally adopted a cold-calling approach. They sought to overcome the initial reluctance to engage by moving away from a direct approach, and working via second-tier agencies, such as federations of small businesses and the local chamber of commerce. This was seen as important in building credibility for their work, since they were a new organisation, and did not have an established profile in the business community. In fact, having enjoyed success with this approach in one area, they went as far as setting up a local chamber of commerce in another area, enabling them to establish new networks, raise their profile, promote their services more widely and build up trust with employers. '*it has been interesting, we had to enlist the help of the MP and local members and the town centre office just to get it off the ground*'. The providers' involvement also ensured that local ethnic minority businesses were well represented in the chamber of commerce from the outset. The chamber provided a forum through which to organise a popular business breakfast club sponsored by different employers each month. The project also arranged to receive referrals from the Race Relations Employment Advisory Service of employers involved in race discrimination cases, since it was felt that these employers would have an obvious motivation to improve their working practices. Unfortunately, despite considerable investment of time in this approach, the departure of a key member of staff at the Race Relations Employment Advisory Service meant that this never came to fruition.

There were other examples of innovation in the strategies projects developed for engaging employers. One provider had anticipated that there might be problems in motivating employers to take part in diversity training, remarking that '*diversity is a very dry subject, and to some people it's a difficult subject to grapple with, and sensitive as well*'. This organisation had decided to invest in a high-profile launch event, which involved hosting a free multicultural dinner for 300 local employers, accompanied by fusion music and a series of humorous sketches about diversity in the workplace, performed by a local theatre group and highlighting stereotypical views held by both white and ethnic minority employers. A prize draw had been held, offering a meal for two at a local restaurant, and this had been a means of obtaining names and addresses of people to invite to attend workshops. The

response from this one event was almost sufficient to fulfil the project's outcomes for the year, but more importantly, project workers hoped that it could act as a catalyst for increased communication and understanding between employers in the local area, creating:

> *'...*[an] *integration process which can cascade down to other facets of* [area's] *life, of communities coming together, business communities coming together and whatever. So if employers from both sides of the community start gelling, then hopefully the employees will gel together as well, and that has a knock-on effect on the economy and social fabric of society.'*

An employer who had attended this event noted that as well as enjoying it a great deal, he had made *'quite a few contacts, very useful contacts'* and that he had remained in touch with the people he had met. A spin-off benefit of the event was that a local newspaper had offered a bursary for a young person from an ethnic minority background to train as a journalist. A similar event was run the following year, attracted a good deal of sponsorship from local businesses and proved equally popular.

A project that had experienced low take up of their diversity training, decided to trial a half day seminar as a forum for getting employers and community practitioners together to discuss diversity issues. The feedback from these groups and the comprehensive evaluation they undertook of their first set of diversity training sessions provided the basis for their decision to restructure their provision in the second year to offer in house diversity training that they termed diversity support. This could be more closely tailored to the company's priorities and time commitments. This provider also pointed out that bespoke services would enable them to start charging which they felt lent more weight to the service they were offering particularly to professional businesses, which were used to paying highly for consultancy and might question the value of a free service.

One theme that emerged very strongly in relation to successful recruitment was the importance for projects of developing networks and relationships of trust in the business community. This worked in a variety of ways. One employer offering diversity policy consultancy tapped into the needs of the local voluntary sector. They acted as an adviser for one organisation, a community nursery, which was very happy with the services they had received and passed their name on to a similar organisation; a series of other recommendations followed. One of the organisations involved described the relationships:

> *'The voluntary organisations within the area work very closely, very supportive to each other, so if one organisation stumbles on something which is really helpful, they will pass that information on as we would to the next. And I think that is clearly what happened.'*

These contacts created a series of referrals for the provider and led them to pursue a strategy of recommendations with all the employers they worked with. A voluntary sector organisation that acted as an umbrella body for many others recognised how useful the EMO services were for capacity building (including many of the personnel

and procedural issues that smaller EMO providers encountered) in the local voluntary sector and were keen to promote them more widely:

> '...he would be an ideal contact to be part of our membership package if you know what I mean! (Laughs)… Saying to groups, "you know, there are, these are the areas that we can find support for you in'.

By contrast with the provider noted above, an important issue here was that these services were provided free, since the voluntary sector organisations that had used them would not have been able to afford consultancy fees.

Another provider offering diversity training began to work with a similar organisation in the same area that offered diversity consultancy to local professional businesses through a diversity forum with several hundred members. This organisation did not provide training themselves, but acted as a broker for employers they felt would benefit. This same provider also had links with another organisation specialising in diversity issues in schools and through them a large engineering company who were trying to increase ethnic minority recruitment to their apprenticeship schemes.

Perhaps one of the problems with relying on connections and networks was the issue that these tapped into the 'easier to reach employers' for whom diversity was already high on the agenda and who were already engaged in finding strategies to deal with these issues. If these networks were already diversity driven it made recruitment to diversity training easier but there was also a danger pointed out by one employer of *'preaching to the converted'* since it tended to be employers with most interest in the issues who attended these sessions. As several of the organisations had discovered, it was much harder to reach employers who were not open to diversity issues and were unlikely to be easily convinced that there was a business case for undertaking training.

However, this did not mean that diversity training was not useful for these groups. One HR manager for a large manufacturing company who had attended a session noted that diversity issues had been on the agenda at the company for sometime and they were always looking for ways of tackling the issues of recruitment and asking themselves *'what else should we be doing'.* But it was also important for the provider to convince her that she would benefit from taking two days out from her job which she, like many employers, felt was a lot. Another employer from an accountancy firm who was a strong proponent of diversity felt the training had given him the extra push to set some deadlines:

> 'You see it wasn't on my agenda, to be honest, before I went on the course, it was just the questions I was being asked, what have you got in place? And then you start to think that really I should probably have some kind of action plan so I'll integrate it to our whole HR plan which will look at everything really not just diversity.'

For projects offering placements, their reputation was crucial. Projects emphasised the need for careful matching so that placements were successful. If the employer

was not happy with the person, the provider explained they risked losing out on future placements:

> *'I don't like to have broken promises… you want to build that reputation as well, so the employer will say 'Oh that person sent us somebody really good, you know, let's ring them again they might have somebody else'… I like to… make sure I know my clients really well and I know, you know, whether they're going to be doing the job, whether they're going to be punctual, whether it's a job they want to do, whether it's a job they're going to stick to.'*

Another important point for attracting employers illustrated by the experiences of several of the projects was the importance of being able to offer employers something quite concrete over and above promoting diversity awareness. This selling point or 'hook' for their services, as one project described it, could take a variety of forms. Having general expertise in the area of rights and policies was one way of attracting employers. One project worker noted how employers tended to come to them with related issues about employee rights, the Disability Discrimination Act etc., that although they were not part of the EMO remit were of direct concern to businesses. Sorting out these policy issues provided a way into advising on diversity policy:

> *'…those are the things that I tend to focus on that benefits their business and […] can say well if I'm going to help you do this then we need to be sure that you're an Equal Opportunities Employer.'*

One approach 2 only project lamented the fact that it was not working with clients, as employers were very interested in being supplied with appropriate candidates when they had vacancies. They had found a way to support one employers' needs in this area by matching New Deal trainees to their employment vacancies, sitting on interview panels and providing troubleshooting support in the first few weeks of employment. However this was time-consuming work and although the worker involved regarded it as an investment it was not rewarded in terms of project targets. The success of this type of interface with employers was illustrated by the one project which was providing a subsidised placement for the first 6 months of employment along side its diversity workshops with employers. This provider had been particularly successful meeting its targets for both types of provision:

> *'We've tended to look for quality placements rather than just filling the placements. So what we've done is we've got a wide range of, number of businesses, so the list is, we've got solicitors, we've got accountants, we've got dental technicians, we've got manufacturers. So we've covered most of the areas… and when I do go and visit them and talk to the employer about the client, they've been very happy with the clients, very, very impressed.'*

Other employers were keen to obtain accreditation for their diversity friendly work practices. A contract cleaning company in one area explained that codifying the equal opportunities policies in the company had been important, not so much in terms of practice, which was already good, but in order to be able to prove that they

had effective policies in place when bidding for public sector contracts. They were eager to demonstrate their credentials, and had hoped that it would be possible to have a process whereby:

> '…you'd go onto the CRE website to say you're approved and you'd get a certificate to go with it. So to me that was more of an incentive, to get onto that website or to put it on our own website to say that we're approved by the CRE.'

Employers' main criticisms of the training, and for some, reasons for not attending, were that there were not enough practical benefits. Employers who had taken up or been offered diversity training or consultancy emphasised that they needed a focus on the 'practical' business benefits of diversity, and were less interested in what they perceived as the more 'theoretical' aspects. One employer explained that:

> 'I'm not too hung up in trying to understand what the differences in culture are… I grew up in [one EMO area]*, now living in* [another EMO area]*, you get pretty used to the cultural diversity, so personally I don't think that's an issue for me, to have different cultures and actually it adds quite an interesting balance. So I'm not sure I needed that but it is an understanding of how do we get into particular markets to get to the people we're not getting to now.'*

One employer, who had not attended the diversity training, although his company were concerned to improve their profile, felt that he needed to know exactly what he or the HR manager was going to get in very practical terms from attending that training:

> 'I think they could be better in explaining what the seminar was going to give back to us. I think the bit I couldn't quite get to the bottom of what benefit I was going to see for the two days.'

His concerns were similar to other employers interviewed who were looking for practical strategies and suggestions for recruiting from the African Caribbean population, a market that they all felt they were not currently reaching. The diversity training on offer did not appear to offer enough practical solutions. However this employer stressed he would be very happy to attend in the future if they were able to hone the structure and content of the course.

One very practical way of engaging with employers and bringing in potential recruits discovered by both approach 2 and non approach 2 employers was Job fairs. Several of the projects had run a number of job fairs very successfully over the two years of the pilot attracting both employers and those from ethnic minority communities looking for work. The problem was that these were time consuming to organise and had few direct benefits in terms of meeting targets. What they did provide was a way to engage with local employers and raise the profile of the project. A major employer in one area looking to increase the number of recruits from ethnic minority communities, had attended diversity training, and was keen to be involved in forthcoming job fairs organised by the same EMO provider. Such events did not

necessarily yield high numbers of recruits at least initially but they were seen as being about raising the profile and thus the potential for future recruitment. This employer saw their involvement with the EMO provider more in terms of *'looking at the whole'* and regarded events such as job fairs as *'feeding into the bigger picture'*.

Given the problems with implementation and time needed to build trust and engage employers, approach 2 projects had found it difficult to meet targets initially. However the second interview with project workers found them much more positive about the provision and their ability to deliver as the development strategies and relationship building undertaken in the first year started to pay off. One project had noticed a simple but, they felt, crucial change in their relationship with employers in the previous few months; employers were now starting to phone them. The projects offering diversity type support were able to meet their targets or fell one or two employers short by the end of the pilot. However, it was an indication of how much preparation was needed for this type of provision that many of those employers had been recruited at the very end of the programme. As with approach 1 and 3 providers working with clients, one project worker noted that the pressure to reach targets meant that in the end they were working with employers who would generate outcomes, rather than those they had really wanted to get on board.

A number of themes emerged from interviews with approach 2 providers in terms of what worked in engaging employers. This included raising awareness and improving policies and practices and making direct links to ethnic minority job seekers. One of the most crucial things for approach 2 providers was having the flexibility to tailor their approach and maximise outcomes. Strategies had to be adopted to suit the particular priorities and expectations of different types of employer. For example, whilst one provider argued that the EMO 'label' was unhelpful, and something that they had sought to downplay in their publicity materials, another working primarily with ethnic minority businesses was keen to see a more distinctive 'branding' of EMO. They argued that the adoption of a national marketing strategy would increase the legitimacy of their work, and that ethnic minority employers would appreciate knowing that an initiative was aimed at meeting their specific needs:

> *'…so that when an employer picks it up, when we go and talk about EMO and we say Gordon Brown backed it … It's absolutely important, if it's to have any credibility with employers, that needs to be done.'*

Employer focused approaches generally worked better when in conjunction with other approaches, as this enabled them to offer clients to fill vacancies, which employers perceived as a tangible benefit. Several projects, funded only for approaches 1 and or 3, expressed considerable disappointment that they had not been funded for approach 2 as it was felt that an integrated strategy that involved work with both clients and employers would have provided the best outcomes. At the same time, several projects which were not funded for approach 2 had adopted employer-facing strategies such as job fairs, which were in most cases not rewarded directly by outcomes, but enabled them to provide their clients with the kinds of service they were demanding. Given the importance of such strategies, there may be a case for creating greater incentives for projects to provide them, over and above any job entries that may result.

4   Other agencies' perspectives on EMO

4.1   Summary

- This chapter discussed the relationships between EMO providers and other stakeholders, including Jobcentre Plus, referral agencies, community organisations, employers and partner organisations.

- Jobcentre Plus staff reported mixed views on working with EMO providers. While the majority were positive about the idea of being able to offer additional help to those furthest from the labour market, the general view appeared to be that the initiative had not made a large difference to the types of people using Jobcentre Plus services, with the exception of women from an Indian and Pakistani background.

- Some providers gave examples of good practice in working alongside Jobcentre Plus staff to identify customers who needed additional support, often for smaller communities and those with distinctive cultural and language issues, such as the Turkish, Kurdish, Chinese and Vietnamese communities. Others had found it more difficult to establish good working relationships, sometimes due to differing expectations about whether EMO workers would provide a service within Jobcentre Plus offices.

- Referrals to Jobcentre Plus from EMO providers were seen to have fallen in the second year; in some cases this was due to improved direct access by clients.

- Most employers who had contact with a provider, whether this involved taking on a worker on placement or using training or consultancy services, had positive experiences, but few had any sense of EMO as a distinctive initiative, or as something provided via Jobcentre Plus.

- Referral agencies had a variety of relationships with providers. While some were working in close partnership, others acted simply as a venue for job fairs or a conduit for publicity. Agencies particularly valued services for groups with unmet needs, such as older Asian men, and access to vacancies at community sites. From the providers' point of view, working with trusted local organisations gave them access to communities they might otherwise have taken longer to reach.

4.2   Introduction

There were a number of different stakeholders involved in the EMO pilot and their contact with providers and clients varied. These stakeholders included:

- Jobcentre Plus;

- Referral agencies;

- Community organisations;

- Employers;

- Partner organisations.

Some had relatively little contact with, or knowledge of, the EMO pilot beyond providing a community base for an outreach surgery or taking on an EMO client on as an employee. This chapter focuses mainly on Jobcentre Plus, their relationship with providers and clients and also their role managing the pilot. The chapter also touches briefly on the more general views of the EMO pilot expressed by employers and other stakeholders.

4.3   The role and perceptions of Jobcentres involved in EMO

Interviews were carried out with 24 Jobcentre staff in 18 Jobcentre Plus offices, across the five areas in the pilot, and at two points in the process; around 6-8 months after the start of the pilot, and towards the end of the two years of the pilot. Both waves of interviews included front-line staff, and the second wave of interviews also included representatives of DPQMT. Most interviews with staff were cross-sectional, because of turnover of roles within Jobcentre Plus, or because project workers were unable to identify a suitable contact at the time of their first interview, although a few were follow-up interviews, where this was possible. During both sets of interviews staff were asked about their relationship with EMO providers including; perceptions and expectations of the provision, extent and nature of contact, implementation, impact of EMO on Jobcentre Plus staff and existing provisions and procedures, positive and negative issues in working with EMO and suggestions for improvement.

4.3.1 Relationships with EMO providers and how these changed over time

Most of the staff working with EMO providers had learnt about the pilot immediately prior to its implementation, at a launch event, which was often attended by a single representative from a local office, and many of those interviewed in the first year of the evaluation had quite a vague understanding of what was involved prior to receiving their first referrals:

> 'It seemed to sneak in, to be honest with you, and what happened was we'd got the agreement with [provider] you know suddenly we started having green forms arrive.'

> (Front line adviser, area 1, year 1)

The majority of Jobcentre Plus staff had little or no knowledge of EMO, prior to or even several months after its launch. Provider meetings had been held in some, but not all, districts. The information on the pilot was perceived as having been 'top down', and even in offices where there was a significant relationship with EMO providers, advisers felt they did not know very much about the initiative. Even where meetings were held and Jobcentre Plus staff had been briefed about EMO, there was considerable confusion about the nature of the service and relationship between the provider and the local Jobcentre, confirming the initial impressions of EMO project workers. One project worker commented that in his area there was a *'lack of focus on this initiative'* and that Jobcentre Plus staff *'don't care about it'*. A comment by a member of Jobcentre Plus staff put this into context:

> 'EMO was dealt with as part of New Deal. It was made New Deal team's responsibility. Maybe that was not such a good idea. They have got a lot of work already.'

In some cases, advisers had gained a definite impression that EMO would have only a very limited impact on their day-to-day work. One Jobcentre said they only referred clients on to EMO who were already signed on although they got many enquiries from people passing through the centre. '*We wouldn't do it, because again we wouldn't get any performance out of them*'

However, awareness and enthusiasm also varied considerably within districts, and depended to some extent on the relevance of the provision to the communities served. A provider in one area had quickly established a good working relationship with one local Jobcentre, but all attempts to engage the other Jobcentre in the area had failed. This second Jobcentre was, however, working closely with another EMO provider. Where Jobcentres were working with more than one project, there was sometimes a designated member of staff for each, which facilitated the process of building and maintaining relationships between staff and providers.

One manager who was particularly candid on the subject of Jobcentre Plus staffing explained that the real problem was that staff turnover was so high that although an EMO briefing for advisers had taken place those advisers had already all left, and the new recruits and no idea what EMO was or how it worked:

> *'High staff turnover at Jobcentres is a factor contributing to communication difficulties we have. It takes time to get another one in place, if the staff you've designated and trained as EMO contact leaves.'*

EMO providers appeared to be widely regarded as *'just another provider'*. Jobcentres work with a range of providers and as one adviser put it *'there are tons of them out there'*. There was also an expectation that providers would be doing the work i.e. reaching out to clients and referring them on to Jobcentre Plus and therefore EMO was not expected to have any substantial impact on the amount or the nature of the advisers' work. Few Jobcentre Plus staff had been to visit projects although the projects were increasingly going out to meet Jobcentre Plus staff as it became clear that they would have to sell their product to those on the front line. For the Jobcentre staff the problem was not lack of interest in EMO so much as a lack of time to familiarise themselves with a new initiative. EMO meant more form filling and staff needed to know that the projects were reliable and effective. Services other than pure outreach (ESOL, other training such as job search) were seen to overlap with existing provision to a great degree. Some advisers suggested that most EMO providers were relatively inexperienced and that advisers would prefer to work with providers they knew already.

Advisers were generally positive about the idea of being able to offer additional assistance to groups seen as hard to help, which typically included recent arrivals in the UK, older people from declining industries (particularly those who had worked in their own language and not tackled their ESOL issues when younger) and Indian and Pakistani women with children:

> *'I mean I sort of felt that these providers would probably engage people who were perhaps apprehensive about using the Jobcentres or who've never used it or contemplated using it, even though they possibly could have been entitled to benefits. I thought it would benefit those people. I didn't necessarily think they'd have a lot of success with it, because in this area what you'll find is most people who are eligible for benefits are claiming it, and that's what they've been finding out now.'*

> (Front-line adviser, year 1)

Many of the EMO providers were new to the advisers, although some were involved in New Deal and other programmes, and had a more established profile and relationships, as well as more experience in dealing with Jobcentre Plus procedures. Some advisers viewed the lack of experience on the part of some providers as a potential problem:

> *'Advisers are going to use the strongest providers that they've got, the ones with a lot more experience than these guys, to be realistic these guys haven't got a lot of experience.'*

> (Front-line adviser, year 1)

It was notable that Jobcentre staff within a district tended to have had much more contact with some EMO providers than with others. This was for a variety of reasons,

including the extent to which services were perceived as complementary to Jobcentre programmes (e.g. offering services to particular communities which had previously been hard to reach, or offering ESOL classes) and Jobcentre staff perceptions of the quality of services being offered. It was also argued that EMO providers could spend a longer time with clients and 'nurture' them in progress towards employment, while Jobcentre Plus staff were more constrained in this respect:

> *'If they find that a provider don't really help a client or are just really in it for the money, I don't know, especially the ones that are more experienced, they can sniff them out. I'm sorry to say this, I can't say this to the other providers at the meeting but advisers know a good provider from a bad provider and this is what I've been trying to tell them but in… without actually saying that. But if the advisers feel that they're good then they'll use them all the time and if they feel they provide a good service to the client they'll use them all the time and if they feel that the client is going to gain something out of it they will use them all the time.'*

(Front-line adviser, year 1)

The nature of the demands on Jobcentre Plus staff has also tended to mean that most do not spend a great deal of time out of the office or see networking/outreach as a central dimension of their work (one commented *'my view is what's on my desk'*); it has therefore been those projects which have been most proactive themselves which have had most contact with Jobcentre Plus. Staff in Jobcentre Plus also felt it was important that EMO projects were located nearby, as many people were reluctant to travel to use services in unfamiliar areas:

> *'To work here it has to be on our doorstep'.*

In some cases, there have been arrangements for a provider to attend the Jobcentre on a particular day, floor walking or working from a desk base, to increase customer familiarity with their services. Those EMO project workers that have been working quite closely with Jobcentre Plus, have often been doing so in relation to particular groups, with distinctive cultural and language issues, such as the Turkish, Kurdish, Chinese and Vietnamese communities. In one area, it was planned to send a letter in Cantonese to all people with a common Vietnamese surname on the Jobcentre Plus database (whether currently registered or not). Information from the database search had also helped the project worker decide on the best geographical areas for outreach:

> *'They've been trying to locate the Chinese and Vietnamese people in the area to see where they're concentrated… And they even said to me that there's a lot of the Vietnamese people with this surname based in* [two local wards]*. And probably those are the two where I need to concentrate my resources, you know.'*

Not all providers were willing to work from a base within the Jobcentre, as they were keen to maintain a clear distinction between their own community-based identity and that of Jobcentre Plus. This could be a cause of tensions between providers and Jobcentre staff, where the latter felt that this was necessary for successful working:

> *'I want them to be visible to the public, that they're working with us. Now say his argument is 'Well you're perceived as big brother and I don't want that' but I've seen* [another project worker] *work. We had a jobs fair and I've seen her work in a jobs fair. We had a Christmas jobs fair and she's picked people out 'just come over here and let's have a chat' and she'd get people on her caseload and things like that. She's more up for that than* [name]*. It's around communication and when you're pushing any project, staff need to know who they're talking to.'*

(Front-line adviser , year 2)

4.3.2 Jobcentre staff perceptions of the benefits of EMO

It seems that it took some time for EMO to become an established service in most Jobcentres. The issue of *'who is referring onto whom'* had in many cases not been resolved by the time of the first wave of interviews. While EMO was expected to bring hard-to-reach clients into mainstream provision, in some areas their services were seized on by Jobcentres not knowing what to do with clients facing multiple barriers and with whom they had problems communicating.

EMO was seen as a particularly effective intervention for those Jobcentres that were facing a crisis. In one location for example there had been a recent influx of asylum seekers, and there was a huge shortage of ESOL classes to refer them on too. The one project offering ESOL training on a large scale (not part of this evaluation) had been inundated by referrals from Jobcentre Plus. Unlike college courses EMO ESOL courses were viewed as flexible and immediate. The fact that the client could start straight away was crucial for the Jobcentre:

> *'I honestly think we just swamped them because we had so many people that needed help… and as soon as they called the Jobcentre* [advertising their services] *we all went 'great', you know.'*

(Front line adviser, Year 1)

Interestingly, another project in that area also offered ESOL classes, but they had limited places available and this had delayed Jobcentre Plus staff from starting to use them for referrals. The large number of asylum seekers dispersed to that area had also created a need for interpretation services and projects where workers had language skills or could provide interpretation were much in demand as they could support individuals through the claim process.

There was also a much more fundamental role that EMO workers could provide which was only just beginning to be exploited by Jobcentre Plus workers at the time of the first set of staff interviews. The project workers provided an important bridge between the community and Jobcentre Plus, and could promote their services and also take the pressure off the advisers, in that they can deal with the mass of problems and issues that advisers do not have time to engage with. As one adviser put it:

'… they carry a client through. If we are having problems, … she [the project worker] *carries them along for us. If they've not turned up somewhere, she'll ring them up and get them to come in and all that.'*

(Front line adviser, Year 1)

Similarly a Jobcentre manager also recognised the role project workers could play:

'We call them an intermediary, in effect and that's what they are between us and [the] *community really, but they also bridge the gap there for us, for these clients, like to give them something to latch on to, to have.'*

(Front line adviser, Year 1)

This Jobcentre had an excellent relationship with EMO providers and had gone as far as drawing up a service level agreement that would give the provider a role as an official intermediary. Another adviser was asked if the EMO project provided any added value, if they were simply providing ESOL courses. She responded unhesitatingly that they did:

'We do often get people reluctant to go on to courses but that (the project) is quite useful as they will persuade them and they will persuade them in their own language and everything. They already have that sort of position of trust anyway. They come in here and we don't understand them and they don't understand us so there is a little bit of mistrust there, do you know what I mean? They are unsure and when [project worker] *is persuading people, you know, do the course, do the course, this sort of thing and she can persuade them to do it.'*

(Front line adviser, Year 1)

Several of Jobcentre Plus staff pointed out that there is often a distrust of their services and staff have to overcome this in order to work with the client:

'There's always the guarded information given from the client because we're the government so they won't relax and give us all the information that we need, even though we're trying to help them.'

However, EMO outreach workers who come from the same community and speak the same language can build trust more quickly and because of this they are much better placed to act as advocates and promote Jobcentre Plus services, in particular to those who would otherwise not have come in.

Some Jobcentre Plus staff were starting to appreciate the benefits of having outreach workers promoting employment to their clients and some felt that it improved their clients' options, particularly those trapped in jobs where English was not required or those who did not have the confidence to try anything else. The outreach work by EMO project workers, such as visits to mosques or community venues, was seen to be highly valuable in reaching such groups. These were clearly areas that were inappropriate for Jobcentre Plus staff.

Some Jobcentres also recognised a growing outreach role for their own staff. In one area, staff had been doing outreach work in a local community centre as part of another initiative but had been so successful that they were starting to promote the EMO service to clients that they were meeting in the community centre. Simply being in their clients' familiar territory, and wearing casual clothes had changed the relationship with these clients.

Innovation was taking place in other ways. Advisers in one area were using EMO referrals to test commitment to job seeking among people from ethnic minority communities who had ESOL needs. The fact that suitable provision was now available meant that it was possible to treat them equally with other clients, rather than unjustly sanctioning them or being unduly lenient:

> *'Because there are a lot of clients that to be fair to them, to give them an opportunity rather than go along the sanctions route is to give them a chance to prove to us that; one, they are capable of working, two, they're willing to work.'*

Advisers working with one training project expressed dissatisfaction that they were effectively being asked to rubberstamp referrals to approach 3 training, when they would have liked to be able to discuss the range of Jobcentre Plus options available with the client.

A number of advisers said that employers had given positive feedback about people they had employed from EMO

4.3.3   Jobcentre Plus staff perceptions of outcomes and outcome related difficulties

Overall, EMO was not seen as having made a very large difference to the types of clients using Jobcentre Plus services, with the exception of women from an Indian or Pakistani background, who were widely noted as having made little use of Jobcentres before EMO. Although some Jobcentres had noted an increased level of referrals from projects in the second year of EMO, others felt that these had tailed off after a promising start. For example one member of staff spoke of having moved from around ten referrals per month to around two per month, if that. His perception was the clients were bypassing local EMO projects and directly approaching the Jobcentre. It is important to note that the referrals from projects could also fall as the result of success in getting people to engage, as one front-line adviser noted:

> *'I think now what's happened is a lot of them are missing those organisations. They're coming direct now.'*

(Front line adviser, year 2)

One project had been very successful in securing referrals, achieving its targets, but was subsequently perceived by its main Jobcentre Plus contact to have lost momentum. She felt it was a shame that they had not managed to keep the momentum going after building up a relationship that had proved very fruitful for participant opportunities in the local labour market.

Tracking the progress of clients has proved problematic, with Jobcentre Plus staff commenting 'We have got no idea what happens once we refer clients on to EMO providers'. Providers say the same thing, commenting that they have no idea what happens to clients once they refer them to Jobcentres. This constrains the process of assessing the distance travelled by EMO participants. By the time of the later set of Jobcentre staff interviews there continued to be Jobcentre Plus staff who remained unsure about the work undertaken by EMO projects and how they helped their clients. For example one Jobcentre worker commented that while an outreach worker in one project was clearly very active in securing new EMO participants, referrals might visit the Jobcentre ask for a job search to be done and never be seen again. Another Jobcentre worker could not comment on the impact of EMO on clients as she did not get referrals or refer anyone. Consequently staff that had been designated EMO advisers at the start of the pilot simply forgot about EMO. In contrast, a vacancy manager working closely with another EMO approach 1 project enthused about how she had been able to act as a conduit for male participants to secure employment in the construction industry. She had been working with clients who she described as being '*a bit hesitant*' about seeing her because they had not used a Jobcentre before. It was not unusual for these clients to contact her again, when their contracts came to an end, to see if she had any further job opportunities that they might pursue. However, 20 to 25 per cent of referrals did not show up to register at the Jobcentre and the smaller number of female clients who had expressed an interest in retail employment had registered with the Jobcentre, found employment and disappeared.

Several advisers perceived that EMO project staffing difficulties had adversely affected the effectiveness of projects. One adviser described how staff turnover at one EMO project had had a negative impact on not only its own outcomes but also those of other projects operating locally. Another spoke of a project having no-one in charge for a year and having to insist that another project worker stepped into the role.

4.3.4 Administrative problems

Several advisers reported problems with EMO related administration. Jobcentre Plus staff found referral forms rather confusing, particularly early on. One adviser complained of receiving too many sheets of information relating to all of one EMO projects clients rather just those referred to the Jobcentre. Some confusion was caused by the similarity of certain forms, such as the 'Mref3' and the 'Mref1':

> '*I'm just totally confused when I get them two, so I've just signed them, sent them back, but I've never had any comeback after that to sort of say what's that.*'

More information might have helped to alleviate these kinds of difficulties, but there was a guidance gap. For most advisers this gap appeared to be being addressed as EMO bedded down, but by no means all. For example, one project worker had got *'months behind'* on his paper work and this had contributed to deteriorating

relations with an adviser. By the later set of interviews at least one adviser was still describing paperwork as excessively bureaucratic, duplicating much information, creating additional work for him as well as the EMO projects. Moreover, the problems with paperwork meant that projects did not get into their stride until about six months after start-up.

4.3.4.1   Inadequate resources, mismatch and failure to deliver

Advisers also expressed concern over the resources that had been made available to EMO projects, who were attempting to fill an important community provision gap, implying that they were in a sense set up for failure:

> '…because they were dealing with a specialist group of the Kurdish community and the numbers were so large, I just don't think that the organisation was set up to be big enough to cope with it, you know... they were just trying to do too much I think… They were helpful, don't get me wrong, they were really helpful.'

(Front line adviser Year 1)

There were also some reports of local area needs mismatch from an adviser who was critical of the absence of an EMO approach 1 project in his area when what was needed was a project to access hard-to-reach clients who were not using and would not use Jobcentre Plus services. A second adviser was rather disappointed that a project had failed to deliver on its approach 3 provision. In his view, the simple approach 1 outreach undertaken by this project could have been done by the Jobcentre.

4.3.5   Suggestions for development

At both the early and later Jobcentre Plus staff interviews, lack of information about EMO providers was a recurring theme. Lack of information was two way and hampering the ability of EMO providers to do their best for participants, limiting their perception of choices:

> '...if they knew more of the range of services that we offered under the Jobcentre so that you know perhaps the people before they came in were given more freedom of choice…' 'cause it might be that it's been put into their heads that really yeah they so want a 'you want a college course' when really they might want a part time job.'

(Front line adviser, Year 1).

While there had been some development of local structures to facilitate exchange of information between Jobcentre Plus staff and providers as the EMO provision bedded down, front-line advisers in several areas suggested that they would benefit from regular provider forums to iron out any problems and keep them up to date. One of these advisers also argued that front-line Jobcentre Plus staff dealing with EMO, were not being kept 'in the loop' as far as good practice was concerned, and that they would benefit from more information sharing, and from events such as the

continuous improvement workshops, which tended to involve DPQMT, but not front-line staff. He would have liked to see a national forum to share good practice across Jobcentre Plus, especially as they move into the next two years of the initiative.

Jobcentre Plus staff did not see EMO as having made an impact on local employers and employer practices, although a number of advisers said that employers had given positive feedback about people they had employed from EMO. Some advisers expressed unease at having to raise the issue of ethnic diversity with employers, and felt that employer provision of the kind made available under approach 2 needed to be marketed in quite a sophisticated way. It was suggested that smaller employers were most likely to benefit from provision geared towards encouraging good practice in recruitment and other diversity policies:

> 'I would say the smaller private companies. People who have control on who they take on to be quite honest with you… your smaller companies, you get like one manager who decides who comes and goes, and I think they're the people who probably need to be targeted.'

> (Front line adviser, Year 1)

Some Jobcentre Plus staff implied that the scope of EMO projects might be broadened to provide almost a one-stop-shop for hard to reach or help ethnic minority clients:

> 'If they do it all in one, Intermediary and Ethnic Minority Outreach it would be great, for the clients as well…'

> (Front line adviser, Year 1)

> '…we've known what we wanted for a long time. We want ESOL courses with a work environment, with employers on board and we want it [on our doorstep] is what we want.'

> (Front line adviser, Year 1)

In their suggestions for further development of EMO, some advisers indicated that provision needed to have greater sensitivity to the range of labour market barriers that could be encountered by ethnic minority groups with ESOL needs. For example one adviser had noticed that quite a few clients had not been able to get onto an ESOL course because they did not have literacy skills in their own language. This represented a substantial barrier for these individuals, as they were unable to progress without this literacy support. Another adviser perceived that many of their clients were skilled and qualified and being held back not only by their ESOL needs but also by lack of recognition of their experience and qualifications. Provision over and above ESOL was something that might be addressed by EMO in the future:

> 'I don't know whether they could provide like you know a lot of them are quite skilled people, whether they could provide, I don't know training in their field with somebody who could maybe speak their language, I don't know, maybe they could get something, even if it's something basic… they can't go to

college because their English isn't good enough to grasp what they're going to do at college, whether they could do any basic classes I don't know, so that they can get something on paper, so that they are competent, it doesn't have to be a qualification, just something to show an employer.'

(Front line adviser, Year 2)

4.4   Employers

Most employers had positive experiences of working with EMO providers either through taking on employees and placements or by attending diversity training or using consultancy services. However few had any clear perception of the nature of EMO as an initiative, rather they identified particular beneficial services and relationships with providers. Whilst ethnic minority employers could see the wider benefits of the scheme and were keen to encourage any provision that benefited ethnic minority communities, in general an understanding of EMO as a whole was not a concern for the majority of employers. In fact linking the services they had received from the provider with Jobcentre Plus provision could deter employers from getting involved. One employer who had used the consultancy services of an approach 2 provider noted that if it had been marketed by the Jobcentre he 'probably wouldn't have taken it up anyway' He had seen a lot of EU and government initiatives being promoted and felt the benefits were not always clear.

The employer interviews highlighted the huge diversity amongst employers in terms of their needs for support for employing a diverse workforce. Some employers were very interested in accessing new staff, which had been trained and were willing to work, and for some businesses the idea of supported placements was particularly useful in attracting them to the provision. Other employers, particularly large private sector companies, already had recruitment schemes and equal opportunities monitoring and were looking for practical strategies to help them recruit more staff from ethnic minority communities as they had identified that they were not being reached by their current methods. Other organisations had recognised the need to have a range of policies in place (sometimes going beyond diversity policies) and wanted help and advice in setting these up. Whilst some wanted one-to-one consultancy, others saw training sessions and workshops as a way to meet other employers, swap strategies and build networks. The most successful providers were those that exploited employers' interest in building business networks and relationships.

4.5   Referral agencies

Interviews were carried out with 14 referral agencies, across all five areas in the evaluation, and were identified in conjunction with project workers as the agencies they were working mostly closely with as part of the EMO pilot. The relationships varied from being a close working partnership to simply being a venue for job fairs and a conduit for publicity materials.

An EMO provider working in one area had worked closely with a refugee organisation, assisting with housing benefit claims and making refugees more aware of training and employment opportunities. This was of benefit not only to the individual refugees, but had also increased the organisation's awareness and capacity in these matters. Another provider had worked closely with a local community centre and pooled resources to provide IT training, with the centre providing the equipment and the EMO provider the trainers. Both agencies saw this as valuable work, particularly as it had involved older Asian men, whose needs were not well met elsewhere, despite the fact that outcomes from this group were ineligible for payment, due to existing LMS records.

Providers both made and accepted referrals. One EMO provider used local community centres to recruit from particular communities, but also referred clients back to these centres for mentoring and befriending, which fell outside its more tightly employment-focused remit. Other centres also worked with EMO providers in similar ways. Centres valued having additional resources, such as providers who were able to offer access to vacancies on site, and needed to be happy about the quality of service offered by EMO providers, which would reflect on their reputation. Providers benefited from the trust enjoyed by established centres, which gave them ready access to communities that might otherwise have required a longer period of outreach before taking up services.

One organisation interviewed was a local training provider, which had been featured on a radio programme run by the EMO provider. They had been very happy with the way their work was presented and with the content of the programme as a whole, pointing out that in addition to providing information for clients, it was a useful source for local professionals wanting to know about other services in the area. Two other interviewees (another EMO provider and a major local employer) had also appeared on the programme, and were impressed with its professionalism. All of those involved made the comment that they had not noted any direct impact on their own work arising from their involvement. It was more a question of being willing to make a contribution.

5   MI Data Analysis

5.1   Summary

- This chapter describes the characteristics of EMO participants and employers in the 20 projects selected for the evaluation, and provides analysis of outcome measures by these characteristics.

- For the five projects using Approach 2 methods there were 271 employers recorded on the database. Employers were typically small business with less than 50 employees.

- Project-Employer relationships appeared to be quite strong. Projects developed a working relationship with 53 per cent of employers and were still in contact with 88 per cent of employers.

- For more than half the employers, data on employment take up was missing. Where data was recorded, 26 per cent of employers took on an EMO client.

- For the 18 projects using Approach 1 and/or Approach 3 methods there were 3,962 participants recorded on the database. Roughly half of these participants were male and three per cent had a disability. 58 per cent were Asian or Asian British, 44 per cent Indian and 24 per cent Black or Black British.

- Data on benefit status, qualifications and time since they last worked when they entered EMO was missing for around half the participants. Where data was recorded, half the participants did not claim benefit and 31 per cent claimed JSA. Around half did not have a qualification whilst nine per cent had a qualification at NVQ Level 4 or 5. Nearly a half of participants had worked in the six months prior to EMO entry and just one-in-six had not worked for more than two years.

- 34 per cent of participants were recorded as being referred to Jobcentre Plus, 12 per cent had an LMS record established, five per cent accessed Jobcentre Plus provision, seven per cent started training and 26 per cent started a job.

5.2   Introduction

The aim of the Management Information (MI) data analysis is to identify the number of people accessing EMO and their characteristics and outcomes.

Initially there were significant problems with the MI data, with large numbers of participants not recorded on the database. Following recognition of these problems Jobcentre Plus made a concerted effort to improve the quality of MI data. The result of these efforts were am immediate increase in the size of the database, such that by March 2004 it was felt that the data reflected the true situation for most projects, although evidence from some projects indicated some continuing discrepancies.

A further problem with the database is the amount of missing data for certain key indicators. There are several projects where there were no positive outcomes in terms of jobs and training according to the MI data. This does not tally with other information gathered directly from the projects. Given this, we may consider that in general the figures presented in this chapter as a lower bound of the impact of the programme.

The following analysis presents the available information for those participants with an MI record. There are two sources of data. The first is concerned with projects that adopted an employer-based approach (Approach 2), whilst the second covers projects focused on individual participants (approaches I and III). Some projects adopted more than one approach. Overall there were 882 records on the entire employer database and 11,545 records on the individual database. For the 20 projects considered in this evaluation there were 271 employer records and 3,962 individual records.

5.3   Projects Working with Employers

Five of the 20 projects considered in this evaluation operated the Approach 2 model, with some of these also utilising other approaches. However, more than 90 per cent of all MI records were for just three of these projects.

5.3.1   Employer size

In general, the employers that these projects worked with were small or micro-businesses with fewer than 50 employees. Figure 5.1 indicates that only seven per cent of employers had 250 or more employees, whilst more than half the employers had between 10 and 49 employees and a further 32 per cent had fewer than ten employees.

Figure 5.1   Distribution of Employers by Number of Employees

Source: EMO Evaluation, MI Data
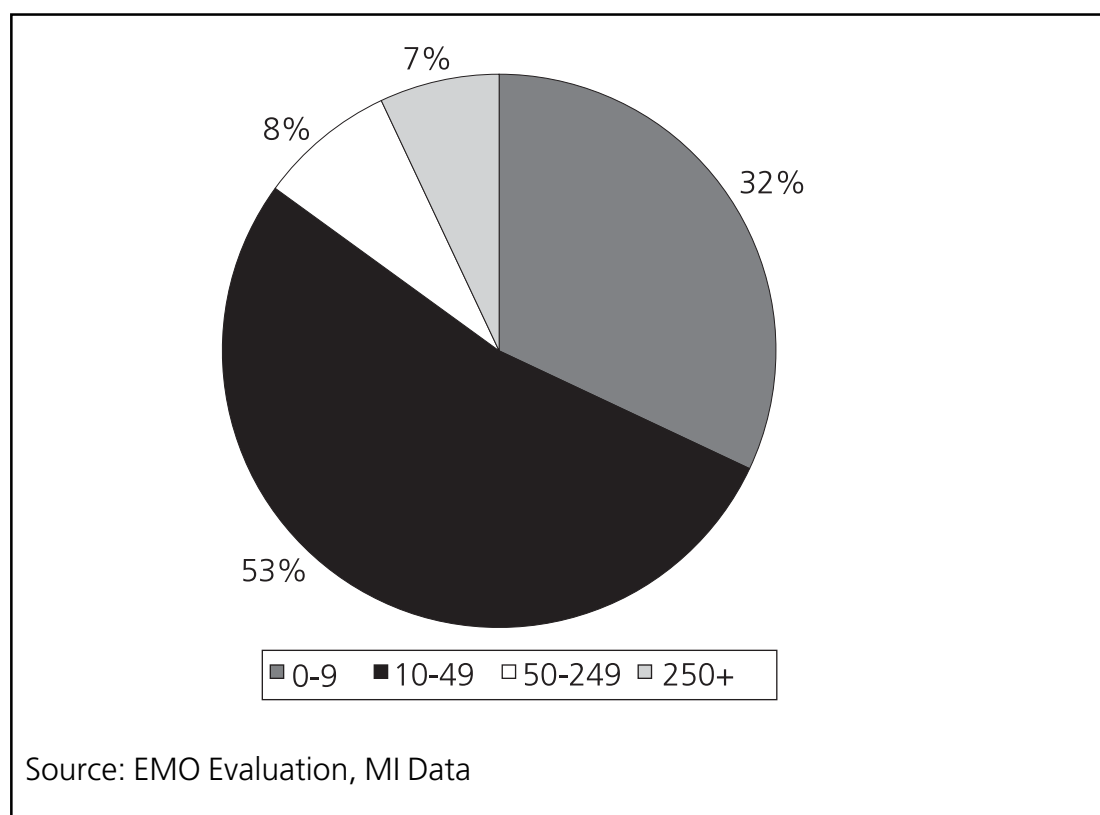
5.3.2   Project and Employer Relationships

Overall the relationships between projects and the employers appeared to be quite strong. Table 5.1 shows that a working partnership had been developed with more than half the employers. In two out of the three larger projects there was a working partnership with all or almost all employers, whilst in the third a working partnership developed with only around a third of employers.

All projects remained in contact with the majority of employers, and overall, projects remained in contact with 88 per cent of employers.

Whilst support of Equal Opportunities Policy was not a designated aim of the programme, the MI data did record whether projects supported employers with their equal opportunities policy. Unfortunately, for roughly 30 per cent of employers this data was not recorded, however, for those employers where it was recorded there was considerable variation in the extent to which the policy was supported. Overall 37 per cent of employers were supported by the projects with their equal opportunities policy, but the support across projects varies from 10 to 82 per cent of employers.

Table 5.1   Employer contact and working relationships by project

	Base N	Percentage of Employers	Range of Percentages by Project
Developed a Working Partnership with Employer	245	53	36-100
Project Still in Contact with Employers	246	88	72-100
Supported Employer with Equal Opportunities Policy	189	37	10-82
Have any outreach clients taken up employment with the Employer	127	26	5-38

Source: EMO Evaluation, MI Data

5.3.3   Employment Outcomes

Analysis of employment outcomes for these projects is even more severely hampered by missing data, with no data recorded for more than half of the employers. It is therefore not possible to be confident about the percentage of employers who took on EMO clients.

If we take the data at face value, then 26 per cent of employers had EMO clients who had taken up employment. It may be possible, however, that the missing data is somehow systematically missing. For example, if no employment occurs, nothing gets entered into the database and the data is recorded as missing when it should record that no employment took place. In this case the 26 per cent figure would be an over-estimate. In contrast if employment was simply not recorded then the 26 per cent figure would be an under-estimate.

There is one large project, where missing data is not a problem, with data recorded for all but one employer. For this project 38 per cent of employers had taken on EMO clients, the highest figure recorded across the projects. It is not possible to say with this is a typical take up rate, but it does at least provide an indication of what may be possible from this approach.

For those employers providing employment to an outreach client, the vast majority (72 per cent) provided only one outreach client with employment. The maximum number of clients for an employer was eight.

5.4   Projects working with individual participants

18 out of the 20 projects considered operated directly with individual participants. There was a mix of projects; some operating only Approach 1, some operating Approach 2 and others operating both approaches. In terms of participants, more than half were in projects that used both approaches. This figure is strongly influenced by one project that had more than one-third of the EMO participants out of the 20 projects considered in this evaluation.

5.4.1 Participant Characteristics

Table 5.2 presents some basic information for all projects, also split by approach. Roughly half of the participants were male with considerable variation by project particularly because some projects were targeted mainly at women.

Three per cent of clients had a disability and most projects had clients with a disability.

The different projects had very different client groups in terms of ethnicity depending primarily on their location. Overall nearly three out of five clients were Asian or Asian British, most of these were Indian, 44 per cent of all participants. Nearly a quarter of participants were Black or Black British. Nearly one in ten clients were White.

For many projects the focus was predominantly on a single ethnic minority group, whilst others focused on a range of minority groups.

Table 5.2   Characteristics of the individual participant MI sample by project

	All Projects	Approach I only	Approach 3 only	Both
Number of MI Records	3,962	1,262	556	2,144
Per cent Male	49.4	53.3	67.3	42.5
Per cent with disability	3.1	5.1	4.7	1.6
Ethnicity				
Asian or Asian British	57.9	15.7	52.5	84.8
Black or Black British	23.9	48.1	20.3	10.1
Mixed	0.9	1.7	1.1	0.4
Chinese	5.3	12.3	0.5	2.1
Other	3.5	2.5	15.3	1.5
White	8.5	19.8	10.3	1.2

There were 28 participants where gender was not recorded, 366 participants where disability data was not recorded and 328 participants where ethnicity was not recorded.

Source: EMO Evaluation, MI Data

5.4.2 Situation at EMO entry

It is important when attempting to assess the success of EMO projects to identify the starting point of EMO participants. Here we look at benefit status, qualifications and time since last worked.

5.4.2.1 *Main type of benefit claimed*

Across all projects nearly half of the data on benefit status was missing, see Figure 5.2. Much of this missing data was for the extremely large project discussed above

which accounted for 36 per cent of all records. This project operated both Approach 1 and Approach 3, hence this explains the high proportion of missing data for projects with these approaches. In addition, all approach 3 projects had high levels of missing data, whilst the missing data problem was less severe for approach 1 projects. This does not imply anything about the approaches, but is indicative of difficulties with MI data within certain projects.

Overall 26 per cent of participants recorded that they did not claim benefit at EMO entry. In terms of those where data was recorded the figure was 51 per cent. Most benefit claimants claimed JSA. Overall 16 per cent of participants claimed JSA, for those where data was recorded the figure is 31 per cent. Similar figures for IS claimants are four and nine per cent and for other claimants five and nine per cent.

There was considerable variation by project. In one project 98 per cent of participants where data was recorded claimed benefit and 89 per cent of these claimed JSA. At the other extreme, in another project, only three per cent of participants claimed benefit and none of these benefit claimants were claiming JSA or Income Support.

These patterns may be partly due to the gender composition of the participants, with projects with a high proportion of female participants also having more IS claimants. It may also be due to differences in policy implementation with some projects specifically targeting non-claimants and others focusing specifically on JSA claimants.

Figure 5.2 indicates that one-in-six EMO participants were already JSA claimants when they started the initiative. For these participants outcomes related to engagement with Jobcentre Plus (establishment of LMS record) are rendered meaningless, since they will already be engaged with Jobcentre Plus.

Figure 5.2   Benefit Status at EMO entry by approach

Source: EMO Evaluation, MI Data
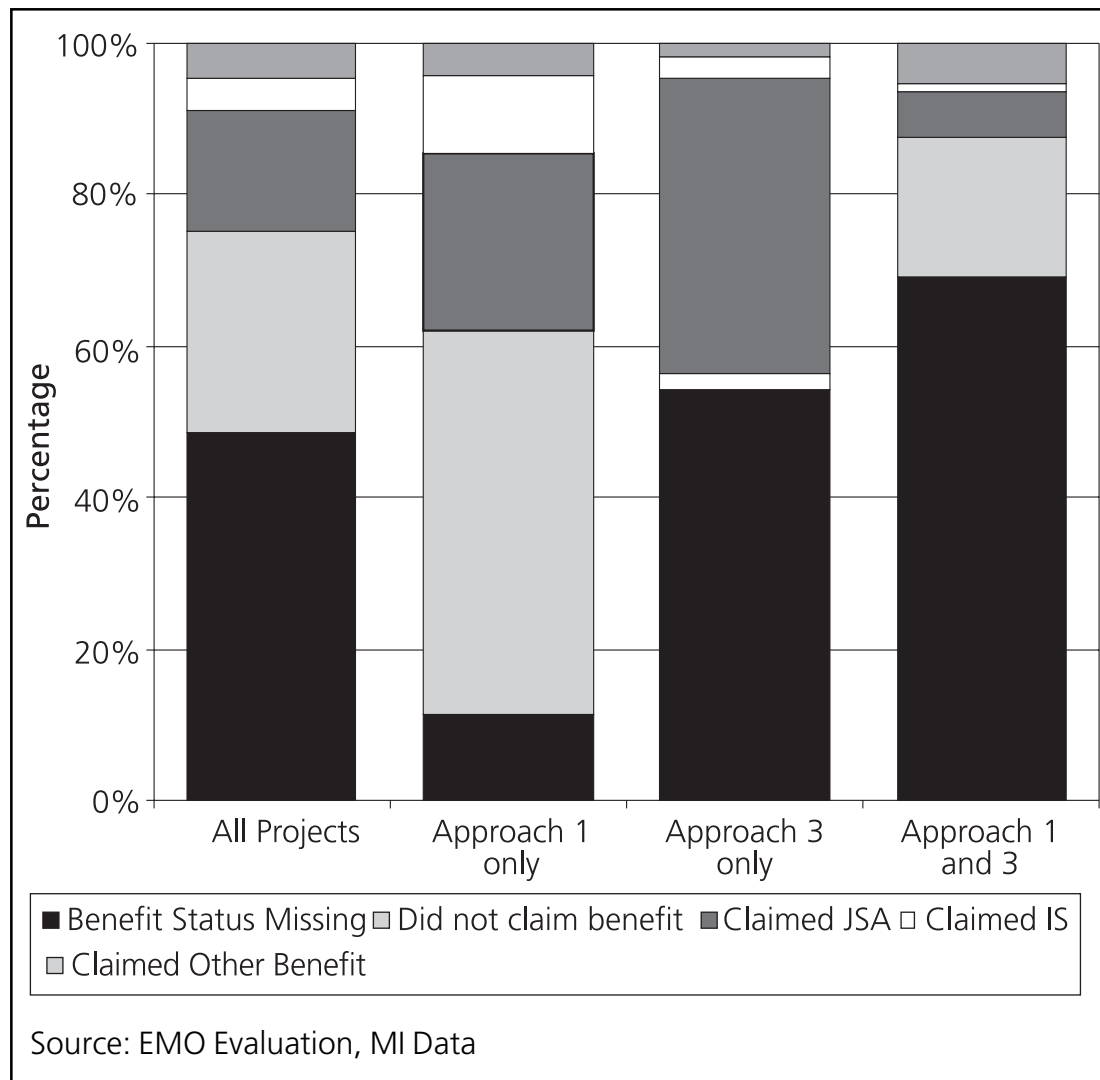
5.4.2.2   Highest qualification held

Similar data is reported for the highest qualification held at EMO entry in Figure 5.3. Overall, for 45 per cent of participants whether they held a qualification upon EMO entry was not recorded. The missing data problem is similar to that discussed above for benefit status, with missing data on qualifications being prevalent in the same projects as there was missing data for benefit status. The same is true for time since last worked discussed below.

Where qualifications data was recorded, roughly a half of all participants did not have a qualification. For those with a qualification there was a wide range of levels including five per cent of all participants or nine per cent of clients with qualifications data recorded having qualifications at NVQ Level 4 or 5.

Again there was considerable variation by project. Where data was recorded, for several projects more than two out of three participants did not have a qualification,

whilst in four projects less than 20 per cent did not have a qualification. Meanwhile in two projects more than twenty per cent of participants had a qualification at NVQ Level 4 or 5, but in five projects less than five per cent of participants had NVQ Level 4 or 5.

Figure 5.3   Qualifications at EMO entry by approach

Source: EMO Evaluation, MI Data
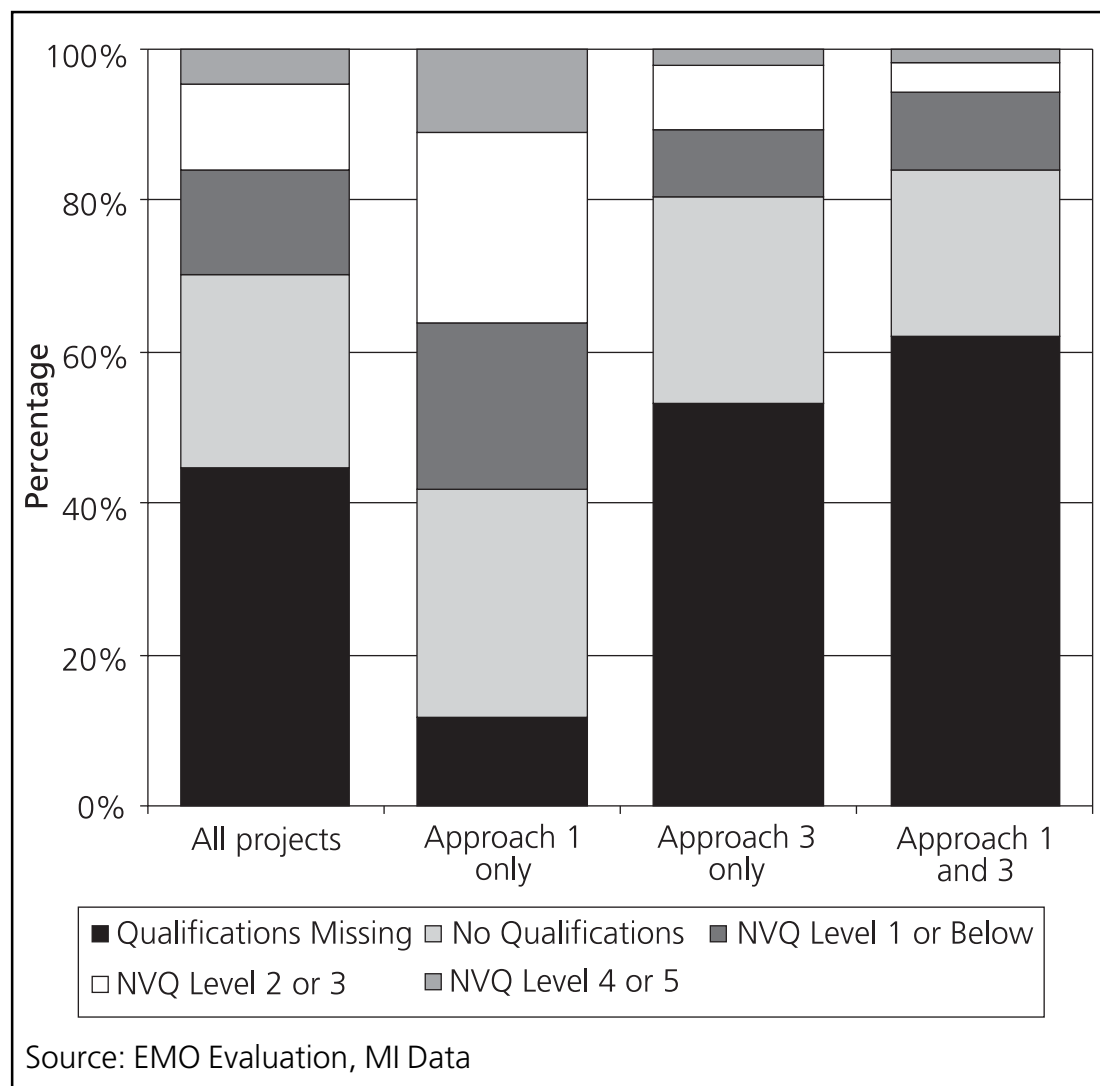
5.4.2.3   Time since last worked

Patterns of missing data here are similar to those recorded for benefit status and qualifications. Where data was recorded, for almost half the participants it had been less than six months since they last worked and only 16 per cent of participants had not worked for two or more years.

There was some correspondence between time since last worked and qualifications held. In one project where just 25 per cent of reporting participants held a qualification, only three per cent of reporting participants had been out of work for less than six months and 79 per cent had been out of work for more than a year. In another project 87 per cent of reporting participants held a qualification and 70 per cent of participants had been out of work for less than six months.

Figure 5.4 **Time since last worked at EMO entry by approach**

Source: EMO Evaluation, MI Data
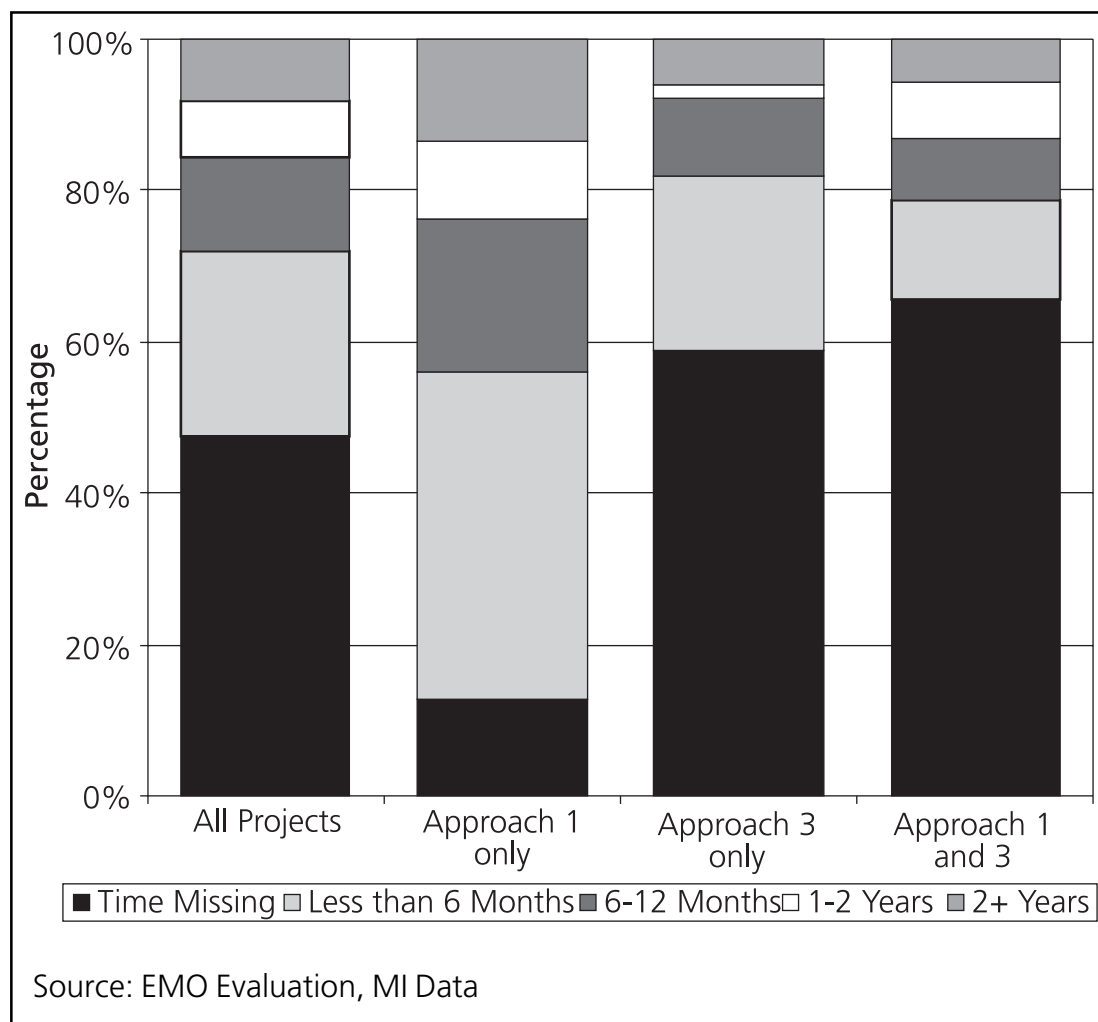
5.4.3 Outcome measures

There are a number of potential outcome measures for EMO that are recorded in the MI data. These cover two broad areas. First, Jobcentre Plus related outcomes, including referral to Jobcentre Plus, whether an LMS record was established and whether Jobcentre Plus provision was accessed. The second covers starting training and work.

Table 5.3 reports the percentage of EMO participants with a positive outcome by the range of project and participant characteristics discussed above.

34 per cent of all participants were recorded as having been referred to Jobcentre Plus, 12.1 per cent had an LMS record established, 5.4 per cent accessed Jobcentre Plus provision, 7.4 per cent started training and 26.4 per cent started a job.

It is worth noting here that the percentage of participants that started a job in the 18 projects considered in this evaluation was exactly the same as the percentage of all EMO participants across all EMO projects in the period between April 2002 and March 2004.

Analysis by approach shows some large differences in outcomes. It is difficult with the samples under consideration and the small number of projects adopting different approaches to say that differences in outcomes relate strongly to the approach adopted. It is more likely that these differences relate to specific outcomes in different projects. Elsewhere in this report we attempt to assess the success of the different approaches.

Nevertheless, Approach 1 only projects accounted for most of the Jobcentre Plus referrals and LMS records. Approach 3 only projects had a much higher percentage of participants who accessed Jobcentre Plus provision. Training and Job starts were also much lower for Approach 3 only projects.

Gender differences were small across all measures. While participants with disabilities were twice as likely to be referred to Jobcentre Plus and have an LMS record established than participants without disabilities, but they were less likely to have accessed Jobcentre Plus provision, and much less likely to have started training or a job.

Table 5.3   Jobcentre Plus related outcome measures by project

	Number of records	Referred to Jobcentre Plus	LMS record established	Accessed Jobcentre Plus provision	Started training	Started a job
All	3,962	34.0	12.1	5.4	7.4	26.4
Approach						
1 only	1,262	71.6	30.8	6.7	8.9	26.3
3 only	556	13.7	1.3	14.4	1.3	11.3
1 and 3	2,144	17.0	4.0	2.5	8.2	30.4
Gender[1]						
Male	1,945	34.6	14.6	4.6	6.7	27.1
Female	1,990	33.5	9.9	6.4	8.1	25.6
People with or without disabilities						
With	112	63.4	25.9	4.5	3.6	15.2
Without	3,484	34.8	12.7	5.5	8.2	28.3
Missing	366	16.4	2.7	5.7	1.9	12.3
Benefit Status						
None claimed	1,045	55.1	14.7	6.5	9.8	28.0
JSA	638	46.7	34.2	8.3	9.6	23.4
IS	175	62.9	17.7	13.1	16.0	10.9
Other	177	31.1	6.7	7.3	10.1	16.9
Missing	1,926	15.9	3.4	3.1	4.5	28.9

Continued

Table 5.3 Continued

	Number of records	Referred to Jobcentre Plus	LMS record established	Accessed Jobcentre Plus provision	Started training	Started a job
Qualifications						
None	1,010	44.7	16.4	5.8	8.5	19.7
NVQ 1 or below	544	53.5	20.0	11.6	10.8	25.9
NVQ 2/3	448	55.4	24.5	6.7	11.8	35.7
NVQ 4/ 5	188	49.5	17.6	7.4	9.0	28.7
Missing	1,772	14.8	3.6	2.9	4.5	27.8
Time since last worked						
<6 months	963	53.6	17.5	7.5	10.3	32.8
6-12 months	485	53.2	28.7	5.8	5.8	20.2
1-2 years	297	45.5	20.2	6.1	10.8	20.9
2 or more years	328	44.8	13.1	10.7	16.2	11.6
Missing	1,889	15.3	3.7	3.4	4.4	28.2

1. There were 28 people for which gender was not recorded. Given the small number of cases, no data is reported for these people.

Source: EMO Evaluation, MI Data

For participants with missing data on benefit status, qualifications and time since last worked the percentage of participants with positive outcomes were generally lower than for participants with data recorded. The exception to this is the job start measure where job start rates were slightly higher than the overall figure.

One possible implication of this is that if data is missing on benefit status, qualifications and time since last worked, then it seems plausible that data on other outcome variables is also more likely to be not recorded. If we were to consider only outcomes where data on these other measures are recorded then roughly 50 per cent of these participants were referred to Jobcentre Plus (compared with 34 per cent of all participants); roughly 20 per cent of these participants had an LMS record established (compared with 12 per cent of all participants); 7.5 per cent of these participants accessed Jobcentre Plus provision (compared with 5.4 per cent of all participants) and around ten per cent started training (compared with 7.4 per cent of all participants).

The percentage of job starts remains roughly the same at around 25 per cent. The consistent recording of job starts may be related to payment contracts for projects that are linked to the number of job starts.

The analysis of these outcome measures also reveal a paradox whereby nearly a half of JSA claimants were recorded as being referred to Jobcentre Plus and more than a third had an LMS record established. All JSA claimants should already have been engaged with Jobcentre Plus and have an LMS record set up.

Analysis by benefit status shows that IS claimants were twice as likely as other non-JSA benefit claimants to be referred to Jobcentre Plus. Furthermore IS claimants were the most likely to have accessed Jobcentre Plus provision or started training, but were the least likely to have started a job. Interestingly non-claimants were the most likely to have started a job. One explanation for this is that these participants did not previously claim because their partners were already in work, but they were more likely to be job-ready than many other participants who claimed benefit.

Outcomes by qualification levels and time since last worked also reveal interesting patterns. Participants who had worked in the last six months were almost three times more likely to have started a job than participants who had not worked for two or more years and were more likely to have started a job than any other group.

Participants who had not worked for two or more years were the most likely group to have accessed Jobcentre Plus provision and the most likely to have started training.

Participants with no qualifications were the least likely to have started a job. However participants with NVQ Level 2 or 3 qualifications were the most likely to have started a job, with a higher percentage of these participants starting a job even than participants with NVQ Level 4 or 5 qualifications.

6   The participants

6.1   Summary

• This chapter describes the characteristics of EMO participants in the interview sample, and provides a breakdown by age, ethnicity, and current employment status. It goes on to discuss the work profile of participants, and how they have engaged with Jobcentre Plus.

• A total of 144 initial interviews were conducted with participants, 64 in autumn 2002, and 80 in spring 2003. Exactly half were male, and half female. Just under a third (53) were aged 25-34, around one in four (35) were 16-24, and an equal proportion aged 35-44. Only four people in the sample were aged over 55.

• In terms of ethnicity, Pakistani (35) and Indian (16) participants together made up over a third of the sample, while one in four were Black, this group consisting almost equally of Caribbean (17) and Africans (17). Nearly all of those defining themselves as 'Other' were Turkish or Kurdish. Only two people declined to define their ethnicity.

• At the time when they were first interviewed, over two-thirds (105) of participants were unemployed. Of those in paid employment, half were working part-time, most of them in low-paid work. Around half of the sample, including some of those working part-time, was registered with Jobcentre Plus.

• In terms of household employment profile, participants fell into three groups; those solely reliant on benefits, where non-one was in work, those where all or most adult members of the household were employed, and the largest group, which consisted of households receiving income from a variety of sources, including earnings, disability benefits and tax credits.

• Individual work histories and profiles varied considerably, and ranged from those with high-level qualifications and recent work experience to people with few or redundant skills who had not worked for many years. Some participants who had worked for many years in poorly paid 'ethnic enclave' employment to cope with ESOL needs were anxious to change direction.

- Most participants were strongly positive in work orientation, but not all were prepared to take the first job available, as some wished to focus on longer-term goals.

- Most EMO participants had some contact with Jobcentre Plus. Many had registered following their contact with the EMO provider. While in many cases contact was limited to mandatory appointments and 'signing', others visited more frequently to seek work.

- Participants had mixed feelings about Jobcentre Plus, identifying positive instances of support and guidance, particularly from personal advisers, but also expressing dissatisfaction with some elements of the service, including the range of jobs on offer, the accuracy of vacancy systems, support for people with ESOL needs, and the physical environment in the offices.

6.2   Introduction

This chapter describes the characteristics of EMO participants in the interview sample. It begins by providing a breakdown of their gender, age, ethnicity, and current employment status. This is followed by a discussion of family and work profile. It then moves onto presenting the work profile of participants, by identifying the broad client groups in the sample and illustrating the range of needs and labour market positions through examples. The final section explores how participants have been engaging with Jobcentre Plus, in terms of both their use of provision and perceptions of the services offered.

6.3   Participant characteristics

6.3.1   Age and Gender

A total of 144 initial interviews were conducted with participants, in two cohorts. Sixty four of these took place in Autumn 2002 (phase a) and 80 in (Spring 2003 (phase b). Half the participants were male (72) and half female (72). In terms of age, the sample had a balanced profile. Of the total, just under one third (53) were aged 25-34, around one in four (35) were 16-24 and an equal proportion (35) were aged 35-44. Participants aged over 45 formed less than one eighth of the sample, with only four over the age of 55. A higher proportion of Phase b participants were in the 16-24 and 35-44 age groups (Table 7.1).

Table 6.1 Age profile of participants

Age group	Phase a	Phase b	Total
16-24	12	23	35
25-34	29	24	53
35-44	14	21	35
45-54	8	9	17
55+	1	3	4
Total	**64**	**80**	**144**

Source: EMO Evaluation, participant interviews

6.3.2 Ethnicity Profile

Table 7.2 summarises participants' ethnic profile, according to the Census classification of ethnicity.

About one third of the whole sample are Asians and the largest groups among those are Pakistanis (35) and Indians (16). One in four are Black and this group consists of nearly equal proportions of Caribbeans (15) and Africans (17). Most of the 'White Other' were Turkish or Kurds from Turkey. The 'Other' category includes participants, among others, originating from the Middle East. Fewer Indian participants were interviewed in Phase b than in Phase a. Finally, two participants refused to define their ethnicity.

Table 6.2 Participants ethnic composition

Ethnicity	Phase a	Phase b	Total
White British	-	1	1
White Other	3	8	12
Mixed: White & Asian	-	1	1
Mixed: White & Black Caribbean	-	3	3
Mixed: White & Black African	1	-	1
Asian or Asian British: Indian	14	3	17
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	15	22	37
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	-	1	1
Other Asian	2	4	6
Black or Black British: Caribbean	8	7	15
Black or Black British: African	7	10	17
Other Black	2	-	2
Chinese	8	7	15
Other Ethnic group	3	3	6
Unable to classify	1	-	1
Refusal to self-define	-	2	2
Missing	-	8	8
Total	**64**	**80**	**144**

Source: EMO Evaluation, Phase a & Phase b interviews

There was some unease about having to define oneself racially or in terms of ethnicity. A number of participants were keen to make it clear that they did not mean to discriminate between people or did not have anything against people of other origins. Some participants felt strongly about the whole idea of ethnic classification saying that 'we are all human beings', that they did not believe 'any caste and creed' and they were not 'racist'. One participant questioned the interviewer about why that mattered so much and said 'people are people', adding that *'It is a segregation thing … it separates people from one another'* (Nellie).

More recent migrants were another group that had considerable difficulty with the question about their ethnic origins. This seemed to reflect the unfamiliarity of these participants with the idea of ethnic monitoring. One group that seems to have struggled most with this question was Kurdish and Turkish participants. Some of these participants appeared not to understand the question at all and seemed unhappy about having to choose a category since they felt none of those on offer quite captured their identity. This may reflect the inadequacy of the census criteria in describing their origin. 'White other' has a particularly exclusionary sense to it. One asked whether there was a category that said 'Mediterranean' and one said he was choosing British because it was the closest amongst the options available.

Another concern seemed to be perceptions of how 'others' define a particular group. Some Indian, Pakistani and Black participants appeared to identify as British and Indian/Pakistani/Black, but in defining their ethnicity, revealed a preoccupation with how indigenous whites see them as Indian/Pakistani/Black and not British. One participant described feeling as if he is not entitled to call himself 'British' despite being born and raised in England, while others felt obliged to mention their parents' origins as in *'I was born in England, but my parents are Caribbean, so I'd say Caribbean'* (Gillian).

When asked to state their ethnic origins, without reference to any pre-defined categorisation, this prompted a more varied classification. It is interesting to note that members of the more settled minority communities such as those from South Asia and Black participants tended to use terms similar to the official ones to describe their ethnicity (i.e. Black Caribbean, Black African, British Indian, British Asian) and this may be a sign of their familiarity with ethnicity monitoring. It may also suggest that external definitions may influence self-perceptions. Most participants tended to be more specific, revealing subtle differences in self-perceptions and emphasising different elements of their identity such as religion, country of origin or region in their home country. One participant who defined himself as 'Bhutan' said, Pakistani was his nationality, but his ethnicity was Bhutan. Another participant who put himself down as Pakistani according to the census classification, said he would have preferred to call himself a Sikh. There were others who similarly preferred to emphasise their religion and used definitions such as 'Muslim' or 'Pakistani Muslim', 'Alevi Kurdish', 'Hindu Punjabi' and 'Indian Christian'. References to particular regions in country of origin, such as 'Mirpuri', or local tribal divisions such as 'Mandinka-Gambian' were also common. Another common pattern is to include different elements of one's identity by using terms such as 'English-Kurdish', 'Black

English', 'British Pakistani', 'Black British'. This was more common among those born and raised in the UK or those who have lived here for a large part of their adult life and some participants demonstrated considerably reluctance to choose one of these:

> *'You see I am a British citizen so I have been here for 40 years, if somebody asked me I would, you see I've been born over there in Pakistan but I'm a resident here so I'm British Citizen…. Well, actually I'm British but then I put Pakistani as well'.*

> (Wasim)

6.3.3 Participants' current employment status

More than two thirds of the participants interviewed (105) were not in paid work at the time of their interview (Table 7.3). Among them were one participant who did some casual work occasionally and another on work placement for 6 months, who did not see themselves as in 'real' employment.

Table 6.3 Participants' employment status at time of their first interview

Are you in paid work?	Phase a	Phase b	Total
Yes	15	24	39
No	49	56	105
Total	64	80	144

Source: EMO Evaluation, Phase a and Phase b interviews

Of those in paid work (39), two were engaged in temporary work but despite not having regular jobs, did not consider themselves unemployed. Half of those in paid work were working part-time. Participants working part-time tended to be in low status employment. In some cases, they were combining part-time working with courses delivered by EMO providers. Some of those working full-time were in jobs they disliked or work unsuited to their qualifications and skills and others had ESOL needs. Some of them were attending ESOL courses by EMO providers or other training to improve their prospects.

More than half of all interviewees were registered with Jobcentre Plus. This included some of those working part-time. Some unemployed participants were not registered with the Jobcentre despite actively seeking work and their reasons for not doing so varied:

• they were newly arrived in the country and were not eligible or were not sure of their eligibility;

• they had leave to remain but were waiting for NI numbers;

• they had health problems and were on Incapacity Benefit;

- they had childcare responsibilities and were not looking for work in the near future;

- pregnant women not available for work in the near future, but keen to improve skills and qualifications in preparation;

- participants with relatively higher qualifications who did not think the Jobcentre could help with finding the type of jobs they sought.;

- some said claiming benefits was stigmatised in their communities.

The great majority of the unemployed, including participants who were not registered with Jobcentre Plus, expressed a strong desire to work and were looking for work. Some sought part-time work to be able to continue learning English or complete other training, and some of those studying full-time or with care responsibilities had postponed job seeking for the near future, but most participants wanted and planned to be working eventually.

6.3.4   Refugees

About one in five of those interviewed were refugees or asylum seekers. This included recently arrivals whose asylum application may or may not have been resolved, and the more settled, some of whom had been in the UK for a number of years. It is possible that this number underestimates the number of refugees in the sample, as this question was not directly asked in interviews, though some participants volunteered this information openly or revealed it in other ways. In most cases there were clear signs such as living in dispersal accommodation, lack of eligibility for Jobcentre Plus registration, country of origin (e.g. Kurdish, Iraqi, Iranian, Afghan, Somali) and length of time in the country.

6.3.5   Family work profile

In order contextualise their broader situation, participants were asked about the composition of their household. They were also probed specifically about employment activities of other members of their family and household income sources, with a view to gaining an insight into the work orientations of the whole family. Understandably, there was some reluctance to discuss family circumstances, and particularly the questions around family income, in detail. Nevertheless, analysis of the interviews revealed an interesting variety of family formations and income sources.

Family formations included nuclear families where members of the immediate family lived together; small families where a few relatives (e.g. two sisters or aunt and cousin) lived in the same house; larger families where members of extended family (e.g. in-laws, cousins, aunts) were found together; and there were other arrangements such as sharing accommodation with friends and or living alone.

In terms of the sources of household income, it is possible to distinguish three broad groups, though there was not a clear overlap between family composition and

household income profiles. Families of all types and sizes are found across these groups and most participants live in households where members of the family have a range of positions within the labour market and consequently, the household income is obtained from a range of sources.

The first distinctive group is where the main source of household income is benefits of one sort or another. Most asylum seekers living in dispersal accommodation and sharing with other asylum seekers fall into this group. A sizeable number of people living alone and large families headed by older men who worked in industries which have now declined, and who still have children at school or college, also seem to be wholly reliant on benefits. Asylum seekers and older participants with large families to look after were particularly concerned about their low incomes and appeared to find it extremely difficult to make ends meet. For asylum seekers, the overwhelming feeling was one of helplessness, as they were not allowed to work. Many older participants felt they lacked the skills or the qualifications needed to seek employment in the new economy and also felt disadvantaged by their age. As they had been working for all their adult lives, they also found it difficult to deal with the loss of income and status and emphasised the strong work ethic they had citing how they had worked from an early age, putting in long-hours and doing shift work all their lives. Bashin, a 53 year old Pakistani male, who worked in textile mills previously, lived with his wife and six children. In response to questions about his income he explained how difficult it was to make ends meet and the pressure he felt to work:

> *'… of course there is pressure to work you see, if you work and your salary is £400 .. and if you had six kids obviously they are going to have a better life … but we're going to be spending our £150 so we have to manage a lot… you can afford to buy boots or trainers for your kids that are £30 all we can afford is £5. You see the kids don't understand all this, you see even our kids feel it that we're way behind the neighbours, so even , so if the kids think, just imagine how we feel about all this.'*

It is interesting to note that, as with many participants in similar circumstances, Bashin did his best to encourage his children to continue with their education and was determined to support them, so that they were equipped to operate in the modern employment market and could avoid his own fate.

The second group consists of families where all or most able-bodied and adult members of the family work and the main source of income is from employment. This includes women with young children seeking training with a view to employment in the medium term and young adults and graduates living with their parents. Most of these participants did not feel particularly under pressure to work, as money was not an issue for them, and they felt supported by their families. Women whose partners were employed desired to get a job, both to contribute to family income and to start/continue a working life outside the home. Some young adults living with their parents had other siblings in work and those in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) were not generally expected to contribute to family income or share any of the household costs. Nevertheless, they were motivated and sought to

establish meaningful careers and also wanted work as a means of gaining independence. Fahmida is a 23 year old Pakistani woman who left education at 18, living with parents and some siblings who are in employment. She did some part-time and temporary jobs working in administration and finance and says she has never claimed unemployment benefits. She does not feel under pressure to work and says she does not have to worry about the mortgage or the bills. She is currently on a work placement and keen to get a job immediately afterwards:

> *'I'm right stressed out now. I'm looking for a job 'cause like this course* [referring to work placement] *is finishing and I don't know whether I will get a job on it or not, so I do need a job. I don't want to stay unemployed.'*

The largest group consists of those whose household income is a combination of income from employment and benefits. Participants living with extended family, those sharing with friends and a number of nuclear families reported various sources for the household income. The participant and also other members of the family could be on JSA or other benefits but there were usually some (e.g. brother-in-law, nephews, aunts, daughter-in-law) who were working. A small number of participants were keen to emphasise that their finances were separate although they lived together, but in many cases all members of the household seemed to be contributing towards key expenditure such as food and bills. Working tax credit, child benefit and disability benefits were all listed as contributing to family income. The working members of the family were sometimes adults who have continued living with their family after completing their education/getting married and supported their elderly parents. There were also participants who had recently arrived from abroad and were living with relatives, sometimes just temporarily accommodated and in other cases also supported financially. In a small number of cases, particularly where the breadwinner had recently become unemployed or the family had recently arrived from abroad, savings or money sent from overseas were indicated as the main source of income.

A key point of interest in examining household work profiles is to identify any patterns in the way family and individual orientations to and experiences of work overlap or diverge. Both family and individual work profiles are complex and analysis does not suggest a clear continuity between family and individual employment trajectories.

Household work profile is also not a constant. Some of the households now wholly dependent on benefit will have been working households in the past. Some of the most job-ready and highly motivated participants had unemployed family members. Family work histories may have nevertheless affected participants' work trajectories in different ways. For instance, it appears that participants from working households receive more support – financial and otherwise – and therefore have more scope to explore training and employment opportunities, rather than taking the first available job. Similarly, family expectations to contribute to household income or other family pressures may influence both short-term and longer term choices made in education or employment.

6.4   Work histories

Examination of participant work histories reveals a rich tapestry of backgrounds. Table 7.4 summarises the profiles of client groups interviewed for this evaluation. Employment barriers identified by participants are explored in detail in Chapter 8 and issues for particular groups are mentioned briefly in Table 7.4 below.

The range of profiles reflects the range of clients supported by EMO projects across the country. Whilst most projects had a main client base, the great majority responded to demand from across a wide variety of client groups and only a few worked with specific ethnic communities (e.g. Turkish, Somali, Chinese). While it is possible to identify broad 'groups of clients' based on education, skills, employment histories and personal circumstance, differences within and between these groups, and the large number of clients that do not fit neatly into any one group, makes it difficult to develop a typology of work histories.

Table 6.4   Client group profiles

Client group	Main Characteristics
Asian women or men who arrived on marriage	Includes both the long settled and the recently arrived. Most in their 20s & 30s. Some have ESOL needs, some have overseas HE qualifications that may not be recognised in the UK. Some women have dependent children. Most have no UK work experience.
Young Indian & Pakistani women	20s & 30s with varied levels of education. Could be part UK, part overseas educated. Most up to A-levels. Some have minor ESOL issues. Includes women born and raised in the UK and some recent arrivals. May have cultural preferences for local, female-only workplaces. Limited work experience and no access to networks that could support in job search and beyond.
Older Asian women	Includes Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. Fairly settled groups, with children who are at school. Some worked in textiles previously, but most have no work experience. Several were educated abroad prior to their arrival in the UK. Those who arrived young, had a few years of schooling in the UK. Most have ESOL needs and are looking for part-time work.
Women with childcare responsibilities	All age and ethnic groups. Some lone mothers and some with pre-school children. Varied educational and employment backgrounds. Older women have heavy ESOL needs. Most seek part-time work and looking to improve prospects after full-time childcare for a number of years.
Refugees	From a wide range of countries. Extremely varied profiles, ranging from no qualifications and no experience to highly qualified with plenty of experience. Accordingly, needs vary. ESOL an issue for the great majority. Most have no UK experience and not familiar with the UK labour market. Some awaiting decisions on their asylum applications and still uncertain about their future in the UK.

Table 6.4   Continued

Client group	Main Characteristics
Older Pakistani men	In late 40s and 50s. Most redundant from now declined industries such as textiles. Longstanding ESOL needs, lack of qualifications and skills demanded in the new economy and health issues.
Chinese men and women	Includes clients of all ages, most long settled. Includes men who have worked in low paid jobs such as catering and cleaning, in an ethnic job market for many years and now want better prospects. Severe ESOL needs and no knowledge of the formal job search systems. Some women have dependent children and seek part-time work. Some recent arrivals.
Young Pakistani men	Most born and raised in the UK. While English is not an issue, qualifications vary, with most up to A-level and some with equivalent qualifications from abroad. Limited work experience. Lack familiarity with the wider job market and limited access to networks that may help.
Turkish & Kurdish men and women	Most in 20s and 30s. Include recent refugees and more settled ones. Some with dependent children and also young men with no dependants. Severe ESOL needs. Most with no UK work experience or limited to ethnic restaurants/shops. Few with overseas HE qualifications.
Somali men and women	All age groups. Includes recent arrivals and more settled migrants. Some have a few years UK education. Older groups and recent arrivals have ESOL needs. A small minority with HE qualifications and skilled work experience from Somalia and seeking recognition of qualifications in the UK. The majority have no education/experience and are looking to go into manual work in the UK.
African-Caribbean men & women	All age groups. Includes UK and non-UK born. Very varied histories. English language tends not to be an issue.
Graduates	Young men and women seeking to establish careers in their chosen field. Most with none or little work experience yet. Mostly, of Black Caribbean, Black African and Pakistani origin.

As illustrated by the brief group profiles in Table 7.4 above, the combination of factors that collectively constitute a participant's position in the labour market varies widely within these groups. Not all women with childcare responsibilities have similar levels of education and work experience, for instance. In terms of future employment prospects, participants similarly occupy widely ranging labour market positions.

At one end of the spectrum are graduates educated in the UK. A typical example is Milat. He is a 30 year old Pakistani man born and educated to degree level in the UK, with many years highly skilled work experience, and in his first period of unemployment. His fortunes seems to have taken a turn for the worse, with the drop in demand in the IT sector and he also found the required skills to have changed since he last applied for jobs.

At the other end are older men and women (Pakistani, Chinese, Indian), long settled in the UK, but with severe language needs, minimal qualifications and limited skills

and experience. Ahmed is typical example of older Pakistani workers who became unemployed following the decline of certain industries. He is a 49 year old man who came to the UK as a teenager in the 1960s, with little education, worked in textiles for many years and has been unemployed for several years following the decline in that industry. Another example is Mingmei, a 54 year old Chinese woman, who has been in the UK for 15 years. She ran a takeaway with her husband for years, but became unemployed after his death. Both of these participants were attending ESOL and basic IT courses with the EMO provider. Both have poor health, limited skills and no qualifications and both are concerned about age discrimination. Another group that could be seen as being at the far end of the spectrum are refugees with rural backgrounds, limited or no qualifications and limited work experience. Firehat is a 27 year old Kurdish refugee, who completed primary school in Turkey. He worked in agriculture on the family farm and also worked in a barber's shop for a few months every year, for about six years. He has severe ESOL needs and no UK work experience. He thinks opening his own shop may be a way out, but has no access to funds.

Between these two positions, there are a number of groups, with an intermediate position relative to the labour market. These include refugees with divergent backgrounds. Some were highly educated in their countries (although several, like Serhan and Alain have not completed degree courses because of civil war or political persecution). Ghanim, for example, is a 30 year old Iraqi refugee who has been in the UK for a year. He was educated to degree level in Iraq and speaks some English. He is currently attending ESOL and basic IT courses. His last job was as an accounts supervisor in Iraq for 6 years and he would like to work with computers in the UK. He is planning to do a range of IT courses and starting one in web design soon.

Young Asian and Black men and women with varying levels of UK education and experience, including some recent arrivals with overseas qualifications and work experience fall into this group. Hamsa for example, a 35 year old Indian female, with a BA in Statistics and 12 years of work experience at the National Bank of India. She does not have significant language needs, but has no UK work experience. She is not sure if her qualifications would be recognised in the UK.

Other participants are finding it hard to change direction in their 30s and 40s after years in a certain type of work, such as manual work or catering. David is a 56 year old Chinese man who has lived in the UK since 1969. He is educated to GCSE level in China. He worked in catering in the UK and owned his own business until recently. In the last few years, he has been working as a part-time administrative assistant and also studying for a professional qualification in accounting. He speaks fluent English and his only barrier seems to be lack of experience in this field.

Many female participants in their 20s and 30s have children and may not have done paid work for some years, although some have considerable transferable skills as a result of informal and unpaid work. Some older women with adult children are in a similar position, a number also having caring commitments for older family members. Rupali is an African-Asian woman, educated to GCSE level in South

Africa. She also completed a one-year IT course in the UK. She worked briefly as a receptionist in South Africa for three months and about six months as a sales person in the UK. She's recently had a baby, though looking for work as a receptionist, she has childcare issues and also limited experience and qualifications. Another example is Ahlam, a 24 year old Pakistani lone mother with a four year old son. She was educated to degree level in Pakistan, but has no work experience. She feels that she needs to improve her English and not sure if her qualifications are recognised in the UK. She also needs to find a job that will fit around her childcare responsibilities.

Analysing longitudinal data, chapter 8 will examine the longer-term employment trajectories of a group of EMO participants, representing the range of work histories and labour market profiles presented in this section.

6.5   Participants' orientations towards paid work

This evaluation seeks to explore participants' orientations towards work, particularly though not exclusively, paid work. EMO participants were asked how they felt about trying to find paid work and entering paid work and, via various lines of questioning, probed on why they did or did not want paid work. It was noted in section 7.2.3 that many unemployed participants expressed a strong desire to work and were looking for work. This section takes a closer look at orientations to work, which were imbued with a complex web of factors.

It was rare for EMO participants to state that they were simply not interested in paid work. One young participant seemed particularly disengaged. He had previously held low paid jobs without any employment prospects and described how he had experienced so much disappointment that he no longer felt that employment provided a sense of independence or a reliable income. Rather he felt that it involved having problems with fellow workers. A more common reason individuals gave for not wanting paid employment in the short-term, was that they were currently enrolled in an educational course. They emphasised that education and training were very important. Time spent undertaking IT and ESOL courses were seen as beneficial to employment prospects. This was not always an easy choice, especially when participants were experiencing financial difficulties, but was seen as a useful investment, as the following quotation illustrates:

> *'I was thinking about working. If the course was not there… My financial situation sometimes depresses me. Sometimes I think to myself 'Come on, forget about the school, you also need money'. But on the other hand I think let me endure this now, so that in the future I will benefit from being able to read and write.'*
>
> (Zafer)

This participant was considering combining study with part-time work, and he was not alone in this. The reasons given by participants for wanting to combine work and study were overwhelmingly financial.

Many participants emphasised that they wanted paid employment and, again, they gave a variety of reasons for this. One reason was linked to concern about economic security and basic survival. For example a pregnant woman emphasised that she felt under pressure to secure paid employment even though she had postponed job search until after the birth of her child:

> Respondent: *'I'm having a baby soon and I haven't had a flat for myself. I am renting one now, but.. I feel the pressure.'*
>
> Interviewer: *'Are you planning to find a job soon?'*
>
> Respondent: *'Yes. If I wasn't pregnant I would look for a job now. I don't want to be unemployed* (Genji).*'*

A second reason for wanting paid employment was the contribution of paid work to feelings of independence. A participant who was studying felt that he would like to work as a sales person or care assistant. He, like others, felt that he had a duty to work, to make a contribution and *'be independent'* and that, once he obtained his national insurance number, he should not be 'in someone's country and not working'. Another man located his need to work firmly in beliefs embedded in his religion and culture:

> *'..all I want to do is work, and then we can be at peace. We can go and… we can earn our own bread… we feel it's like the duty of the man, he should be earning for his family. And its good, it's a form of worship to work. And the mind stays at peace as well, and everything is calm.'*
>
> (Dheeraj)

It was common for participants to emphasise that they needed to be active, that they did not enjoy 'sitting around':

> *'I prefer to come out of my place OK and do something for the day even if I have to, even if I end up, delivering leaflets door to door…'*
>
> (Babu)

One African-Caribbean man in his forties, had been signing on at the Jobcentre for most of the last three years. He described how he wanted 'more than the Jobcentre' and this helped him to keep his spirits up when it came around to the time for him to sign on. These comments reveal that much as he disliked using the Jobcentre, and was critical of the services provided to job seekers, it was important to persevere to have a chance of a change of fortunes:

> *'It's a case of I do it because I have to, and the sooner I can sign off then in a sense all the better for me personally… my downside is when I have to go to the Jobcentre… The feelings get quite low on that morning when I have to make my way to there. But again, it's a case for me then that I know that I want more than the Jobcentre. So that's what brings me back up again at the same time.'*
>
> (Newman)

Another participant was also eager to find paid employment, because of feeling the strain of being in debt, having 'nothing to do at home' and not seeing or interacting with people. She was using the Jobcentre 'every day'. Other participants emphasised that work was important, not only to 'pass the time' but also to feel connected with society. For example one man described how civil war had depleted his savings. Paid work was important to him not only for the money, but also to feel that he was 'going somewhere'. To take a further example, a mother valued paid work as a means to spend just a few hours feeling somewhat more free, more 'relaxed', to meet with other people:

> *'..I have to look after the kids all the time and I feel constrained by that. If I go out to work sometimes, I have more opportunities to talk to other people and feel more relaxed. I seldom have a chance to work outside, so I feel relaxed about it…'*

(Faye Kam)

For some participants paid work was important to their self-esteem. One young man felt that to be in paid work would mean that he would feel more positive about himself and that people would treat him with more respect, or to use his words: 'it's just more positive vibes off people'. Another man describing himself as a 'foreigner' felt that for people in his position paid work was important to make them feel more 'valuable', to evade 'isolation', oppression and 'depression' and to realise dreams:

> *'...if you work it's more valuable, you feel better and you're also useful for other people in your environment, you're helpful to them, that's especially true for us foreigners. When you work you're more valuable, and they if you don't have work you get oppressed more easily… it's very difficult psychologically. You get depressed, you came here with so many dreams and then if you can't realise these dreams here then you just feel very isolated, and you feel without an aim…'*

(Serxan)

It was noted above that the desire to complete education and training could influence paid work decisions. The influence of other decision shaping factors could also be traced in individual orientations towards work. For example unpaid work commitments emerged as a consideration in taking a job. Comments from some women revealed the importance of balancing and negotiating home commitments with the demands of paid work. One woman helping her mother to care for younger siblings described how it would be necessary for her to reach agreement with her mother over the rescheduling of domestic tasks were she to take a paid job. She also had to take care over the working-time commitment that a job might involve:

> *'I think part time suits me because I have domestic responsibilities and I have to make sure that my house is in order. Even if I found paid work I'd only do it part time, not full-time. You know even if I had to work on a daily basis I'd only do two, three hours maximum, because I'm only doing this to occupy myself, to get out of the house'*

(Sugharan)

Unpaid work commitments may be viewed as a positive activity in an individual's orientations to, and decisions about, paid work, but these commitments also have the potential to form a barrier to entering employment, a theme returned to in the next chapter.

A further theme concerned the type of jobs that people felt were suitable. Some people were willing to take any job, applying for jobs that they did not really want to do in their desperation to find paid employment:

> *'At this moment, I would like to take up any job which is available. It's better than staying at home all day. I have waited for a job for months already, even my hair turns white. I'm so keen to find a job. I don't care about the nature of the job.'*

(Wang)

Others rejected the idea of taking 'any job', as they did not want to be underemployed or in a job without career prospects. One sub theme here was the issue of the lack of recognition of some overseas qualifications and the related labour market under-valuation of overseas experience. A particularly striking example of this came from an Asian woman qualified as a pharmacist with a BSc in chemistry. Her qualifications were not recognised in this country. She felt that Asian women needed to be more positive about the prospects for securing employment in England. While requiring support, she argued that they also needed to use their own initiative. She had been considering the possibility of working for qualifications recognised in the UK before making contact with the EMO project. Her EMO project worker had helped her to explore her options. She had been working in a factory making ladies tops, but since participating in the project, had found a job working in a chemists shop. Taking this step had helped her feel more connected with the networks that she felt she needed to tap into in the pharmacy field:

> *'Pharmacy, I felt relieved that I got in my right line, the right field where slowly I can get through… you know knowing the medicines and everything over here, knowing people was more important. And I was in a factory in a small, you now… and this is like… every day I meet new people so that counts, that helps me…'*

(Meena)

She was not alone in feeling that taking one job might be a stepping-stone into another. While some people were keen to sustain an existing trade or career path, or rekindle a previous one, others took a job as a stop gap en route to their preferred job:

> *'If I find a job as a chef tomorrow, I'll get it because I need the money. But I wouldn't stop look(ing) for another job in the audio side. But if I found a job in the audio side tomorrow, I won't look for, I would stay with this; I wouldn't look for more.'*

(Henri)

6.6 Participants' use and perceptions of Jobcentre Plus

Participants were asked about their use of and perceptions of Jobcentre Plus. They were probed on a number of areas, including whether they had found the Jobcentre helpful or unhelpful; and were asked to elaborate on specific aspects of their experience. Positive perceptions were the exception rather than the rule and participant perceptions of unhelpful features of Jobcentre Plus provision pointed to a variety of weaknesses. Negative perceptions of Jobcentre Plus services had an adverse impact on people's use of them. Overall, through the eyes of participants, standards of service across the geographical areas covered by this evaluation emerged as inconsistent. Some of their suggestions for improvement of Jobcentre Plus services appeared to be existing good practice in other areas.

6.6.1 Participant use of Jobcentres

Most EMO participants in both cohorts of interviews had some contact with Jobcentre Plus. At the time of interview some had been registered with the Jobcentre for over a year, while others had been registered for as little as one month. In section 7.2.3 it was reported that about half of participants were registered with the Jobcentre. Many of these registrations appeared to have occurred following involvement with EMO provision. Some participants described how project workers accompanied them to the Jobcentre to provide social and informational support, which sometimes involved translation for those with ESOL needs. The frequency of visits to the Jobcentre varied, again across both cohorts. Some visited the Jobcentre once a fortnight to sign on. For example one participant reported that he went to the Jobcentre to sign on once a fortnight because 'they require me to do so'. Another recently registered participant, also visited once every two weeks and described how he had been given 'many websites' and information about Arabic schools where he might possibly finding a teaching job. Another group of participants visited the Jobcentre more than once a fortnight, some once or twice a week, one person most days. Reasons given for visiting less frequently included the lack of new vacancies. As one participant explained:

> 'I can't go every day, every few days just to look at the same old jobs over and over again.'

> (Inesh)

Frequency of use of the Jobcentre was mediated by how helpful participants found Jobcentres in the job search process.

6.6.2 Participants' experiences and perceptions of Jobcentres

A minority of participants indicated that they had only had positive encounters with the Jobcentre. Examples of support that they appreciated included general help with job search, including computerised job search, and a participant being directed to social services when it became apparent that they did not have a National Insurance number. Another participant, who had been an EMO client for two to three weeks

at the time of interview, and appreciated both being given useful information by an adviser and encouraged to telephone if she encountered any problems:

> 'Well I think the adviser, the man that gave me lots of information, he was really useful, you know he gave me his telephone number, he said if there's any problem at all just give me a ring and I'll sort things out.'

(Sugharan)

A lone parent also mentioned the benefits of tailored adviser support. She found it very helpful that her adviser was also a lone parent:

> 'I'm a lone parent you know, they say you want to work, used to work, it's been nearly three and a half years. They find someone to help you who is a lone parent, at least they understand where you're coming from. So I find it very helpful, and they know what you really want, what kind of jobs you want and they are there to help.'

(Assaggi)

Several participants with ESOL needs appreciated the direction that Jobcentres had given them in facilitating their access to ESOL courses.

Other participants had mixed feelings about help received from Jobcentres. While they might identify the benefits of having a measure of job search support, they also observed shortcomings in the service. One man, a recent graduate, indicated that using the job point machines was sufficient to search for work but noted that he 'didn't get time to speak to an adviser'. Another participant noted that CDs that covered the different stages involved in finding a job and achieving your goals had filled in a gap in her awareness. Another fairly recent graduate is a further example of someone suggesting that *some* Jobcentre Plus services are convenient and useful, particular the employment phone service:

> 'I just pop in and have a look and see what they have got on the books at the time. Basically. It is a good service. It's very convenient and that as I can see what has come up and what is new and that... I have used the employment phone service that they offer as well which is really good and they tell you about what jobs are happening in the certain areas, and sometimes I have come up with really good jobs and I've tried and, you know, I've just been really unlucky really.'

(Ruth)

Participants occasionally empathised with the pressure that Jobcentre Plus advisers were under:

> 'It's not the staff, they're just doing their job. I think it's difficult for them as well. Some of the claimants get annoyed and irritable.'

(Gillian).

However, many participant perceptions of the Jobcentre were rather more negative. Several participants felt that Jobcentre Plus systems did not have the kinds of jobs

that they wanted. It was common for graduates to be particularly disenchanted with the Jobcentre for this reason, noting that Jobcentres did not have jobs for people with degrees. Graduates tended to use other forms of job search, such as the internet, newspapers and university careers services. Graduates were also concerned that taking a job not related to a degree or preferred career path might harm their career. One recounted that on one visit to the Jobcentre he had been told that Jobcentres 'don't have [..offer..] careers as such'. Another graduate, while keen to pursue her dream of a career in the film industry, was willing to pursue other job options in the short term, but perceived many of the job opportunities on offer at the Jobcentre to be too low paid. A graduate in a similar position, looking for IT related work, described how through the Jobcentre he had applied for lower paid jobs in which he would be underemployed, but doing so had simply made it clear that he was in an unemployment trap:

> 'I've applied for these jobs… And I just get knocked back, you know, sometimes I don't even get a letter! And then I apply for the ones where I'm qualified, already qualified and , we're sorry, you haven't got the experience because I haven't been working for six months.'

> (Erroll)

It was not only the highly qualified who were critical of the types of vacancies available in the Jobcentre Plus system. One participant felt that Jobcentres were not networked with employers from his local Chinese community. He wanted to work for a Chinese employer, but had noticed that they did not advertise job vacancies in the Jobcentre. Another described how lack of recognition of his overseas qualifications had deterred him from regular use of the Jobcentre, even though he had found staff helpful:

> 'And the other thing I have found a disadvantage is that my qualifications are from [overseas]. They are very helpful but I don't have what they want. What the employers want me to have.'

> (Assaggi)

A further concern emerged from those reporting that they were being encouraged to apply for inappropriate jobs, wasting both their time and that of the employers. These EMO project participants revealed anxieties that Jobcentre staff were pushing them down paths that they did not want to go down and that might adversely affect their long-term aspirations. Some were concerned that Jobcentre staff tended 'to push you into something that you might not enjoy… some kind of job that doesn't even require a degree'. One participant had been undertaking a computer programming course to help her chances of getting an IT related job and felt that Jobcentre staff lacked empathy and understanding, as the following quote illustrates:

> 'It's a positive thing that I'm doing, but I don't think they understand that. They just want to get you into work you know whatever, whatever you know. They don't care… I don't find it helpful because I find it de-motivating… If I do some kind of clerical work it's going to affect my career.'

> (Sulekha)

Again, this was not only a theme emerging for graduates. A participant with a background in manual work, and living alone, was also concerned that he was under pressure to take any job offered. In order to sustain a home, he needed to receive a wage that enabled him to pay his bills. He had recently completed an accredited course in painting and decorating and wanted to build on this achievement. His perception was that the Jobcentre did not treat him 'like a human being'. Another man who had done a two month course described how he would have liked to have continued his studies for a while longer but felt that the Jobcentre wanted him to 'immediately find work'.

A slightly different concern surfaced from a participant who felt that he was being misled about job suitability. He noted that Jobcentre staff sent him to pursue vacancies mediated by employment agencies, it being implied that experience was 'not essential'. On arrival at the agency he would be told that experience was required in order to register on their books. Moreover agencies tended to give 'good jobs' to people who had been on their books for several years. He tended to be offered jobs in locations that would require a lot of travel, which he described as incompatible with also being able to sustain his college course.

Some criticisms centred on Jobcentre Plus vacancy systems. These included not only gaps in information networks, as in the example from the Chinese community above, but also vacancy systems not being up-to-date. For example one participant described how he might take ten vacancy print outs from the live system to find that only three of the ten were still available. Another participant felt that the job categories in the vacancies system might be more specific:

> '…basically it is a link, link pages and to the categories that they have are not that expansive, like if I went to Customer Service and that and them it's kind of like general or reception or whatever. It is not broken down very well, I mean I don't think it communicates very well; maybe it's just me being difficult with it but I always come up with like Postman and stuff! And odd jobs!'

> (Ruth)

Some participants saw Jobcentre staff as inaccessible and inflexible. A common frustration was with the length of time that people had to queue in order to access services:

> 'I think they should have more people working there to help us out because there's always a really massive queue and it takes ages to get your turn.'

> (Nandini)

One participant was disconcerted at having to wait for 30 minutes in spite of having turned up on time for an appointment. Another noted that if you wanted to see a member of Jobcentre staff you had to be prepared to 'be there for the whole day'; and if you wanted information, staff were unlikely to be able to answer your query. One woman employed by a project, but who had originally been a participant, was unimpressed with the degree of support provided by Jobcentres. She described how

she had accompanied an EMO project outreach worker and other Asian women to the Jobcentre and found staff lacked awareness of the EMO initiative, and rather unwelcoming:

> *'…I've been to a few houses… like to take them to the Jobcentre. We're getting loads of clients, we're taking them to the Jobcentre and they just don't want to know.* [the EMO outreach worker] *and me have been to the Jobcentre and they're telling us, …they don't know about it either. It's new to them too, but then they should be helping us. They shouldn't like when we go there, they shouldn't like be saying that well, you know, take them away or this is the only time that we've got for them, which is like half past four and I finish at three and I can't take them after half four…'*

> (Ethibal)

Several participants found Jobcentre staff slow in responding to requests for letters to facilitate registration at educational courses. One participant went as far as to describe Jobcentre staff as 'dragging their feet'.

A participant in receipt of Invalid Care Allowance could not understand why the Jobcentre Plus system did not seem able to accommodate the desire of people in her position to train:

> *'I think in my capacity and many more like me if they are getting Invalid Care Allowance, not entitled to Job Seekers' allowance, because this is the way the system works, I think they should say 'Okay, are you willing to be trained?'. If the person says yes take them and train them. When they are finished training they go look a job or the Jobcentre would provide them with a job.'*

> (Nellie)

Criticisms were made of the Jobcentre environment, some presenting it as an oppressive place to visit. One participant graphically stated that *'there is no darkest, dullest, unhelpfullest place on this planet that you could possible go to seek for employment'*, also noting how uncomfortable the use of security guards made him feel. Another expressed his resentment at the way in which it appeared to be part of the Jobcentre Plus ethos to threaten people with the loss of benefit. Contact with Jobcentres did seem to generate negative feelings amongst participants often tied up with the frustration of being out of paid employment and the impact upon peoples' self-esteem, which comes across from the following quote from a participant replying to a question about whether they found anything unhelpful about Jobcentres:

> *'...the people I don't think go out of their way to help you. I don't think that they, you just feel that they are just doing the job because it is a job but it is not, they don't do anything exceptional… I didn't want to register.. I found it very negative and I am embarrassed going there. I feel I shouldn't be there.'*

> (Odell)

Other participants went as far as to say that the Jobcentre was not there to help people, but rather to 'discourage'.

> '...they are trying to make you give up. Trying to discourage you. This is what I saw at the Jobcentre.'

(Olan)

Most participants who compared services received from the Jobcentre to services received from the EMO project felt that the latter was more supportive of their needs. The main theme here was that projects provided much more support in the job search process, for example booking appointments, giving feedback on why an employer did not offer them a job and also had staff who were able to converse with people with ESOL needs in their own language. These participants felt that Jobcentres tended to expect them to do 'everything for yourself'. One woman described Jobcentres as not very friendly prior to the EMO initiative and had so far observed no changes as a result of it:

> 'I think that it's really horrible to be honest.. I just don't like it. I think it's like, you know when I used to go there before it wasn't friendly, it's not friendly at all.'

(Ethibal)

Few participants explicitly referred to the modernisation of the Jobcentre system into Jobcentre Plus. A participant, in an area where the roll-out of Jobcentre Plus did not seem to have impacted on the ground described how Jobcentre Plus had not given him the impression *'that it is active as a programme'*. A participant from the same project reiterated a similar theme, emphasising that she *'did not see the point of going'* to the Jobcentre:

> 'They have changed the system now. When you find a job you have to call them up yourself but they were saying some things I don't really understand so then I just felt, that's it because what's the point if I find a job that they can't help me call them up or help book the appointment and stuff for me. Because I know I can't do it myself, that's why I came there but if they are not able to provide that service I don't see the point of going there…'

(Alice)

A member of staff had explained that he could not contact employers on his behalf because he was *'not receiving benefit or something'*.

Interestingly in another area, where Jobcentre Plus had been rolled out, participants appeared more enthusiastic, feeling that Jobcentres were more friendly and supportive compared to what had gone before. One participant felt that Jobcentre Plus staff worked *'harder for you'* and were *'there for you more actively'*, for example providing support in addressing language needs.

6.6.3 Suggestions for improvement to Jobcentre Plus services

Participants had several suggestions for ways in which Jobcentres might improve their services. These included providing access to newspapers, making the Internet more user-friendly and sending clients more information about jobs. The need to have more staff who understood the first language of people with ESOL needs. Some suggestions focused on ease of contact with employers, including the benefits of advertising jobs with employers' telephone numbers so that they could be contacted directly and getting employers into Jobcentres to meet unemployed people:

> 'I just wish there'd be more presentations and open days at Jobcentres, that's where the majority of people are. I would like to see more presentations, employers coming in and having a chat with people, communication basically between the Jobcentre and the employer.'

> (Dost)

It was noted above that some participants were dissatisfied with the amount of time that they had to spend queuing in Jobcentres. One participant suggested that an increase in the number of Jobcentre staff would help to alleviate this problem.

Related to the issue of staffing levels was that of the degree of attention received from staff. A further suggestion was that on registration there should be some kind of induction to using Jobcentre Plus, that someone should spend time with you talking through your work history and on the basis of this discussion provide guidance on next steps.

7 Participant perspectives on barriers to employment

7.1 Summary

- This chapter describes the characteristics of EMO participants in the interview sample, and provides a breakdown by age, ethnicity, and current employment status. It goes on to discuss the work profile of participants, and how they have engaged with Jobcentre Plus.

- A total of 144 initial interviews were conducted with participants, 64 in autumn 2002, and 80 in spring 2003. Exactly half were male, and half female. Just under a third (53) were aged 25-34, around one in four (35) were 16-24, and an equal proportion aged 35-44. Only four people in the sample were aged over 55.

- In terms of ethnicity, Pakistani (35) and Indian (16) participants together made up over a third of the sample, while one in four were Black, this group consisting almost equally of Caribbean (17) and Africans (17). Nearly all of those defining themselves as 'Other' were Turkish or Kurdish. Only two people declined to define their ethnicity.

- At the time when they were first interviewed, over two-thirds (105) of participants were unemployed. Of those in paid employment, half were working part-time, most of them in low-paid work. Around half of the sample, including some of those working part-time, was registered with Jobcentre Plus.

- In terms of household employment profile, participants fell into three groups; those solely reliant on benefits, where non-one was in work, those where all or most adult members of the household were employed, and the largest group, which consisted of households receiving income from a variety of sources, including earnings, disability benefits and tax credits.

- Individual work histories and profiles varied considerably, and ranged from those

with high-level qualifications and recent work experience to people with few or redundant skills who had not worked for many years. Some participants who had worked for many years in poorly paid 'ethnic enclave' employment to cope with ESOL needs were anxious to change direction.

• Most participants were strongly positive in work orientation, but not all were prepared to take the first job available, as some wished to focus on longer-term goals.

• Most EMO participants had some contact with Jobcentre Plus. Many had registered following their contact with the EMO provider. While in many cases contact was limited to mandatory appointments and 'signing', others visited more frequently to seek work.

• Participants had mixed feelings about Jobcentre Plus, identifying positive instances of support and guidance, particularly from personal advisers, but also expressing dissatisfaction with some elements of the service, including the range of jobs on offer, the accuracy of vacancy systems, support for people with ESOL needs, and the physical environment of the offices.

7.2   Introduction

A key issue explored in the evaluation was participants' views on the barriers preventing them from entering employment. Perceptions of individual location in the labour market and the main barriers to moving from an unemployed or job seeking position into employment varied depending on individuals' educational and work histories and were also influenced by other aspects of their personal lives, including health, childcare responsibilities and immigration issues.

Some participants who were qualified in their chosen field and also had work experience, referred to labour market demand or practices discounting or undervaluing overseas qualifications and experience. Their situation was frequently exacerbated by English language difficulties. Others with qualifications saw their lack of experience as a major issue. Conversely, where experience was not an issue, but demand for the type of skills utilised in previous employment had fallen, gaining new skills and qualifications was seen as an important step in the move towards employment. Women with care responsibilities (child care or looking after sick/ disabled family members) formed another group and they highlighted the lack of flexible employment opportunities as a key problem. There were also more complex cases, where the multitude of factors present put individuals at a considerable distance from the labour market. Participants in this group seemed to be following what might be described as a sequential strategy of tackling barriers one at a time (e.g. by learning English, then entering further education to obtain qualifications), recognising that some of these barriers may be insurmountable (e.g. ill health in the family), whilst at the same time making short-term plans to obtain some sort of a place in the labour market and stability in their lives.

Participants identified a wide range of barriers, which reflected their different life situations (encompassing education, employment and other personal circumstances). A number of issues were repeatedly emphasised and the discussion that follows focuses on the main barriers identified by participants. These were:

• Language.

• Education and qualifications.

• Work experience.

• Local labour market demand.

• Health problems.

• Childcare responsibilities.

• Discrimination.

7.3   Language

Many participants identified poor English language skills as the single most important barrier to obtaining employment. The distribution of clients with ESOL needs across projects to some extent reflected providers' client bases. Projects whose main client groups were Black African, Black Caribbean or second-generation Asians, such as young Pakistani men and women, did not have many clients with language needs, though some reported an increase in the number of asylum seekers with language issues. About half the projects were working with clients with ESOL needs, though the proportion of these clients varied from project to project.

About a third of the participants interviewed had severe language needs and expressed a strong desire to improve their skills. They ranged from absolute beginners who could not read, speak or write in English at all, to those who could manage their daily lives, but felt unconfident in understanding complex information or in more challenging situations, such as job interviews. Participants with language needs included both recent arrivals to the UK and long settled immigrants who lived and worked within their own communities and had not previously felt the need to learn more than basic English (e.g. older Indian and Pakistani women, older Pakistani men who worked in textiles, older Turkish and Chinese men who worked in catering). The correlation between educational background and the level of English language skills was high in most cases, although some recent arrivals with ESOL needs did have high-level qualifications from overseas.

The need to improve English language skills as a precursor to improving one's employment prospects was raised repeatedly by participants with language problems. The majority commented on how it was slowing down their progress, and how they had to postpone their job search. This quote, from a Somali refugee in his 20s was typical:

> *'Even if you look for work, their first question is whether you speak English. I was looking at the newspaper for job ads. But it is all about English and I don't have that confidence yet. First it is important to understand what people say, but they speak very fast. I can't understand that. Then you also have to be able to speak yourself.'*

(Ali)

Participants in this situation felt unable to understand job advertisements in the Jobcentre or in newspapers, complete application forms or write application letters, make phone calls enquiring about vacancies, or manage job interviews. An older Pakistani man who worked in textiles for many years, but became unemployed following the decline in the industry, described ESOL issues as the main barrier to him using the Jobcentre. He explained that he needed to use an interpreter every time he attended. He visited the Jobcentre regularly, but said he did not get much out of these visits because of his language problems:

> *'There are jobs there, but they are on the board and I have difficulty reading them.'*

(Ajaz)

For some, daily activities, such as shopping, reading the mail or going to the doctor, were difficult, and overcoming these problems became the primary motivation for improving English skills. For these participants, employment was a distant prospect. Older Asian women, who had assumed full-time responsibility for childcare and household work for most of their lives, talked about not needing to learn much English. Nevertheless, many described ways in which this restricted their daily activities, and some wanted to improve their language skills, even if they were not looking to work in the short-term, in order to achieve a degree of independence. Khalida talked about having to rely on her husband to read everything for her, and to take her to doctors and shopping:

> *'I think it is better* [learning English] *because sometimes if my husband is not home, who is going to read the letters for me? It is a big problem, you know… I feel bad about that… If I am in town, to go and buy something, and if I have to go to so and so shop, and I can't read the sign… Any time I have to go to the shop, I have to take my daughter with me… And sometimes she says to me, 'Mum, why can't you read?'… and she makes fun of me.'*

(Khalida)

Poor English language skills also proved to be a barrier to undertaking work-related training. Ezde wanted to work as a driver, and thus needed a driving licence, but could not contemplate taking driving lessons before he improved his English. Some younger Indian and Pakistani women, planning to work part-time to accommodate their childcare responsibilities, also commented that that a lack of good English language skills were holding them back and preventing them from doing work-related training that would help them get paying jobs.

Refugees with overseas work experience but poor English language skills often prioritised learning English over job search. One Kurdish refugee, who had worked for ten years in the auto-repairs industry in his home country, wanted to improve his English so that he could start exploring employment opportunities in this field. In the meantime, he was resigned, despite his reluctance, to working in places owned by his fellow countrymen, where he would not need to speak English. Similarly, an older Chinese participant who had worked in restaurants for many years, did not want to work as a chef any more, but said:

> 'There is no way out. I can't speak English. I also want to change to another profession, but I just can't.'

(Sam)

Several participants, both recent arrivals and more settled migrants, saw learning English as the only means of obtaining jobs outside ethnic labour markets, within which poor working conditions and low pay were cited. A young Kurdish refugee, whose asylum application had recently been resolved, was due to start ESOL classes arranged by his local Jobcentre. He was looking forward to taking this step in improving his life and future prospects, after waiting for a decision on his case for two years. In response to questions about his employment plans, he said he could find a job in a local Turkish or Kurdish restaurant if he wanted to, but that he chose not to do this because he considered these 'dead end' jobs:

> 'You'll start working early in the morning, until 12 o'clock at mid-night, or even longer. Then you would not have anything, no normal life in this country. I have seen many friends like that. Your wages, at most £100-150… You can't do anything. You have no other choice but to work downstairs [in the kitchen]. I am not interested in this kind of thing.'

(Tozo)

Others felt trapped in jobs that they did not like or which were not appropriate to their skills, because of poor language skills. Shen, a middle-aged migrant from Hong Kong, had many years of experience as a supervisor in car maintenance. In the UK, he was working as a warehouse assistant in a Chinese food store and did not think that getting skilled work in his previous field was realistic, due to his limited English:

> 'My current job is not my most desired job. I did not intend to do this kind of jobs at first. But employers might think that my English is bad. I hope to do a car maintenance job again. But people think my English is bad and I might not be able to understand customer orders. I want to be a skilled worker.'

(Shen)

He was also concerned that he would not be able to communicate effectively with his employer. Participants with language needs frequently raised this issue. Some were worried about not being able to perform their duties, in ways that could put themselves or others in danger. One participant who was hoping to get a job as a driver, but did not consider this achievable at present, explained:

> *'At least I should know how to speak and how to write in English. How can I do the jobs, given that I am poor at both now? As I said, I can't even explain whether I am hurt or in pain during an accident.'*

(Kai Ti)

Sita wanted to work in childcare but was concerned about the responsibility that that would bring, and was keen to achieve a good level of English before she started her training:

> *'I don't want to like, some people, they think they want to do a job regardless of whether they can handle it or not but they do it for money. I don't want to do it like that, I want to sort out my English properly and… I don't want to until I can handle properly whatever work I do.'*

(Sita)

Poor language skills could reduce participants' confidence considerably, resulting in low ambitions, expectations and self-belief. Asked about her dream job, one young female participant revealed that she almost did not dare think about what she might want to do, citing her poor English: '*Even if I have* [a dream job]*, I can't* [have one]*, as my English is poor.*' (Genji). After probing, she revealed her desire to work as a shop assistant, which may not require the level of language skills she imagined. What was interesting about this example, is the effect that Genji's perception of language requirements had on her aspirations. Participants who made job applications, despite feeling that their English language skills were inadequate, reported experiences where they were turned down and were advised to re-apply in the future after improving their English. In fact, they had anticipated this outcome, which was the reason for delaying their job search until they were more confident in English.

7.4   Education and qualifications

Participants who lacked formal qualifications identified this as a major problem in the labour market. Older participants from all ethnic groups, both men and women, made up the largest group without any qualifications. Some of the younger participants who had recently arrived from abroad also had limited (recognised) qualifications. Most participants had received some education, ranging from GCSE to degree or higher level, and some had overseas, or a combination of overseas and UK qualifications. Vocational qualifications, usually obtained following GCSEs, were mentioned by quite a number of participants. Participants were aware that without qualifications their options would be severely limited, and saw further training and education as a key step in improving their skills base and therefore their chances of getting a (better) job. One unemployed man with a variety of previous work experience said:

'I've got relevant experience in what I have done before in the past, but I've not got all that I want on paper. So to help me then to shine, to get the job I want, it's got to be some more paperwork to go with it.'

(Trevor)

Older Pakistani men who worked in declining industries also identified lack of qualifications as a major barrier. Most had worked in jobs that did not require any particular qualification. Following redundancies, they found themselves in an entirely different labour market, without any qualifications. One said that he had plenty of work experience, but no qualifications to show for it, adding '*I don't have the right qualifications, that's why I can't get a job.*' (Omar).

Some participants prioritised training and education over finding a job, and said they had postponed looking for work until their training was complete. Others were studying and working part-time, and hoped to improve their job prospects and work full-time in the future.

Ebrahim, a young Pakistani man, who had recently arrived on marriage, was studying to improve his English. He was aware of the importance of qualifications and, without these, anticipated considerable difficulty in obtaining work. He was therefore planning to do some work-related training, following his language classes. Asked what was stopping him getting work, he said:

'Well, it's my English and lack of qualifications … Both of those things. You see you can get a good job if you've got good qualifications.'

(Ebrahim)

Recent arrivals with overseas qualifications, feared that they were not receiving positive responses to their job applications, because their qualifications from abroad were not recognised or equally valued:

'And the other thing that I have found a disadvantage for me is my qualifications are from Zimbabwe. When I was working, I had some certificates that I did when I was working, they don't work here. And when I left home I didn't plan my journey, so it's like I don't know if my qualifications work here, so it's very difficult. I have to work on my qualifications so that I will be able to get something. It puts me off to go to the Jobcentre when I know I'm not included.'

(Assaggi)

Similarly, a refugee who had studied at degree level in his country said:

'…the most important thing is the qualification. I have spent half of my life on education, and now I have come here and it counts as if I started from zero… You have to have a qualification.'

(Fethi)

Some participants found that their existing qualifications had become out of date, or did not meet the requirements following changes in particular industries, or in the

labour market more broadly. They felt that employers' demands for skills were constantly changing, and they needed to keep upgrading their skills or learn new ones in order to maintain a competitive edge. Some also felt that the London market was more competitive than other places. A Black Caribbean man in his 40s with a City and Guilds qualification in IT explained that when he had qualified, this had been a good qualification for his line of work. After losing his job, however, he discovered that further higher qualifications were now required, and despite his experience, he was having difficulties finding another job:

> *'You know, you can't assume in today's society that you can train in one area… You can't just think that you can have some qualifications that are seven years old and OK, whilst you are in work they are fine… But when you lose your job there are new set of benchmarks for you to achieve, because although the industry hasn't moved on with regards to how the skills that you use, it has moved on with regards to what it sees as specific certification and levels of expertise for that area.'*

> (Babu).

Graduates with relevant qualifications and work experience also cited similar experiences.

7.5   Work experience

Some participants commented that even if they had the relevant qualifications, most employers required work experience, which they lacked. Young adults in their 20s, graduates, recent arrivals, and women wanting to enter the labour market after assuming full-time responsibility for childcare for a number of years, were among those without significant work experience. The widespread perception was that there would always be someone with experience among applicants to any job, and some felt at a loss as to how they could break into particular fields. Some, especially those who had relevant qualifications, expressed a sense of disappointment and despair at not being given the chance to prove themselves.

A Pakistani lone mother in her early 20s, with a degree in literature but no work experience, wanted to go into childcare, but was finding it extremely difficult to get a job without experience:

> *'I cannot cope with just benefits; I am looking for work. I have been to Jobcentre and they tried to find* [a job]*, but everybody asks about experience, volunteer work. But I haven't got any experience, I've just experience in work in nursery, two and half months volunteer, and no more. And they ask more experience, 'Where do you work?'*

> (Ahlam)

Some tried to compensate for this by doing voluntary work, particularly those living with their parents and with no responsibility to contribute to household income. Zeenat, a young woman, was sent to Pakistan halfway through her education in the

UK and, after returning to the UK, felt she lacked both qualifications and experience. Being unable to find a job after completing her qualifications prompted her to consider voluntary work, and she worked with an immigration consultant for some months on an unpaid basis, which she felt had enabled her to move forward.

Lack of work experience was particularly emphasised as an issue by recent graduates, who felt that their qualifications were not sufficient to enable them to move into the labour market to gain that all-important first work experience. One unemployed graduate on a work-placement scheme said:

> *'That is number one. Experience, man… Because I can't go into an interview and say 'Listen, I've got this* [skill]*.' You've got to say when you put them into practice, what experience have you got. And back it up with the evidence.'*

> (Shafgat).

A similarly disadvantaged group were those who had worked abroad prior to arriving in the UK, but were unable to get recognition for their experience. Participants in this situation expressed understanding that employers would find it difficult to evaluate work experience in another country, but were nevertheless frustrated that their previous work experience seemed not to count.

Those wanting or needing to make a career change after years working in a particular field similarly felt disadvantaged while applying for jobs in other lines of work. A Black African woman in her 40s, who had been made redundant from her job as a bus conductor, failed to find another job, despite completing a number of courses in the social welfare field. She was frustrated at being advised to take English language courses and refused to do so, since she felt she was a competent and fluent speaker (a perception corroborated by our interviewer).

7.6   Local labour market demand

Some participants' employment prospects had deteriorated over time because of structural changes in the economy as the industries in which they worked declined, and demand for their skills fell. This issue was particularly significant in the Midlands, Yorkshire and the North West. Older Pakistani and Indian men were particularly affected by these changes. Many had worked in textiles all their lives, within their own communities and in workplaces where they could speak in their own language. They suddenly found themselves out of a job and unable to obtain another job in the same sector. Middle aged interviewees found it particularly difficult to re-enter the labour market, as they needed to gain a different set of skills, and some had to begin by learning English, gaining basic IT and job search skills. One ex-textile worker in his 50s and out of work for the last ten years said he could have worked for all this time but said: *'you can't get that kind of job anymore*.' (Ajaz).

Another older participant with four children had worked in the textile industry for over 30 years before losing his job. He said the jobs he was trained for no longer existed, and he commented that his skills had become devalued in the new economy:

> *'All those years that's what I did mainly spinning… But that industry has gone now. That's why I started coming here to learn something to update skills. Everything is on computer these days even if you go work in a factory or a mill, the machine is computerised… before you see you used to have two or three buttons only, one was a start, one was a stop and that's how we used to operate the machinery'.*

(Wasim)

Others referred to depressed local labour markets and high levels of unemployment. Young people were among those making this point, including graduates. However, while young people contemplated moving to different parts of the country, for example, to larger towns with more work opportunities, older participants often did not want or feel able to do this. After living in these areas all their lives, such a strategy was likely to entail leaving behind families and communities and starting again:

> *'You see people who have been living here for 20-25 years it's difficult for them to up sticks and live somewhere else… we know their families are round here, the community is here you can't just get up and go somewhere else, it would be difficult… a lot of people don't drive, coming forward and back all the time to visit the family it would be a hardship.'*

(Rafiq)

Age was repeatedly mentioned by these participants as their most significant barrier. Firoz felt that although his English and job search skills had improved after attending the EMO provider's courses, he stood no chance in today's competitive labour market:

> *'You see young people don't get jobs and I am going to be 58, if you go to town and you go to the Jobcentre to sign on you see people, young people, they are in the queue you know unemployed so, English children, so what chance do I really have?'*

(Firoz)

Some commented on the advantages of hiring younger people, from employers' perspective, in that they would have been educated in this country, spoke fluent English, and were physically able to do more work; employers '*would get more out of them'*.

7.7   Health problems

Health problems emerged as an important barrier, restricting the options open to participants, and, in some cases, preventing them from working altogether. Depending on the debilitating effects of the illness, participants tried to enhance their situation as best as they could, either by undertaking training, considering jobs that they felt they would be able to do, or working part-time. In some cases,

everything else, including employment arrangements, had to be planned around the illness. A participant on an ESOL course said:

> 'You know, I have so many health problems it just stops me from being able to work, you know I have pains in my joints and, you know, I have problems because of my diabetes as well.'

(Habiba)

Only a small number of young participants mentioned debilitating health problems. As discussed above, some asylum seekers reported being on medication for depression. Cohtar, a Kurdish refugee in his late 20s had chronic back pain, which limited his work opportunities as he had no formal qualifications and his work experience was all in the construction industry. In the last few years, his back pain had worsened and he was advised not to lift anything heavy, leaving him to seek alternative work.

Some of the older Pakistani men in particular, had health problems including back-pain, diabetes, blood pressure and arthritis. These restricted their activities and the range of jobs they could do. Some participants said even if jobs were available in their former industries, they no longer felt able to do this heavy, physical work, which involved shift work and long hours. Employers were often seen as viewing older people with health problems negatively.

Ill health in the family was equally important in some situations, where participants took on responsibility for caring a family member. A female participant who was desperate to improve her job prospects said:

> 'My main activity is to look after my husband because he is a sick man… I have to do what I am doing for him… anything can happen to him when nobody's there. He's diabetic, he has angina, he has a heart attack, once he [had] a bypass. He also [had] a stroke and he suffers from [fluid] retention and high cholesterol.'

(Nellie)

Those with care responsibilities or health problems tended to be seeking flexible and part-time employment. There was a strong sense of frustration amongst those keen to work but unable to find a job that would accommodate their care responsibilities.

7.8   Childcare responsibilities

Childcare responsibilities, and the need to work flexible hours, came up as a key issue for female participants. In the absence of other forms of childcare provision or limited or no help from family or friends, childcare simply took centre stage in women's lives, and employment plans were put on hold for the foreseeable future. Parveen did not think it practical to work a few hours a day and rush between work, home and the nursery:

> 'My youngest son, he's only at nursery for half a day so I'd have to, you know if I was working just half a day I'd have to really rush to get back to pick him up

from nursery. That's why at the moment I should attend courses whilst he is half time and then when he's full time then I will be able to think seriously about work.'

(Parveen)

Despite having sole responsibility for childcare, some participants tried to find work they could do on a part-time basis, or jobs that offered a degree of flexibility. Finding work that with hours to fit around childcare responsibilities proved challenging for most women, as they not only wanted to work pre-defined and set hours (i.e. no shift work), they also needed to work in areas close to their child's school. Lone mothers with no one to leave their children with felt that they lacked leeway in negotiating childcare duties, and work had to fit around this primary responsibility. One participant whose two children were at school said:

'... it's been like a year, two years I've been like looking for jobs, like you know, that will give me flexibility with the children 'cause like now I need that, you know, there is nobody there that can get them except for me.'

(Ethibal)

A Black African lone mother with sole responsibility for child care talked about how hard it had been for her raising two children, and the impossibility of leaving them with anyone else. Although she felt ready to start working full-time now that her children were older, she experienced difficulty finding a job offering suitable hours. She commented that any additional money she earned by working full-time would be spent on childcare. She added that she was '*working on it'* and hoped to get help from a friend who would mind the children if she found a full-time job.

Women also had to review their employment prospects and chosen fields of work in the light of childcare responsibilities. Teresa previously worked in catering, but said with a baby, she was unable to contemplate returning to the field, since it involved unsociable hours (evenings and weekends), and she no longer wished to do this.

7.9   Discrimination

Participants were asked to indicate whether they had personally experienced discrimination and whether they thought that, in general, employers discriminated against applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds. They were required to indicate their response on a scale of five values ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', which was followed by an open discussion around their responses.

An interesting pattern that emerged was the difference between reports of personal experience and the belief that discrimination took place. Whilst most participants believed employers discriminated against non-white job applicants, a relatively small proportion reported personal experiences of discrimination. This discrepancy between personal experience and general belief that discrimination occurs has been found in other studies examining perceptions and experiences of discrimination (Modood *et*

al., 1997; Marsh and Sahin-Dikmen, 2002). To some extent, this could be explained by the fact that some of those interviewed had no experience of going through formal job application processes, or had never applied for a job with a white employer. For some participants with ESOL needs and who lacked qualifications, seeking employment within their local ethnic labour market was the only way of avoiding unemployment. For others, it suggested discrimination-avoiding behaviour, which in turn contributed to segregation. One participant commented on how he avoided working with people who thought differently of him because of his ethnicity:

> *'If somebody says to me, 'How did you get on with people who dislike you because of your colour?' at a job interview, I tell them the truth, I don't get on with people like those, I distance myself from people like those. Things like that lose me jobs, I know that.'*

(Babu)

Some participants explained this segregation by referring to exclusionary behaviour by both ethnic minority and white employers, saying that everybody employed *'their own people'*. One participant explained it by referring to the advantages to an employer of taking on someone from your own background:

> *'I think that even if we say were setting up some business and I think naturally we'd go first to our own people because we'd see that it has benefits for us and it has, and gives employment to the other person as well so its advantageous on both sides so I think if you look at English people as well that they would prefer to give jobs to their, someone from their own background.'*

(Nasreen)

Some tried to explain the behaviour of white employers not employing non-white applicants, in terms of a perception that ethnic minorities would not speak English well, or would not be able to cope with the demands of the job. Others believed that employers stereotyped ethnic minorities and considered them suitable only for certain types of jobs. Notably, this was commonly perceived as being manual work, and interviewees reported experiencing greater problems breaking into skilled or higher-level positions. An older Pakistani participant talked about how textiles was traditionally a minority-only industry and that because English people did not want to do those kind of jobs, there had been little competition or discrimination in this sector:

> *'I think it's English people's policy that the good work, good jobs they give to their own people and the jobs that are left behind that nobody wants to do they are rubbish jobs and they will give to our people.'*

(Firoz).

Some thought that mainstream employers were *'scared'* of ethnic minorities, and/or were just not used to mixing and working with foreign nationals, and that whites were advantaged as they spoke the language and knew how the 'culture works'.

Participants found themselves having to challenge such perceptions. A Black woman, seeking work in the arts, felt many people were surprised to come across her in the field:

> *'I think people do judge you because of the way that you look, especially because I work in an environment of art galleries and I sometimes feel like until I have opened my mouth to prove that I can speak, you know, they look down on me.'*

> (Ruth)

The ambivalent language used to express views on discrimination was notable. Some participants were cautious in their answers saying, for example, they *'did not know'* or *'were not sure'*, or qualified their perspectives with comments like, '*you could not know'*, '*it was always on your mind',* that '*something like that was going on*', and that '*there was much we didn't know about'.*

For some participants, the belief that discrimination took place was based on other people's experiences that they had heard and read about. Others argued that the high unemployment rate among young and educated ethnic minorities could not be explained in any other way:

> *'But recently I have been looking for work, now I feel it is the case because we are the ones that seem to be out of work most of the time.'*

> (Odell)

Parveen, whose husband was unemployed, was convinced that discrimination was the reason for his lack of success, since he was educated in the UK, had a mechanical engineering degree and higher degree in computing, together with experience in both fields. During a previous spell of unemployment, he had ended up working as a minicab driver. She said she 'strongly agreed' with the statement that employers discriminate against people from ethnic minority groups.

The way participants tried to explain their belief that discrimination was going on, revealed a range of experiences that pointed to the subtle forms it could take, and confirmed the much-cited difficulty of proving discrimination in recruitment. As one participant put it, the overwhelming feeling was that 'it happened all the time'. The suspicion that the 'real' reason for not being offered an interview, or being turned down after an interview was because they were not white, was widely reported.

Participants of different faiths thought they were treated differently because of the way they dress which often reflected their religious beliefs. A Sikh participant said he felt he stood out because of his turban and had suspicions that this could put off employers from considering him for a job. A young Somali woman who was turned down for a cleaning job for not having experience couldn't understand what experience she would need for that job. She believed that the real reason for her rejection was that she was wearing a headscarf (expressed through an interpreter):

> *'But the problem is, she said that she has headscarf, she's a Muslim, she wears a scarf. She thinks the problem is scarf. When I go there they will simply say 'You don't have experience.' But the problem is my scarf.'*

(Rhaxma)

She also believed that in telephone enquiries, foreign names put people at a disadvantage. She cited a case where she had applied to another cleaning job advertised at her local Jobcentre, a job that said no experience was necessary, but upon hearing her name the employer asked her a lot of questions about her experience and then said he did not need someone like her.

Similar concerns were raised in relation to the ethnicity information provided in application forms/CVs. Some believed that employers used this to filter applicants. A Black Caribbean participant felt that as soon as employers heard his name and ethnicity, metaphorical shutters came down and he knew they would say 'Yes, we will get back to you,' and that this would not happen (Babu).

Some interviewees had attempted to enact their own form of discrimination testing in applying for jobs, and noted a difference in employer response, for instance, depending on how they reported their ethnic origin on application forms:

> *'Most jobs when I tick Black African, they don't even write back to me but when I tick Black British they write back and say: 'You were unsuccessful.' Even though that's not what I really want to know, but at least they've written back to me. That really showed me the difference, so nowadays that's why when I fill out the application form I tick Black British.'*

(Alice)

Discriminating employers' behaviour was sometimes described in terms of a '*bad attitude',* as not paying attention to what an applicant was saying, ignoring a job seeking enquirer, or simply being pointedly unhelpful. Recruitment agencies also came in for criticism for treating ethnic minority applicants badly. A young Pakistani described his experience with an agency, having been first ignored, and then turned away, before having been asked what type of jobs he was looking for:

Idris: *'That is, it is a bit of racism, they don't want to see us Asians like getting jobs. This is in one of the drop in agencies I walked in, … as soon as I walked in, right, I was just standing there, they see me come in and they were like … you know I was waiting, waiting for ages and then this … they called her over and like saying, 'How can I help you?' and stuff like that… And I go, 'I want to apply for some jobs.' And she goes to me 'Sorry, but we don't have any jobs for you, the job that you are looking for.' I said, 'I am interested in office type of job,' and she said, 'no, we are not.'*

Interviewer: *'Did she say that before she even asked you what kind of job you were looking for?'*

Idris: *'I know. Exactly. That's what I'm saying.'*

Others related experiences where they were asked intrusive questions in interviews, for instance about their religion, or had not felt respected by the interview panel and had felt alienated because all the panel members were white:

> *'And then there was this other place when I went for an interview, it was in Bradford, it was a small firm, and I went and when I walked in they sort of just looked and I thought 'right'. And he was asking me questions and I was answering them. He just started asking me stuff like culture and religion and stuff.'*

(Zeenat)

Refugees also felt strongly that employers particularly treated them with caution, and had almost come to expect and accept differential treatment.

> *'I have realised that refugees and asylum seekers seem to evoke in the minds... I realised that some employers think twice just at the mention of refugees or asylum seekers.'*

(Alain)

7.10   Conclusion

Analysis of participants' perspectives illustrates the range of barriers identified as preventing them from obtaining work. While the analysis focused on the issues raised most often by participants, a range of additional problems were mentioned less frequently. These included cultural and religious issues (e.g. not wanting to work in a restaurant which served alcohol), financial (e.g. money to fund training), long-term unemployment and being recently arrived in the UK.

Employment barriers reflected participants' work and education histories, as well as their personal circumstances. Two key issues emerged from the detailed exploration of individual experiences. The first is the way both supply and demand side factors combine to create the scene for individuals' search for jobs in the labour market. In the same way as individuals' initial position in the labour markets depends on a range of factors, so too do their job search experiences and movements. Participants with sufficient qualifications and experience may be stalled by childcare responsibilities. Others, with no particular barriers, may face discrimination. Graduates may have to move to other parts of the country if local labour markets are depressed. A theme running through all the participant interviews, regardless of their personal circumstances, was a motivation to improve their employment prospects, and the lengths they went to in order to counteract the supply side factors that affected employment prospects.

The second key issue was the degree of multiple disadvantage among ethnic minority communities. Older Pakistani men, for instance, often had language difficulties, lacked qualifications, had limited skills, experienced health problems, and most reported age discrimination. Refugees similarly, had to start by learning English, update their qualifications, and find ways of gaining work experience, at the

same time as dealing with various other problems associated with settling in a new country. Although less severe, most other groups, apart from graduates educated in the UK, faced multiple barriers entering the labour market. It is interesting to note that patterns of disadvantage ran across groups. In other words, similar barriers applied to different groups of clients, regardless of their ethnic origin. Language issues, for instance, were raised by both older people long settled in the country, recently arrived young adults, and educated refugees of all nationalities. This suggests that while it is possible to identify a set of barriers that are most significant and affect large numbers of people, a wide range of individual profiles and needs exists within that framework.

8   Longitudinal participants and distance travelled

8.1   Summary

- This chapter considers the extent to which participants moved closer to the labour market as a result of their involvement with EMO, and is based on analysis of the longitudinal depth interviews.

- In order to sample individuals for the longitudinal interviews, and to understand their progress relative to their initial employment position, participants were divided into three broad groups, representing a continuum of distance from the labour market. **Group A, furthest from the labour market** included those who had come to the UK as adults, whether recently or many years ago, the majority having at least some ESOL needs, and some UK-born participants without work experience. It includes those made redundant from declining industries, and women who have been involved in full-time childcare for some years. **Group C, closest to the labour market**, consisted of people with current or recent work experience, and included some people who were underemployed, in the sense that they were working fewer hours than desired or in jobs below their skills level. **Group B, the intermediate group**, was heterogeneous, and included people with qualifications and few obvious barriers to work. None were UK-born and for the majority English was a second language, although many spoke English fluently.

- In terms of distance travelled, those in **Group A** made tangible but often rather limited progress towards work, which involved improvements in basic skills and self-efficacy, and in some cases changed job goals. This could involve a greater level of acceptance of the limited range of job opportunities open to them, or alternatively a decision to focus on improving their longer-term employability and skills, rather than seeking a short-term job. Only one person in this group entered employment. Those in **Group B** all moved closer to the labour market, and a number found jobs, while others entering training courses. Only one person in this group who was actively seeking work did not find a job. **Group C**

participants showed least change in their employability or orientation to work, since they were relatively skilled and highly motivated to work from the outset. Most were in work, by the time of their final interview, although this was not always secure work.

- **Group A** participants were severely disadvantaged by their ESOL needs, especially where they were older, and had little formal education. EMO providers had helped people to begin to address these issues, and to go on to engage with mainstream provision. **Group B** participants were often combining short-term jobs with training intended to help them realise their longer-term employment goals. EMO projects were assisting by providing training for some of this group, and were helping others find work. **Group C** participants generally had marketable skills and appeared well equipped to engage in job search, but had nonetheless benefited from EMO providers' specialist advice, which helped with specific issues such as interview technique, especially if they had relatively little work experience.

8.2   Introduction

The EMO initiative is concerned primarily with supporting people from ethnic minority groups who are unemployed or in the 'latent' labour force, helping them to overcome barriers to work and moving them closer to the labour market, or into employment. This evaluation is concerned with understanding the nature of people's position in relation to the labour market, the impact various barriers have on their ability to find and sustain work and how the EMO pilots have contributed to eroding these barriers and moving them closer to the labour market. Given the disadvantage faced by participants, it is important is to acknowledge not only movement into work, but also distance travelled towards the labour market. With these aims in mind, the research has been designed with a longitudinal element that allows the progress of certain individuals to be tracked over the course of a 10 – 15 month period. At each interview, participants were questioned about their current situation, their feelings about work, the barriers they faced finding the work they wanted, and their priorities and future plans in relation to life and work. They were also asked about their relationship with the EMO pilot projects, Jobcentre Plus and other agencies in order to explore the part played by these agencies in any changes that have occurred in their lives.

The research design used several objective and subjective indicators of distance travelled, to measure different types of change. The use of multiple indicators also increases confidence in the validity of measurement (Sefton *et al*., 2002). Scale questions were included in the participant topic guide at initial (phase 1) and all follow-up interviews. These asked participants a range of questions about job search skills, work experience, work-related skills and personal well-being. The interviewees indicated the extent to which they agree/disagree with a range of statements such as 'I know the best ways to apply for the kind of work I want' or 'I do well at job interviews when I get them'. Participants were also probed to expand on their answers, which provided rich and varied insights into people's labour market

position and prospects and enables the development of a potentially fruitful tool for exploring distance travelled. It was not dependent on hard outcomes such as finding a job, but enabled subjective factors to be integrated into the analysis to provide a more subtle and nuanced understanding of people's lives.

This chapter focuses on the longitudinal interviewees and begins by exploring the problem of defining and measuring distance from the labour market. Creating a baseline that captures participants' position in relation to the labour market at their first interview and against which subsequent interviews could be compared was an issue that arose early in the analysis, as it was necessary to categorise phase 1 participants in order to sample a cross section for the longitudinal interviews. The first section in this chapter examines the concept of distance travelled and establishing baselines. The following section will then look at the baseline positions for the longitudinal interviewees at phase 1 taking into account work history, orientations to work and future plans. Work profiles provide an important way to envisage these baseline positions and these are then contrasted with the positions, orientations and plans of participants at their follow-up interviews. The exploration of longitudinal trajectories includes an evaluation of the role of agencies in the lives of participants over this period and attempts to identify particularly effective interventions instigated by the EMO pilot projects.

8.3   Establishing baseline indicators

Initial examination of all the participant work histories in phase 1 of the research revealed a rich tapestry of backgrounds and experience that would need to be taken into account in any exploration of distance from the labour market. Preliminary analysis generated the following typology, reflecting the diversity of participants:

• Students, looking for part-time work.

• (Recent) graduates out of work/doing part-time or agency work.

• Recent arrivals (not refugees, never worked in UK).

• Underemployed.

• Temporary residents.

• Refugees/asylum seekers.

• 20s and 30s, out of work.

• 40s and 50s, out of work.

• Recently started new jobs.

• Women with children wanting family-friendly or part-time work (mostly aged 20s/30s).

These different groups face contrasting issues and barriers and have varying orientations and priorities, all of which impact on their labour market position. Some

form of typology is required that reflects the diversity of the participants and their experiences and unpacks the range of different factors that define and constitute their relation to the labour market. Initial analysis of the data from project worker and participant interviews found a range of objective factors and barriers which play a part in defining an individual's distance from the labour market:

- Current labour market status.

- Employment/non-employment history.

- Length of time since last paid work.

- Length of time since last job interview.

- Other activities/informal work providing transferable or recognised skills.

- Possession of an NI number.

- Geographical mobility.

- Job-seeking activities.

- Take-up and completion of education and training opportunities.

- Housing.

- Health (physical and mental).

- ESOL needs.

- Qualifications and skills (including literacy and numeracy).

- Changes in the labour market and fall in demand for certain skills.

- Immigration status.

- Discrimination.

- Caring responsibilities/need for time flexibility.

More subjective measures of distance from the labour market arising from interviews with participants include:

- Orientations to paid work/life priorities.

- Perceived barriers to secure paid employment.

- Perceptions of job search skills.

- Perceptions of relevant work experience and work-related skills.

- Confidence.

These measures are wide-ranging and clearly interact in complex ways. In their negative sense these factors act as barriers, whilst in their positive sense they can act as stepping stones, moving individuals more swiftly in the direction of paid employment. For example, the lack of an NI number is a practical barrier, since it is

necessary for the person to establish and complete the process for obtaining this before they can get work. Those with ESOL needs would require help with all stages of this process, reinforcing the barrier further. On the other hand, having a positive orientation to work, and wanting to find a job as soon as possible, can provide the necessary motivation to embark on that process. Distance travelled is thus represented by changes observed in the series of baseline measures, drawing on objective measures, attitudinal measures and changes in affective states, such as perceived health, self-esteem and self-efficacy, recorded in the initial interview, and revisited in longitudinal interviews.

The intersection of these factors situates each individual along a continuum of distance from the labour market rather than in polarised positions of 'close' or 'distant'. However, in order to create some working categories for the purposes of sampling the longitudinal participants, these factors were grouped into broad criteria including previous experience of employment, levels of training and qualifications, orientations to work and number of other barriers faced. Interviewees were then divided into three groups constituting three positions on a continuum of distance from the labour market: Group A, at one end, were defined as the furthest away. They had not worked for many years, had few recognised skills or qualifications, negative views of work prospects and were faced with multiple barriers such as having a poor grasp of English or substantial caring commitments. Group B constituted the intermediate group, and in that sense were hardest to define. They included those with limited work experience, although this might mean that they had no UK work experience, but did have some work experience acquired elsewhere. They also had limited skills and qualifications or were in possession of qualifications that were not recognised. This group had positive orientations to work and were hoping to get a job as soon as possible, although they often faced practical barriers such as childcare responsibilities which made that more difficult. Group C was made up of those at the other end of the continuum, and closest to the labour market. They had current or recent work experience, marketable skills and qualifications and few barriers preventing them finding a job. However, they were often underemployed and looking for more appropriate work.

Focusing on these three groups helps to isolate and sift out 'creaming' effects and to explore the question of whether the most advantaged are faring any better in the labour market than the least advantaged. A total of 72 participants were approached (36 in each phase) to ensure that a range of projects, ethnic minority groups, personal circumstances and baseline distance from the labour market were reflected. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 46 participants. Although the sampling was roughly equal across the three groups, the achieved sample was affected by attrition where participants were not contactable or had changed their minds about being interviewed, and those furthest from the labour market are slightly under-represented. As this group included refugees, a highly mobile group, this is unsurprising.

Issues of attrition in longitudinal research were discussed in Chapter 2. Appendix 1 provides details of all interviews conducted with the longitudinal sample, including interview intervals and the difficulties encountered in reaching some participants.

8.4   Participants' baseline profile maps

After sampling and conducting follow-up interviews it was important to explore how meaningful these categories were in understanding participants' relationships with the labour market. One way to do this was to map profiles of each of the longitudinal participants life/work histories that summarise the stories emerging from the interviews and capture the complex elements and dynamics that constitute a person's distance from the labour market. Examples of personal profiles for the participants discussed in detail in this chapter are included in Appendix 1.

8.5   Work histories, orientations to work and future plans at phase

At phase 1, participants were asked about their work histories and immediate and longer-term work plans, including whether they had an ideal or 'dream' job. They were also probed on feelings about work, whether they were optimistic about finding a job and what their priorities were. This section explores how participants are positioned in relation to these issues at phase one. They are examined by sampling group in order to establish their individual baselines and as a way to explore the nuances and boundaries of different positions on the continuum. Participants whose case histories are explored in detail in the following sections are broadly representative of their respective groups and their stories serve to illustrate the issues that characterise each one.

8.5.1   Group A – furthest from the labour market

The individuals who are furthest from the labour market (group A) are those who face multiple forms of labour market disadvantage, who have few qualifications and little marketable work experience. Typically, members of this group came to the UK as adults some years ago and have at least some ESOL needs, which they have often 'managed' by taking work in sectors where this is not an issue, such as catering and factory work. This category also includes some recent refugees, with limited work experience or qualifications, and extensive ESOL needs, and older manual workers who have lost their jobs and been unable to find work, often referred to as 'discouraged workers'. Women who had assumed full-time responsibility for child-care and had no previous work experience and UK-born adults with no formal qualifications or experience were also situated at a considerable distance from the labour market.

Fethi and Ali were refugees in their twenties, both with extensive ESOL needs. Ali had done manual jobs in his native Somalia, but had no education, and was hoping to find a job shelf-filling in a local supermarket, although his long-term goal was to

work with computers. Fethi, a Kurdish refugee, had been unable to complete his degree because of political persecution, and had no work experience at all. He saw ESOL training as an important first stage, and hoped to complete his education before looking for suitable work. Serhan and Zafer were also refugees, but were older, and thus faced greater barriers to work. Serhan was only in her early 30s, but was disadvantaged by having no previous work experience and mental health problems arising from her previous experiences. Zafer was in his late 40s, and had extensive experience in the textile industry in Turkey, but no UK work experience. None of these were available for re-interview.

Nalini was a lone parent, who had come to the UK on marriage five years ago, and had been employed in a family business, where she had been exploited by her in-laws. Her marriage had ended acrimoniously, and she had experienced domestic violence and the attempted kidnapping of her daughter, leaving her in a vulnerable and depressed state of mind. Nalini had no UK work experience apart from unpaid work in her in-laws' business. While she was keen to find work, her first priority was the well being of her daughter. At the time of her first interview, she described her dream job as being a beauty therapist. The EMO project referred her to the Jobcentre for ESOL classes and although the providers of the beauty therapy course she wanted to attend was happy for her to join, the Jobcentre said her English was not good enough to benefit from this. Disappointed about this, she was considering taking a different kind of job, (e.g. making sandwiches) and abandoning her longer-term plans. She also faced a further barrier as work had to be structured around care of her daughter.

Nalini was appreciative of the support she received from the EMO provider, pointing out how useful it was for those who had just arrived in the UK:

> *'I thought it's a really good organisation, especially for those women who can't speak English. It's given women like that a lot of confidence to be able to plan things around what they want to do in their life. And for those women that don't want to… it's not forcing people to do anything it's just widening their opportunities so they know what's available really, so it's widening their awareness of what they can do. I think the government has enabled us to stand on our own two feet.'*

She also found the project worker very helpful and her comments below suggest that she was able to draw upon her support with personal difficulties, which in turn helped her to look beyond her existing problems and envisage and plan a future for herself:

> *'Well I must say that* [worker] *was really supportive of everything I wanted to do. She was always very positive and she provided me with so many options about what I could do. She stopped me feeling downhearted and even when I was supposed to ring her on those occasions she would ring me instead. She was very helpful. She told me about so many courses that I could go …'*

Dheeraj, at 38, had recently become unemployed for the first time, but had little work experience relevant to the UK labour market (Figure A.1, Appendix 2). He had

no vocational or higher educational qualifications and had worked as a minister of religion most of his adult life, but although he would prefer to continue doing this, has realised that it is not possible to support his family on what he can earn from this occupation. He had worked in textile factories over the past two years, but acknowledged that this type of work is not widely available and was looking for alternative unskilled work. Although he had been in the UK for 5 years, and was able to deal with most situations in spoken English, Dheeraj was unable to cope with form filling and written communications at the time of his first interview, and this was a barrier to work, as was his rather limited experience of UK job-searching. On the plus side, he was highly motivated to work, and had a strong ethical and religious commitment to supporting his family:

> *'You see my mind is not set at the moment, I'm quite stressed out at the moment, I think I need to work even sixteen, twenty hours will do, I really do need to work, work is the main thing. You see I'm a religious person and I think its good if I work hard and then eat, I don't want to rely on anybody, on the state or anybody.'*

Sam is also in his thirties, and came to the UK as a young adult. Of Chinese ethnicity, he had originally hoped to work in an office, and studied business accounting, but abandoned this idea because of the difficulties he found in learning English. He had since worked in the catering trade, including a spell running his own takeaway business. At the time of his first interview, Sam expressed a desire to leave the catering trade, saying that he no longer enjoyed this type of work, but felt trapped by his ESOL problems, saying, *'there is no way out, I cannot speak English'*. He was suffering from depression and claiming Incapacity Benefit (Figure A.2, Appendix 2).

Ajaz was 49 when first interviewed, and had been unemployed for over a decade. He came to the UK as a teenager in the 1960s, and had no formal education in either the UK or Pakistan. He worked in textiles for many years before being made redundant, and would still like work of this type, although he recognises that it is not widely available *' you can't get that kind of job any more'*. He has poor health and is unable to read or write English, but is keen to find work. He has benefited considerably from finding out about the EMO project, and has attended English classes regularly, as well as doing some training in computing and woodwork. At the time of his first interview, he had obtained a packing job via the project, but had only attended for one day, saying that he found the work too physically demanding, *'I'm too old to do this kind of work. It's very heavy, very physical work.'* (Figure A.3, Appendix 2).

The above examples are typical of the severity of needs in this group. Poor language skills, lack of formal qualifications and limited work related skills in combination situate these participants at the margins of the labour market. The main issue for many participants in this group was to achieve a minimum degree of labour market functionality, as these barriers prevented even the most basic engagement with mainstream services. While all participants in this group expressed a strong desire to work and some had substantial work experiences in ethnic labour markets (e.g.

restaurants or textile factories) or overseas (e.g. minister of religion), their options in the current UK labour market were severely restricted. Their efforts at the time of first interviews were focused on developing basic skills such as becoming effective in the English language and job search, getting familiar with the UK recruitment processes and building up confidence eroded by long-term unemployment.

8.5.2 Group B – Intermediate distance from labour market

This group consists individuals in an intermediate position in terms of their distance from the labour market. Unlike the previous group, they have some experience and qualifications or skills, few barriers and a strong belief that they should be able to find work. The majority of this group were studying part-time in order to increase their employability and this gave them a particular orientation to work. None of this group was British born and the majority did not speak English as a first language.

There were two refugees in this group, Salahaddin, a 25-year-old Iraqi Kurd, who had arrived 6 months previously, and Ajmal, a 28-year-old from Afganistan who had been in the UK for 2 years. Their backgrounds were also divergent, with Salahaddin having little education and limited work experience on the family farm while Ajmal had studied to diploma level in Afghanistan and worked for two years in the military. Both attended ESOL classes intensively when they arrived and Ajmal's English was now very good. Salahaddin's English was still only at pre intermediate level, but he was working hard to improve (Figures B.1 and B.2, Appendix 2).

Although they were at different stages their main priority at phase 1 was similar: to continue to improve their language and jobs skills so they could find full-time work. Both were doing ESOL and IT/computing courses with EMO projects. Salahaddin had been referred to the project by a friend whilst Ajmal had been referred by another organisation he was using for his job search because he was interested in studying computers and this organisation ran a range of courses. Salahaddin had tried very hard to find a part-time job without success and had come to the conclusion that he should focus his energy on learning English, as he was unable to obtain work without reaching a certain standard. Although Ajmal's English was good, he had also not managed to find work. For these two, training and qualifications were seen as the key to future employment. As Ajmal explained:

> *'I can't go to* [the] *military here, I had to improve my skills in some way and because one of my hobbies was computer and I liked it. I started to go and find somewhere to learn computers and if I get a certificate or if I learn more, maybe I get a job. That's the idea, to improve my skills.'*

In the short-term, both wanted to find part-time work that would allow them to continue with their training. At the same time both had a very strong work ethos and were determined to find some sort of full-time employment in the near future. Whilst Ajmal's ideal job and his long term goal was a career as a computer technician, Salahaddin was content with a driving job or a sewing job. He explained that he had some experience of making women's clothes in Iraq. There was a sense that for him studying IT would build his confidence and help to develop his language rather than providing skills he actually saw himself using in the job market.

Improving skills was also an issue for another subset of group B that consisted of two fairly recent arrivals from the Caribbean in their mid 20s. Angelique, a young Jamaican woman, qualified as a hairdresser and nail technician and worked in a tourist shop before coming to England to visit her mother. Whilst in London she began an IT course with Learn Direct and an NVQ at the local college and these motivated her to look for work in the UK. Like the others, she wanted to find part-time work so she could finish her courses, however, unlike the others, she did not have a letter confirming her right to work in the country and also had no National Insurance number. Although she needed to wait for these issues to be resolved she was determined to find a job once this was done. She had been referred to the EMO project by a college where she went to make enquiries and the project worker had let her know about jobs but more importantly had helped her with CV writing and interview technique which she felt had given her some confidence to find work. Her dream job was as a travel agent, but although she was aware of the need to obtain a vocational qualification, she was not sure how to go about this or how soon she would be able to do this (Figure B.3, Appendix 2).

Henri, from Martinique, spoke French and Creole as his first languages and had trained in music. Prior to coming to England he spent many years living in France where he worked as a chef and a DJ on a radio station. During his two years in the UK he worked as a chef, although his long-term goal was to work in the music industry and he had recently enrolled at university on a part-time music course. Like the others he was looking for part-time work to fit around this His contact with EMO had come through the Jobcentre who had referred him and he was making use of the services such as access to phone and photocopier. The worker had passed on three jobs which he had applied for but not heard anything. (Figure B.4, Appendix 2).

Jumila, a young Somali women aged 19, who had been in the UK for 7 years and had qualifications but no work experience, had a slightly different perspective to the others in this group. She came to the UK at the age of 12, spoke fairly fluent English and gained a BTEC national diploma in engineering. In many ways she was far closer to the labour market than the others, in that she had good qualifications and skills that were recognised in the UK. However, she had recently turned down three places at different universities studying engineering as she felt she needed to earn some money and gain some work experience before going to college. Whilst this had seemed like a sensible idea at the time, finding a job had proved very difficult. The EMO outreach worker who she had been referred to by a cousin was very supportive and had boosted her confidence. She had found some job vacancies for her and advised her where to try asking about jobs but nothing had so far come of these. Jumila said she had phoned the worker every day the previous week and was probably seen as a *'pain in the neck'*. She was beginning to feel quite frustrated by her lack of success and had enrolled on a computer course, in order to make better use of her time. In some senses then, she was in a very similar position to the others in that group in that she was doing part-time training and looking for part-time work in order to improve her labour market position (Figure B.5, Appendix 2).

Two further participants who were classified in the intermediate group were Sebe and Sita. Their priorities and barriers to work were very different both from each other and the others in the group. Sebe, a black African women in her late 40s, had been in the UK for over ten years. She was very active in voluntary social care work and had worked as bus conductor for many years before being sacked and had now been unemployed for 3 years during which time she had done a variety of courses including IT and social care in an attempt to find a way back into work and made numerous applications all of which had been unsuccessful. Her main goal was social care particularly housing although she was applying for anything that came up. Her previous work experience and her determination to find work (she described herself as 'desperate') meant she could have been classified as close to the labour market but her age and the time she had spent out of work (possibly also the fact she was sacked) appeared to be barriers to her getting a job. She wondered if her African accent might also put off potential employers. She had used the EMO project to brush up on her interview and job application techniques, and had been particularly pleased to receive a grant to buy an interview suit.

Sita, a Pakistani female in her late 20s, who had been in the UK four years, was educated to A level in Pakistan but with child care and some ESOL issues. She was doing full time ESOL classes through an EMO provider but finding it very difficult to juggle these with good quality childcare. The crèche at the college was not educational enough to provide a full-time solution, so she also used a nursery. It was in her search for childcare that she got in touch with the EMO project. Sita had long term work plans which involved finding a part-time job to fit in around childcare, and she was thinking about doing a childcare course that would enable her to work in a nursery. She was enthusiastic about finding a job and this positive orientation to work was a new development for her. She explained that the ESOL classes have given her confidence. However, this was also a long term goal as she recognised she needed training first and that although her English was at Intermediate level she felt this needed to improve. Unlike others in this group, she was not looking for short-term work to sustain her, as she was supported by a working partner, and in that sense she was closer to group C who are further from the labour market.

The dilemma for many of this group was that their need to work and improve their income in the short term was in conflict with their vocational aims. Finding part-time work that would fit around their studies involved doing low paid and low skilled work, which for most was not their long-term goal. Henri explained:

> 'If I find a job as a chef tomorrow, I'll get it because I need the money. But I wouldn't stop look(ing) for another job in the audio side. But if I found a job in the audio side tomorrow, I won't look for, I would stay with this; I wouldn't look for more.'

All those in the intermediate group had positive orientations to work at first interview. They expected to be working in the future and they were eager to find work in the short term but they were also thinking about their career in the long term. The desire to find work was tempered slightly for those who had been unable

to find the kinds of work they wanted or to get jobs they were applying for. Jumila explained that she found the experience of signing on at the Jobcentre *'demotivating'*, saying that it made her feel like she was *'begging'*. In fact she described the whole process of being unemployed as *'very depressing'* and explained that although normally a proactive person, after a few months signing on she had started sitting at home watching films on TV. She was starting to regret her decision to defer university for a year. Like Jumila, Sebe was quite frustrated about her lack of success in finding a job.

The issues for many of this group included finding a way to integrate their need for work that would enable them to support themselves with training and education that would enable them to improve their skills and qualifications, and to gain crucial work experience in the area in which they really wanted to work. For others, it was simply a matter of how to obtain paid work when they had no previous experience of work in the country, had ESOL needs, lacked recognised skills and qualifications or were not familiar or confident with recruitment processes.

8.5.3   Group C – participants closest to the labour market

Group C, least distant from the labour market, consists of people who have current or recent work experience, sometimes holding qualifications. Group C may also include the job insecure and underemployed; people who are in a job but not one that makes full use of their skills and abilities.

Participants' work histories encompassed a wide range of experiences. At one end of the spectrum were highly qualified individuals with degrees and varying types and amounts of work experience. One participant in his 30s, Milat, was born and educated to degree level in the UK, and has many years highly skilled work experience as an IT consultant. As can be seen from his profile (Figure C.1, Appendix 2), at phase 1 he was in his first period of unemployment and had been unemployed for ten months. Another graduate, Ruth, a woman in her mid-twenties had worked in several countries, holding a variety of contracts in the film industry. These jobs had often been short-term and temporary and occasionally unpaid. She had been unemployed for one year by the time of her phase 1 interview (Figure C.2, Appendix 2). A related, but distinctive, group is UK-educated graduates with little or no work experience, such as Sulekha, who worked for an Internet company for two years after graduation, but had been unemployed for over a year when interviewed (Figure C.3, Appendix 2).

A second subgroup consists of individuals who did not have degrees but were qualified to a high level and had considerable employment experience. Errol, an African-Caribbean man aged 40, had left school at 16, subsequently undertaking a variety of college and distance learning courses. His main job had been as IT officer in the NHS, and most recently he had set up his own IT consultancy business, but the business folded after six months. At his first (phase 2) interview he was unemployed, and trying to increase his IT credentials in order to get back into the labour market.

A third sub-group are recent arrivals in the UK, with a fairly high standard of English and currently in employment, but looking for more secure work or unemployed and striving for better employment prospects. For example Loh, aged 39, had moved to the UK three months prior to being interviewed. Originally from Macau, where he had worked as a driving instructor, at phase one he explained that he had immediately found employment in the construction industry, but was looking for something more secure, while also taking classes to improve his English (Figure C.4, Appendix 2).

Participants in low paid employment, with few qualifications and little experience outside of low paid work, constitute a fourth broad grouping. Kai Ti was aged 47 and ethnic Chinese. She moved from Hong Kong to the UK in 1997, alone and with ESOL needs (Figure C.5, Appendix 2). She was educated to a junior level in Hong Kong and when she first came to Britain had worked in several restaurants before settling into a job as a home care assistant. Kai Ti remained in this job for three years, but left due to ill treatment. At the time of her phase 1 interview, she had found a job as a part-time cleaner in a clinic, but planned to resign from the post as she felt that it was bad for her health. Nandini, a young Indian woman aged 20, had left school with few qualifications and after a period at college retaking exams had been in a part-time job for almost three years before searching for another one, initially via the Jobcentre and then via an EMO project.

A fourth group is overseas graduates or people with considerable work experience who have come to the UK to study and/or gain work experience. Celeste, aged 26 and from the Caribbean, was in England on a special two year working visa awarded to graduate students. Having recently been awarded a maths degree and come to the UK on one such visa, she had found a temporary full-time job working as a medical secretary following job search support from an EMO project (Figure C.6, Appendix 2).

For many people in group C, finding paid employment was their main priority, though not at any price. This was particularly the case for graduates. For example, in the longer term Ruth wanted to get a job as a film production designer and she was very wary of taking a low paid job in the interim. While currently in debt, and job searching with a sense of urgency, she was anxious about taking a job that put her in 'a rut' and further into debt. Her comments on this reveal the anxieties and tensions at play in the work decision:

> 'I'm not being picky and that. But I have done Customer Service and stuff before which is not that hard really, I am quite happy to do that, but the money they are offering is just ridiculous. I'd rather almost stay unemployed sometimes because I would actually be worse off by having to pay to go to work and you know having to get a uniform and things like that to get paid, to not get paid very well. And it is worth hanging on that extra week to get that better job that will pay. Because otherwise you just get stuck into a rut and get into more debt really.'

At the same time, Ruth was also feeling under pressure to take some casual work, for example in a bar, to help alleviate her debts. She had also recently started attending

evening classes to acquire the kinds of skills that might allow her to become self-employed. Ruth drew in her spare time, sometimes informally selling her work, and her idea was to set up a business marketing the work of other artists, 'an arts supermarket' and, ideally, also do film production design. Milat, trying to resume his career in the IT sector, was also trying to pursue alternative but related career paths. At phase one he was thinking about applying for teaching jobs in the IT field.

Just as some participants were keen not to slip into low paid, low status work, others wanted to shift away from this work and/or enter employment that felt more meaningful for them. Kai Ti had recently found a part-time cleaning job at a clinic but was finding that the job caused health problems. She enjoyed doing informal voluntary work, helping people and wanted to find a driving job or work in a hospital. For others, finding paid work and securing more income was not the central priority. Faye Kam has three children and valued paid work as a means to spend just a few hours feeling somewhat more free, more 'relaxed', and to meet with other people:

> 'I have to look after the kids all the time and I feel constrained by that. If I go out to work sometimes, I have more opportunities to talk to other people and feel more relaxed. I seldom have a chance to work outside, so I feel relaxed about it…'

Her dream job would be office work, but in the short-term she was thinking of opening a Chinese restaurant with her husband.

Recent arrivals were also striving to improve their labour market position. Loh saw the construction work that he obtained on arrival in the UK as an interim job. Similarly, Faisal was keen to get an office job in the longer term. He was applying for jobs in supermarkets and warehouses in the short term, and was keen to work hours that would allow him to continue classes in English and computing, to improve his chances of meeting his longer-term aim. As he explained:

> 'If I get a job now I would take a night shift, but I would continue with my course, I would work in the night and study in the day.'

Some people had firm plans for the future, in which paid employment featured in the short and long-term, but different types of paid work appropriate to different perceived stages in their lives. Celeste, a recent graduate, had come to the UK for life and work experience, started looking for paid employment on arrival and was enjoying her new, temporary, job as a medical secretary. In the longer term she intended to return to Trinidad and Tobago to train as an actuary.

Within these three groups there are those who clearly fall somewhere on the continuum between groups. For instance, in the intermediate group Ajmal and Jumila appear to be closer to group C and thus to the labour market, although for very different reasons, whilst Salahaddin is clearly further from the labour market and closer to group A. However, the groups do provide a working model for understanding and exploring distance from the labour market. Most crucially, they

give a sense of the way particular combinations of factors converge at a given point in time. These profiles suggest that distance from the labour market should be understood in terms of both extrinsic barriers and intrinsic motivations and attitudes, which determine the pace at which people are likely to move as well as the distance they have to travel. The next section looks at the changes that had taken place for these individuals at the first (L1), second (L2) and third (L3) longitudinal interviews, both in terms of job-related activity and their priorities and orientations to work. It draws on the stories emerging from a range of participants representing the three broad groups and variety of subgroups contained within them.

8.6 Changes at follow-up interviews

8.6.1 Group A – furthest from the labour market

By the time of their last follow-up interviews, only one member of the group had moved into paid work, with others making tangible but often rather limited progress. For most participants, this consisted of small improvements in basic skills and self-efficacy. For some, such steps were nevertheless accompanied by significant changes in outlook, long term plans and aspirations.

For some participants in this group, contact with the EMO project created an opportunity for dealing with personal as well as employment and training related issues. Following his contact with the EMO project, Sam had been able to address some of his problems. At the time of his first follow-up interview, he had had counselling for depression and attended a basic hygiene course. He had also done some voluntary work for the project, which had been helpful in clarifying his feelings about office work. Sam had decided that he would prefer to return to catering, or alternatively, seek computer training and look for employment in this field. He applied to go on an IT training course via the Jobcentre. He explained that many catering firms continue to employ people at below the minimum wage, and that his only realistic prospect of earning a decent living was if he managed to set up his own business again. However, he was anxious about the financial risk of doing so.

By the time of first follow-up interview, Ajaz was still attending the EMO project, and taking part in training, although less often than before, apparently because he was not eligible to attend full-time once he had completed the initial period of training. He had made some progress in English, but not enough to make significant impact on his ability to complete application forms or his overall employability. Despite making repeated efforts to find work, he had not been offered an interview, and was not optimistic about his prospects. He was expecting to be called to attend training via Jobcentre Plus, and was happy to do this. Having turned fifty in the interim, Ajaz also saw his age as a significant barrier to work.

Dheeraj showed significant benefits from his involvement with the EMO project. His spoken English had greatly improved and at a recent assessment his level was found to be too high to attend any of the courses offered at the centre. The project had signed Dheeraj up for a computer course. While he was happy to do this, he

explained that his immediate priority was finding paid work. To this end, he was using a range of services, including attending job fairs, looking at boards in the library and local community centres. A knowledge of, and increased confidence in how the job market works was one obvious benefit Dheeraj had derived. He said *'I think I am in a better position. I kind of know how the market works now'* and described himself as 'hopeful', 'confident' and 'optimistic' about the prospects of finding work.

Despite the tangible progress he had made, he had not managed to secure an interview despite making numerous applications and remained unemployed and on a low income. This continued to affect his morale. When asked how he was feeling about life and work he replied, *'Life is a struggle and I'm not feeling so great'*. He described worries about the future of his family, particularly their financial situation.

The initial contact with the EMO provider led to an increased familiarisation with and also an improvement in their ability to engage with more mainstream services. Ajaz, for instance, was referred to a more intensive ESOL course by the Jobcentre. At the time of the second follow-up interview, he was attending ESOL classes at a different centre, four times a week. Although he found the new programme quite intensive, Ajaz clearly appreciated the chance to get out of the house more and he was excited about learning some basic computing. There was a noticeable increase in his confidence at this time in terms of language as he felt more able and comfortable venturing outside of his usual area and talking to people out in the street. While his spoken English had 'improved quite a lot', he still needed help with jobsearch at the Jobcentre, also with writing letters and filling in application forms. He was aware of the lack of a significant leap in his language skills and thought this related to the fact that he had never received a formal education and therefore *'had not learnt it properly'*.

Dheeraj similarly reported a significantly improved efficiency and confidence in operating in English. He was proud of the fact that his English had improved, enabling him to manage all household and job-search matters without help. Explaining the experience of searching for schools for his children, he said:

> *'I went there and defended it in English, faced a tribunal and defended it and said everything to them. At first I used to be scared of things but now I just go and do it.'*

Dheeraj made the most progress in terms of improving his English language and job search skills, but he was having to deal with family problems, which he perceived to be related to his unemployment and inability to provide for his family financially. At the next follow-up interview, frictions with his wife had become much worse, financial difficulties being at the root of their arguments. His wife had started working, first sewing 16-20 hours a week doing piecework at home, which was very poorly paid, then in a factory. Dheeraj had assumed responsibility for looking after the children and the home, but was deeply unhappy about this arrangement:

> *'You see my wife is working but I don't like that. You see I think it's better that I should be working you see the kids are going to school they need to be picked up; they need the food on the table. I think it's better for my wife to stay at home.'*

Although his morale had taken a further dip by this stage, his job search activities showed no sign of slowing down, as the log-book he kept for the Jobcentre demonstrated. He continued to visit the Jobcentre regularly, and had made more than 20 job applications and most significantly, had had about 10 interviews since the last interview. He went to other cities in the region and said he was *'dying to work'* and would work anywhere, as he could commute to daily. His one success in getting a job ended after only a few days as he found himself unable to carry the heavy boxes in a warehouse, and the employer decided that he was not suitable for the job. The whole incident was a major source of stress as he had signed off JSA and stopped housing and council tax benefits on the day he was offered that job and had to re-apply, only a few days later.

At the time of her second interview, Nalini also reported improvements in her English, which was also noted by the interviewer, and that she was much more able to manage alone, though she still needed an interpreter to deal with complicated matters and at the Jobcentre. A marked improvement in personal appearance (e.g. good haircut, well co-ordinated outfit) and confidence were also noted at this time. Her responses to questions about job-search skills showed noticeable improvements in confidence with recruitment processes such as writing application letters and forms, while at the same time indicating that Nalini's evaluation of her existing skills and experience had become more realistic. Her wish to undertake further training also seemed to confirm this. We were unable to contact Nalini for a further follow-up interview. She may have moved away from the area, as she said she was planning to because of undesired contact with her ex-husband and associates of his.

As with most other participants, Nalini had become more conscious of discrimination as a barrier and her revised future plans were partly related to her ideas about discrimination which she saw as being less prevalent in the public sector and among 'educated' people. Dheeraj similarly demonstrated a heightened sensitivity to discrimination and was conscious that some potential employers might be prejudiced against him because of his visible religious identity and strong accent. He believed that he could not get a job in food factories because of his beard and turban, but at the same time appreciated employer concerns about hygiene. He was particularly upset about failing the driving assessment for a bus company, believing that his driving was fine:

> *'I couldn't eat properly for a few days thinking about it but why did that happen just because I am wearing a turban, I'm Sikh, what's that got to do with it. I was driving properly and everything…'*

However, he regarded his lack of skills as the main barrier to finding employment, and saw that it might be necessary for him to invest in further training. He had completed the 3-month computing course and with the little money he made

working in the warehouse he bought a second-hand computer, which he thought would also be beneficial for his children and was visibly confident about using it:

> *'I feel I got more confident, I can open a file, I can save it, I can go onto the Internet, I know how to surf, so yes, my confidence in computers has increased greatly.'*

By the time of their final interviews, participants' trajectories had taken different turns. While only Dheeraj had managed to gain sustainable employment, others demonstrated varying degrees of progress in terms of language and job search skills. For some it led to changes in short and long term plans which seemed to be intrinsically related to an increase in self-belief and expectations.

Nalini had completely revised her future plans, abandoning the idea of doing low-skilled work she was aiming for longer-term and higher goals. She decided to improve her English, and study for A-levels with a view to working for local government or for a government department or agency such as the prison service. She had also become more concerned with having a career, rather than a job, which would be more satisfying and allow for personal development, all of which in turn would enable her to live independently as a lone mother:

> *'I think that, you know, it, it's an area that interests me, you know, I'm not just doing it to earn a living. I think it will give me a lot of satisfaction as well and also I think that, you know, by working it will give me a focus in life as well, I think it will stop people, you know, that might hassle me because I'm living on my own or criticise me because I am, you know, a single mum and I live on my own. I think… people will treat me with respect because I'm working in a good profession. I think that the starting salary is good as well and I'll have opportunities to study further if I want and get promoted. I think there are a lot of opportunities for advancement in this kind of career. You know, if you want to you can study further and I think there's career progression.'*

Despite suffering a further set-back between his second and final follow-up interviews, Dheeraj managed to recover and had secured his ideal job at the time of his last interview. Following his wife's departure from the family home and a death in the family, Dheeraj had spent two months in India, but remarkably, returned with a renewed sense of purpose, making enquiries to every single bus company in the region and accompanying a friend who worked as a bus driver on his shifts, treating the whole experience as a training opportunity. All his efforts finally paid off, as Dheeraj had secured a permanent job as a bus driver with a major company in the region. He had passed the assessment and the medical examination and was due to start working full-time after completing his training.

His relief was evident as he welcomed the interviewer into his house and he could not wait to announce his achievement and also revealing concerns about the consequences of growing up in a workless household for his children. He also attributed his success to his determination to find a job:

> *'I am very, very happy, I am delighted to tell you. …I'm not used to sitting and getting money from the government, that's just not me you see when you work it's a good effect on your children you see… you have to show your kids an example, they learn from you… I've never given up trying to get a job even when the odds were stacked against me and I really, really tried.'*

Dheeraj's success appears to have given him a self-belief and confidence that was notably absent from his first interview. He became more confident of his interview performance and this was reflected in his response to questions about job-search skills. He said proudly that the employer at his last interview had praised his English. Within the space of about 18 months, Dheeraj had become self-reliant and effective in managing his job search and employment plans and his insecurities about job search had disappeared:

> *'I think I know enough to get jobs for myself now. I went for the medical today and even the medical forms and things I filled myself… Give me an application form and I fill it out for you… I know what to do, I've learnt the system but before I didn't really know.'*

He was convinced that now he would be able to *'patch things up'* with his wife, as money was not a worry any more.

Other participants, such as Ajaz and Sam, appeared to have lost the momentum created by their initial encounter with the EMO provider. At his final follow-up interview, Ajaz had completed the 6-months ESOL course and would not be attending any other in the near future. Though he continued to search for work, his outlook remained rather pessimistic and he seemed acutely aware of how the effects of various barriers he faced all *'added up'*. He had been to a job interview, which he was extremely reluctant to discuss, only briefly mentioning that he *'couldn't really communicate'* with the employer. The experience seemed to have reinforced his belief that without language skills, he would not be able to find work and, he did not perceive this as achievable at his age.

His responses to questions about his work-related and job search skills, work experience and personal well-being confirms an increasing pessimism and coming to terms with a bleak future. His attendance at ESOL classes, however, seems to have had a positive affect on his outlook, though not a lasting one, as he appeared to feel positive about meeting other people, to have felt respected and less anxious than other times. The course seems to have provided him with a temporary sense of purpose as he felt he was doing something useful, though remaining aware, throughout, that this did not amount to a substantial change in his circumstances.

He did not believe that, in terms of his employment prospects, much had changed since his first contact with the EMO provider and he appeared to feel rather helpless:

> *'Well, you know I'm not very hopeful I don't know what's going to happen so, I don't know about a job I mean that's what people at the Jobcentre say you should get a job but what kind of job can I do, not trained, not skilled, can't speak the language, fifty one years old I don't know, I don't know what's going to happen.'*

By the time of his last interview, Sam appeared to have stalled, not following any of his ideas through. He was still unemployed and on Incapacity Benefit. In between, he had had a spell working in his friend's restaurant as a chef for six months. He had left this job two months previously, citing some difficulties he had with other employees. This was not the only negative development in his life. He gave up trying to learn English, having found the course *'too hard'* and thought he needed practice more than studying, but lacked the opportunity to use his English, a likely reflection of his social and work networks being restricted to Chinese speaking circles. Similarly, he rolled back his ambitions to train in computing. Although he still thought running a takeaway business was the best option for him, it did not appear that he had given much thought to how he could find the financial capital to set up a business. He also mentioned alternative fields such as decorating, something he had done in his youth, and was contemplating going into business with an experienced friend, doing tiling, carpentry and painting.

He was still on medication for depression, but questioned his doctor's diagnosis. He appeared to have lost motivation and became quite negative about life in general and felt *'fifty-fifty'* about finding a job soon. His responses to questions about job search and work skills and personal well-being reflected this state of mind and indicated a dip in confidence and self-assessment of labour market readiness. Asked about his future plans, he was evasive and uninterested, which may have been partly attributable to his illness, but also reflected the effects of the continuing unemployment and stagnation in his life:

> *'I said before, my confidence gone, I haven't got any, everything is not interest me now.'*

Few participants in this group had a long-term relationship with the EMO provider and the degree of their involvement varied. Sam's contact with the EMO provider had been rather irregular, though he mentioned volunteering as an interpreter with them, helping on a pottery course for the elderly Chinese clients. He seemed to have kept in touch and found out about various training opportunities, but he did not appear to have decided on a direction and therefore was unable to make use of the opportunities that might have helped him to improve his prospects.

Ajaz's contact with the EMO provider did not continue following the termination of his attendance at ESOL courses there. Nevertheless, Ajaz was appreciative of the positive and supportive environment of the centre and recommended it to others. He spoke highly of the ESOL teacher, who appears to have been successful by adopting a low pressure, patient and supportive approach in encouraging his learning.

Dheeraj felt that after improving his English and job-search skills, he did not know how else he could benefit from the provider's services, though he continued to keep in touch to enquire about any vacancies they had heard of and in fact, the advert for the job he obtained, was brought to his attention by the project worker, though after he had spotted it on the side of a bus. He spoke very highly of the EMO project

worker saying he *'helped me up the ladder'* and was extremely appreciative of the support he received from the project:

> *'You see I would be just sat there otherwise, they took me to the Jobcentre, they showed me what to do at the Jobcentre and the different ways of looking for work, they took me to the Jobcentre, met up with different people, I think they really improved my chances otherwise you now it would be really dire. Showed the technique of looking for work…. You see whenever I've gone there they always given me time, they've taken the time to talk to me… they are very courteous, they are very knowledgeable, they've really helped me a lot.'*

Nalini had developed a close relationship with the project and kept in contact with the EMO provider. She said she had been to project 10-15 times since last interview, mainly for jobsearch. She had also now registered with Jobcentre and received help from a Punjabi speaking interpreter there. She appeared to have developed a close relationship with the NDLP Personal advisers who appeared to have become an important source of support at a particularly difficult time in Nalini's life:

> *'Oh, she's very helpful. She's like, you know, how you say someone exceeded, exceeds your expectations, she's like that. You know, like some people they all just carry out their job but she really seems to put a lot in to her work and she's got a real, in fact, she's got a real commitment to, to see people make the most of their lives. You know, she really makes you feel that you can talk openly to her about anything. You know, she doesn't make you feel silly, you know, you say one thing one day and then change your mind and say something another, she makes it and you feel as if it's alright to do that. She encourages you to be open and to speak your mind. When I speak to her it's not as if I'm speaking to an adviser, it's like I'm speaking to a sister or a friend.'*

Some participants in this group used the Jobcentre for job search, but others did not think it they were sufficiently qualified or experienced to apply for the kind of jobs advertised there. All, however, demonstrated an increased knowledge of Jobcentre services and improvements in their ability to use their facilities and interact with advisers.

Nalini's comments express the feelings of most participants in this group:

> *'It's very difficult to go directly to the Jobcentre, especially if you are not very educated, it's difficult to know what to do…. For people that have like come straight from India it's really difficult… I mean they wouldn't know that… the Jobcentre is a place you go where you want to find out about training, things like that, and jobs. Me myself I just thought the, Jobcentre was for people who were looking for jobs really, to find jobs.'*

Comparing with the Jobcentre, Dheeraj said he found the EMO more helpful and more willing to *'spend time with him'* and *'explain things'* to him, highlighting the importance of intensive and one-to-one pastoral support for job-seekers situated at considerable distance from the labour market.

Sam felt justified in not using the Jobcentre, because jobs in the Chinese catering sector are not advertised there, but in local papers and more commonly heard about through word-of-mouth. He also has a rather negative impression of Jobcentres as unhelpful and with no Chinese staff, which raises the question of whether he would go there to search for other types of jobs. Besides, he said, *'Chinese people don't go to Jobcentres'* summarising an issue raised by other Chinese participants and EMO project workers.

Ajaz visited the Jobcentre quite frequently, usually together with his friends who spoke better English and other times, he sought the help of Asian staff. His visits to the Jobcentre seemed prompted more by a threat of sanctions than an actual benefit gained. He said he had never seen a job he could apply to there as most required qualifications and was more hopeful of finding a job through friends or in the local paper:

> *'They* [the Jobcentre] *really don't cater for me,* [they] *cater for those who know the language, who are more experienced.'*

Prompted to reflect on other ways in which he thought the Jobcentre could support him, Ajaz revealed a deep pessimism about his chances of ever finding a job again for he believed the lack of jobs in the only sector (textiles) in which he is skilled and experienced as an insurmountable barrier:

> *'Well I don't know how they can be* [more helpful] *really, because there aren't that many jobs for me, you see. In my area there just aren't any jobs, so what can they do.'*

8.6.2   Group B: intermediate distance from the labour market

At their first follow-up interviews, most of those in the intermediate group had moved closer to the labour market. Ajmal, Salahaddin, and Angelique had all found jobs. Angelique's papers had come through and with her new NI number she soon found work as a kitchen assistant and waitress via the Jobcentre. The job was around 25/30 hours a week and she had arranged to have two days off so she could attend college and finish her IT/business course. At her final interview Angelique, was still in the same job but was now looking for something better paid where she could make use of the confidence she felt she had gained. Despite the fact it was not proving easy to find work that fitted around her two college days she was determined to finish her course. Salahadin, and Ajmal had also found part-time employment so they could continue with their studies. Ajmal still had several months to go on his IT course with EMO provider but felt the course was useful and he was enjoying it.

Ajmal had been offered three interviews and three jobs, including one for a major retailer, about which he was particularly proud, as it had been a very tough interview. Unfortunately, they had wanted him to work Fridays, one of his college days, and he had therefore not taken up this post. Eventually he had accepted a job in a fast food outlet, which, as it was on Saturdays and Sundays, did not affect his studies. He expanded more of his story in the second interview and explained that he had some retail experience in Afghanistan, helping to run the family business, and

that this had helped in job interviews. He also went into more detail about his dreams for the future and explained that although he wanted a job it was education rather than money that was his priority:

> *'My main dream is to get to higher education, get a degree, in anywhere. And hopefully when I finish these courses and I've got a job, I would go to do Access course for university. This is a long plan for my future, I want to go to a higher degree.'*

Salahaddin had progressed a great deal since the first interview. He had moved out of the temporary communal house that he was sharing and into his own flat, so appeared much more independent. His English had improved and he was now doing a full-time course at a local college. He had also found a cleaning job via Jobcentre Plus and was now working 16 hours a week. In this interview he was more confident about finding work and said he was still looking for a full-time job, however, he recognised that the main thing holding him back was his English. He gave more detail on his ideal job, which would be linked with his existing skills. He explained that he was good at sewing women's clothes but recognised that this might not be possible and reiterated that he was willing to take any job.

Ajmal was not available for further interviews so it was not possible to follow his progress beyond a 6 month period. Salahaddin was interviewed twice more over the remaining months evaluation. He found a full-time job sewing via an advertisement in the Jobcentre where he had been doing job search and managed to continue his ESOL classes part time. He still hoped to find a better job and was checking job advertisements but he was satisfied with his current situation and enjoyed his work although they had offered him no formal contract, which worried him slightly. His trajectory was a positive one and all his movements had been in the direction of his goal but he had also moved through the necessary stages very quickly for someone who had had significant barriers to overcome. For Salahaddin his success appeared to be driven by his strong work ethos illustrated by attitude to job search and help from the Jobcentre.

> *'I think you should work hard to find job. He (adviser) gives you advice and that's up to you. Sometimes you have to work hard, go and make interview, you have to do something.'*

At her first follow-up interview Sita had also moved closer to the labour market although her plans were longer term and she was not yet in employment. She had continued with her ESOL classes, was signed up about to start a childcare course run by the project and was optimistic about her future work plans. Henri's situation was less positive and in terms of mapping a trajectory he had remained in the same position. He was continuing with his university course which he enjoyed and had initially found a part time kitchen porter job that he could fit in around his studies. However he had left the job after a few weeks, as he was unable to pay his rent on his £4.20 an hour wages. The promised pay increase 'after training' had never materialised.

Henri had other interviews set up but he was clearly disillusioned about finding catering work that paid adequately and jobs that were commensurate with his experience. At his second follow-up interview he was doing agency chef work cooking school meals, but again this did not fit easily round his college days and he had recognised that it might not be possible to find a part-time job that enabled him to come off benefits. His six-month appointment with the Jobcentre was coming up and he was hoping to talk to them about finding work in the music industry as he felt that if he could get a full time job like this he would be prepared to give up his course. He was no longer in contact with the EMO provider although he thought he might use them in the future. They had not really been able to provide him with the jobs he wanted.

Sebe, like Henri, had managed to find agency work in care to tide her over but still counted herself as looking for work. She had continued to send off applications mainly for housing and social care and was also undergoing further job search training with an employment consultancy organisation, which she had hoped would lead to work, although this was looking increasingly unlikely. She had found this disappointing, but at the same time, felt that taking part in the course had increased her self-confidence. She talked briefly at this stage about going back to university to study social care. At her final interview she had taken out an £8000 pound career development loan and embarked on a computer networking course, despite having little vocational motivation for this type of work. She had been attracted by the provider's claim that they guaranteed jobs at the end of the course, but these claims appeared over-inflated. Sebe was waiting to complete her exams. She had found the course hard but was still hopeful about the future and her dream of having a professional career. Sebe had moved closer to the labour market in that she had more qualifications and work experience, but it was not clear if these would be enough to find a job.

Only one member of this group who was looking for work had not managed to find work at all at their first follow-up interviews. Jumila had completed a number of application forms but found she was rarely called to interview, and had no job outcomes from the interviews she had been offered. In the phase 1 interview she had explained that her 'last resort' had been a two-week unpaid training course offered by a food retailer, which would almost definitely lead to a job, and the project worker had set this up for her. However the course was full-time and her local Jobcentre had refused to let her continue, leaving her back where she started. She was using the EMO project less as it became clear that the job opportunities they provided her were not going to come to anything. On a personal level, Jumila's mother had returned from Somalia and was seeking to impose her own ideas of a suitable career, and this was also proving disruptive. She was unavailable for subsequent interviews as she had moved to a different city to live with her mother.

The longitudinal interviews also revealed a growing perception amongst two members of this group that there was discrimination within the job market. Jumila felt that a question about wearing the *hijab* in an interview had annoyed the interviewer, and contributed to her not being offered a job. Ajmal, who had made

many job applications at phase one without being called for a single interview, decided to omit his ethnicity from application forms, at which point he was offered three interviews. Sebe wondered if her age was affecting the way employers viewed her application. Apart from those on training the contact with EMO providers had declined by the first and second follow up interviews. Sebe had stopped attending the EMO project by the third interview, was ignoring their attempts to contact her, and seemed frustrated and even embarrassed at their concern about whether she had made any *'progress'*. She blamed herself: *'They tried, but I doesn't respond.'* Her example highlights how fragile the relationships are with clients and how quickly participants can lose confidence or give up contacting a project.

8.6.3 Closest to the labour market

By the time of the first follow-up interviews, and in subsequent follow-up interviews, there had been little change in orientation towards work of those closest to the labour market, in the sense that all wished to gain or retain paid employment. By the end of their final longitudinal interviews, most members of group C were in paid employment, though not always 'secure' employment. Unsurprisingly, given the varied nature of the group, the issues they encountered were diverse.

Moving out of paid work had prompted some participants to rethink their long-term plans. Kai Ti had moved from employment to unemployment and at her first follow-up interview, had been focusing on how to improve her longer-term prospects in the UK labour market. She was unsure about her next steps. She had resigned from her cleaning job because of ill-health and while keen to find another job, felt that she needed a break and was unsure about what she could do in the future. She emphasised the desire for 'a good job' in the sense of meaningful work, downplaying the importance of money:

> *'I'd like to take a job after having a break. I hope to get a meaningful job which can help others including Chinese and foreign people. I don't care much about money, but I just want to get a meaningful job.'*

In common with several participants, Kai Ti continued to receive job search help from her EMO project and support with training. For example, at L1 she was visiting the EMO project about every two weeks and attending English classes. A project worker has provided her with information about jobs and helped her to complete forms from Jobcentre Plus and job applications. He has also recommended a new computer course to her, based at the project.

By L2 Kai Ti had done the computer course, was still taking English classes and continued to make job applications. She was disheartened by her lack of progress, feeling that the main barriers were her ESOL needs and age.

> Interviewer: *'So you feel that it was mainly the problem of language?'*
>
> Kai Ti: *'Yes. Just as they use knives and forks and we use chopsticks. It is impossible for me to adapt to this life. The problem with age also makes it quite difficult to learn English. Your life style and environment do not allow you to learn much. Because I*

> *am living alone, it is impossible that everyone will speak English with me on the streets. I am looking for opportunities (to practise English) but I do not know how to find them.'*

At L2 Kai Ti also felt negative about her treatment by the Jobcentre. She had started a part-time job cooking for old people for ten hours a week. She was coming under increased pressure from the Jobcentre who reminded her that she had been in receipt of state benefits for four years and that she was not allowed to work for over sixteen hours per week. She stopped the part-time job and had to visit the Jobcentre more regularly demonstrating her job search activity and had eventually stopped her English classes, in spite of continuing to feel that language needs were a barrier to paid employment, to do a more vocational catering course instead.

Loh had received useful advice from a project worker on how to go about training as an HGV driver. For some participants, the main contribution made by their projects was advice on routes into future employment, though this could generate new barriers to be overcome. While Loh had left his construction job and he questioned the extent to which the EMO project had met his support needs, the project worker's advice and the ensuing support of an action team had set him on a path that would soon lead him to HGV training. This is indicative of how EMO project workers can and do help participants access knowledge about the UK system, widening awareness of potential opportunities. Taking the path of HGV training meant that he had to get his driving credentials recognised in the UK. On his own initiative, Loh was also taking an English course with Learn Direct and felt that it was helping to improve his skills.

Nandini had a particularly positive experience with an EMO project, whose intervention had set her on a career path. Having tried the Jobcentre to find a second part-time job, her sister told her that there was an EMO project helping Asian people look for jobs. She made an appointment at the project, filled in some forms and secured an interview for her for a trainee legal secretary post in a local law firm. She got the post and received three months of training during which the EMO project paid her wages. Nandini described how her self-esteem had grown during this period, as she became more confident in picking up the phone and greeting clients and she learnt audio-typing. An EMO project worker had visited her two or three times to offer support and check that she was satisfied with her placement. By the time of her second follow-up interview her post had been confirmed as permanent, her salary being paid by her employer at the National Minimum Wage. She was content, with no inclination to move:

> *'I was quite happy that they found me this job you know because at the end of the day a job is a job.'*

Other members of group C had more specific aspirations, including several examples of graduates in or trying to (re)enter the IT field, emphasised that a significant barrier to attaining employment was the industrial climate, one of mergers and takeovers fuelling employment insecurity for those seeking entry or re-entry to IT jobs. They were also acutely aware of the importance of ongoing learning to keep skills up-to-date in a fast changing occupational scene.

By the first longitudinal interview Sulekha had passed one IT course with her EMO project and had started a further six months course, with the blessing of the Jobcentre. As at her first interview, she only *'slightly agreed'* that she had relevant work experience and skills, but continued to feel that the EMO training was boosting her confidence and was something constructive to be engaged in while looking for paid work. On the insistence of the Jobcentre, she had started to attend mandatory active job search sessions for four hours per week and had set herself the target of finding work, which she was happy to do. She continued to find the EMO project more useful than the Jobcentre and emphasised the need to recognise that many more people were going to university and in need of support in the graduate labour market:

> *'I think training centres like this* [are] *probably more catering for, you know, the IT graduate, so you know they're probably more helpful than, you know, than the Jobcentre. I mean they don't help graduates at all so, um, you know I think that's wrong, because there's a lot of graduates out there.'*

Her one criticism of the EMO project was that it did not provide enough hands-on experience. Nevertheless, the industrial climate was shaping Sulekha's plans. While she was clearly pursuing a strategy of re-entry to the IT sector, she was also trying to keep her options open because of the insecurity of the sector. She was thinking of trying something like sociology or a business degree:

> *'Just get out of computing a bit because I don't want to put all my eggs in one basket and that think 'yeah that's it' because like computing there's not really a future out there at the moment you know.'*

At his first longitudinal interview Milat had enrolled for an MSc in Computing, seeing keeping skills up-to-date as crucial for achieving his goal of resuming his career in the IT sector. He was still looking for jobs, but felt that evidence of learning helped moderate employer concerns about the employment gaps of job applicants. Milat had broadened his search in terms of types of job being looked for, including registration at over 200 employment agencies, however, he was reluctant to move out of the area where he lived with his young family. Not all EMO participants found their projects supportive or effective. Milat had a very negative experience with his project. He had needed to get his CV printed very quickly because a potential employer was guaranteeing interviews for a particular job. However, when he went to the project there was only one computer for general use and a project worker was using it. An argument ensued, the situation getting quite tense and leaving Milat feeling very disenchanted with what he described as a project with poor resources and 'unapproachable' staff. At the first of his follow-up interviews he had given up on the EMO project and joined a Chamber of Commerce scheme offering job search facilities, which he found more effective. Like others at a similar distance to the labour market, such as Ruth and Errol there was a mismatch between participants' self-perceived needs and the ability of the EMO project, and Jobcentres, to deliver on them. However, Ruth and Errol were both impressed with the high level of social support that they had obtained from EMO project workers, who had adopted an informal mentoring role for a range of project participants. By the time of his second

follow-up interview six months later, Milat had found permanent, full-time employment in what he described as his ideal job. On the suggestion of a friend, rather than the Jobcentre or EMO project, he had spent a month and a half at an executive programme centre geared towards the job search needs of professionals. He was programming and developing websites. In spite of his evident progress and satisfaction his new company had announced that redundancies were on the horizon, related to plans to outsource some of its operations. By the time of the third follow-up interview, Milat's manager had advised him to look for another job and he was applying for ten to fifteen jobs per week.

Other group C longitudinal participants including Errol and Ruth, had also entered employment by the end of the evaluation, though following different trajectories that were shaped by a range of factors. At first interview, Errol's plans to improve his labour market prospects by obtaining accreditation as a Microsoft certified systems engineer were being undermined by his bank's refusal to given him a Career Development Loan. He contacted the EMO project to see if it could help identify potential sources of funding to help him complete the course. Errol, ideally, wanted to set up his own business but in the meantime wanted a job, even if it meant being under-employed. Again, he felt that the Jobcentre could not cater for someone at his level and that it could have been more supportive by simply knowing something, anything, about the IT industry:

> *'What they call an IT job is when you sit there for five pounds an hour and type data into the screen like a mad person. That's their jobs.'*

Aged 40, he felt that the interaction of age and race discrimination and a further form of discrimination based on employer's risk aversion were contributing to a growing collection of job rejections. He tried to articulate his feelings and perceptions thus:

> *'I think people look at me sometimes with regards to employment and they're scared because they under, they look at me and they know that the job I'm coming for I might not have in two years' time, I might have your job, and it scares them. ..If somebody says to me, how did you get on with people who dislike you because of your colour at a job interview, I tell them the truth, I don't get on with people like those, I distance myself from people like those. Things like that lose me jobs, I know that.'*

He had been given advice by the EMO project on how to set up a business plan. This was not a role that the project was funded to provide, but he was making no headway with securing funds for his studies, though acutely aware of the importance of further qualifications for his career development. Errol was angry and distressed. This was the first time he had signed on since leaving school at 16. His two other periods of employment had been brief, a few weeks on each occasion, and he had felt in control. His distress was compounded by personal problems. However, by his first follow-up interview he was feeling more satisfied with life having found a job as a computer officer in a local school, after seeing an advert in the local newspaper, not the Jobcentre. He continued to view the Jobcentre as 'a waste of time', simply

putting him forward as an applicant for unsuitable positions. While the new job was not ideal, he was able to continue his studies and to nurse his plans for self-employment. Consequently he felt more in control of his life.

Ruth had one of the most 'up and down' trajectories in group C. At the time of the first follow-up interview, she had moved from unemployment to temporary employment, after a year searching for paid work, and her experiences reveal a strong 'work ethic', which was shared by many participants across the three groups. While initially wary of taking a job outside her chosen career path at phase 1, six months later she was working for the subscriptions department of a financial magazine. She was good at the job, but not enjoying it, finding it boring and demoralising. Having said this, Ruth had changed her views about taking jobs that she did not want:

> 'I was unemployed and that was really, really depressing and I will never go back there again. I would rather do a job which I can't stand, that I do now, and just get up every morning and do something. When I come home, I have got my own time. I really value my own time.'

Ruth was still working towards combining work in film production design and having her own business. She had found her temporary job in subscriptions with the help of a friend, rather than the EMO project. The development of her business plans owed much to the support of the tutors on her course. Through this course and their support she had grown more confident about contacting artists and had secured commitments from them to supply her with their work. Her experience is illustrative of how there were some ongoing relationships with EMO projects even after paid employment was secured. Although she had moved into temporary employment, she continued to visit the EMO project receiving advice and social support from project workers for her longer-term plans, which helped her confidence. She enthused about her relationship with the project staff:

> 'They are good because I do trust them, you know, because if I anything does come up I believe it's not like trying to get this in, like most recruitment places try and do they try and like get your C.V. together and shove you off. But I think now [my project worker] knows what I like or not which is really important…'

Her new job also increased her confidence in engaging with people, skills that she was transferring to her new business venture. She felt that she needed even more confidence and an improved business climate to see her plans through. By her second follow-up interview Ruth had left the sales job and was doing some voluntary work with a production company. However she was feeling frustrated because she couldn't afford to pay rent and was homeless, relying on friends to let her sleep on their floors. By this point she was at a low ebb, feeling downhearted and low, having lost self-confidence and self-esteem. During this time her health had deteriorated, at least in part linked to the stress of her work situation. In sum, by this stage Ruth had taken a step backwards. Through this difficult time she continued to seek social support from the EMO project. By her third final interview she had recovered and had just been offered a permanent job as a recruitment consultant by

a recruitment agency. She was seriously considering taking this job and using the period of greater financial security that it would generate to support activities that would help her pursue other aspirations, which were still very much alive.

8.7   Conclusions

For participants furthest from the labour market, the role of English language skills in enabling or disabling a participant to operate independently in the labour market cannot be over-emphasised. Undertaking further work-related training or planning and managing a job search strategy all depend on being functional in the English language. Most older participants in this group described the difficulty of learning English at a later age, particularly if they had not received any formal education before. Their experiences also suggest that learning enough English, takes longer than perhaps expected and requires an investment of time and energy which some found hard to make as they faced a dilemma between developing skills and earning a living. It is significant that the only Group A participant who moved into paid employment is the one who managed to overcome this barrier and was subsequently able to concentrate his efforts on job search and improving work related skills. Furthermore, without this leap in language skills, the range of employment opportunities remained limited and had particularly severe consequences for older workers whose skills and experience are undervalued in the current labour market. Participants interviewed for this evaluation repeatedly emphasised that the type of environment they worked in did not necessitate learning much English or gaining other qualifications and they found themselves in a labour market which did not want what they had to offer and furthermore, this change caught them at an advanced age, which they found to be a barrier both to learning and job search. Their case also serves to illustrate the complexity involved in evaluating the weight of individual and extrinsic factors that constitute employability.

Although most participants in group A had used the services of the EMO provider for a limited period, all had benefited from it in many different ways. The intensive and one-to-one support provided by projects appears to have played a significant role in encouraging them to engage with mainstream services and agencies. Moreover, equipping these participants with the basic skills required in undertaking job-search and introducing them to the Jobcentre seems to have helped them overcome some of their fears and misconceptions. EMO providers provided a safe environment for these participants where they could begin to tackle their basic skills shortages. While for most participants this did not lead to immediate employment outcomes, the importance of these small initial steps should not be underestimated. Dheeraj is an example of the extension of horizons travelled possibilities that can follow such small steps.

There was a lot of variety amongst group B participants. Although almost all were highly motivated, some were close to the labour market and on the borders of group A, having had previous work experience, whilst others had more needs such as ESOL and barriers such as childcare and were closer to the boundaries of group C. Many

of the group B participants faced the dilemma of having to find short term employment to support themselves which was poor quality and low skilled when it would be more strategic in the long term to invest time in increasing their skills and move into skilled and well paid careers in IT, housing, music etc. Most of this group moved closer to the labour market by taking the option of poor quality jobs but this raised the issues that finding work was not an end in itself. Temporary agency work and poor quality jobs are a short-term solution and clients take on a whole set of new problems connected with, short-term contracts and redundancy. It was possible to see how several could soon find themselves out of work again.

Participants in Group C also came from a variety of educational and employment backgrounds. Most were well equipped to undertake job search and had high level skills sought after in the employment market. Nevertheless, some needed and benefited from more specialist and guidance offered by the EMO providers. This included help with information about jobs in a particular sector, careers advice and guidance in identifying further training needs and opportunities. Others needed help with improving more specific job search skills such as filling in application forms, writing CVs and interview techniques. The guidance of project workers appeared to have put some participants on the right path, helping them clarify their goals and future plans and identify the steps they need to take in order to achieve their ideal jobs.

A key difficulty for participants in this group was the need to strike a balance between working to get their ideal jobs, which in most cases was a job appropriate to their education and skills, and remaining in the labour market which may mean doing a job which they would not choose. Participants in such situations were waiting for a breakthrough, which, in fact, could be further delayed by taking jobs outside of the field of work in which they planned to establish a career. For some, including those with some years of experience but slightly out of date qualifications, finding the money to fund further training was a major barrier and could lead to lengthy gaps in labour market participation.

There were a number of graduates drawing on EMO projects and the longitudinal strand of the research provided an opportunity to not only underline the mismatch between their job search support needs and Jobcentre provision, but also the ways they have sought out ways to fill those support gaps. This has involved EMO projects, the advice of family and friends or indeed project workers who became friends, providing examples of how access to information can raise awareness and social networks can be extended, often facilitating inclusion.

Personal problems such as homelessness, ill health in the family, mental health issues and other family issues also appeared to be significant factors in individual decisions and actions related to employment and such issues affected the progress of participants in all three groups. Some participants interviewed for this evaluation suffered personal tragedies or major family problems, which either resulted in the scaling down of all training or job search activities (e.g. imprisonment of son abroad) or shelving of all other activities for the near future (e.g. husband attempts suicide).

This chapter has highlighted the variety of issues affecting participants' employability. It demonstrates the conflict which may exist between short-term work and long-term career aspirations; the current situation of older workers who have remained in low-skilled work because of language problems shows that younger people may be making a rational decision in choosing to deal with their skills issues as a priority, even where this means deferring employment.

Progress made is influenced by the multitude of issues affecting participants' employability including skills, experience, attitudes and personal circumstances and external labour market conditions, all of which interact and draw the parameters of possible outcomes. The variety of changes (i.e. forwards, backwards, sideways or stagnation) observed suggests that employability is a dynamic state; it has many dimensions and is constantly evolving, not in a vacuum but in labour markets that are also subject to varying degrees of volatility and change. Individuals' 'position' on the continuum of distance to the labour market is not a constant. It changes and not always for the better, and is influenced by some factors beyond the control of individuals or EMO project workers.

9 Conclusions and implications for policy

9.1 Summary

- This chapter considers the conclusions and policy implications arising from the research. It begins by considering the impact of EMO on participants, and goes on to consider the issues faced by providers, including those which were specific to the different types of approaches funded.

- EMO had a major impact in increasing ethnic minorities' awareness of employment and training opportunities, especially among Indian and Pakistani women. The language and outreach skills of EMO workers were crucial in reaching these groups.

- There was increased use of Jobcentre Plus services, but not all EMO clients were willing to register with Jobcentre Plus in the short-term, and some were already registered, but not making full use of the services on offer, so that not all this work generated outcome payments. The Ethnic Minorities Flexible Fund may be a source of funding to allow this valuable work to continue.

- EMO helped people move closer to the labour market, but some of those with multiple problems remained at a considerable disadvantage even after accessing training and support.

- EMO helped people into work, but it tended to be those who had been out of work for the shortest periods who generated employment outcomes. There were employment successes with people who faced significant barriers, but these often took a year or more, and did not generate outcome payments. This requires addressing to provide incentives to work with the hardest to help.

- There were some issues common to almost all EMO providers. These included capacity issues, implementation problems and issues relating to the administration and management of the pilot. Many of these have now been addressed, but some were an issue for most of the initial two-year period.

- Approach 1 and 3 providers were anxious to continue working with people furthest from the labour market, but needed additional outcome measures to make this financially viable.

- Approach 2 providers felt that they needed links with clients, in order to attract employers. Those providing diversity and consultancy training but without a client base found it harder to recruit employers, and this provision sat oddly with a mainly customer-facing pilot.

9.2   Introduction

This final chapter draws together some overall conclusions from the evaluation, and identifies areas where the EMO pilot offered valuable and innovative services, as well as areas which would benefit from further thought and refinement in taking the programme forward.

The chapter begins by considering the impact on participants, and then considers issues which arose for EMO providers, and ways in which these might be addressed. It goes on to identify the particular successes and problems experienced by customer-facing (approach 1 and approach 3) and employer facing (approach 2) providers, and ways in which these could inform future employment initiatives with ethnic minority groups.

9.3   The impact of EMO on participants

9.3.1   Increasing awareness of available services

The EMO initiative succeeded in reaching many people from ethnic minority groups who would not otherwise have been aware of the range of employment and training opportunities available to them, including, but not limited to, Jobcentre Plus services. Around a quarter of all those who used EMO services were not claiming any benefit at this stage. Groups which are known to be under-represented as users of Jobcentre Plus services, such as Indian, and Pakistani and women, the Chinese community, and people from smaller ethnic groups such as the Somali and Turkish communities were notable for their take-up of EMO. Recruiting workers from within 'hard to reach' communities, who had an intimate knowledge of the employment issues faced, spoke community languages, worked in ways which respected cultural sensitivities, and whose personal commitment often far exceeded their contractual obligations, was the key to success. Going out to the places where communities lived and socialised was important, as was making provision available in non-threatening and user-friendly venues. The use of media, such as television, radio and the Internet, enabled EMO providers to reach clients who would never otherwise have walked into a Jobcentre or a community centre, overcoming a key barrier to access.

Some people reached in this way went on to access Jobcentre Plus provision as a direct result of their contact with the EMO provider, around a third being referred to

Jobcentre Plus, and 12 per cent establishing an LMS record. While some people were very happy with the service received, others appear to have been less satisfied, and to have had minimal contact with the Jobcentre. Some EMO participants did not go on to use Jobcentre Plus services, for a variety of reasons. These included people at some distance from the labour market, who wished to explore their employment options without the requirement to make an instant commitment to job search, those looking for work but unwilling to register with Jobcentre Plus, and those who were in employment, often temporary or low-skilled work, but were seeking to improve their future prospects. Other participants (around 1 in 6) were already registered with Jobcentre Plus and had LMS records, but were often not making full use of the available services, sometimes because of ESOL needs. These types of situation did not fit well with the intended model of outreach, which anticipated that those not making use of Jobcentre Plus services would register, and which was linked to the outcome payment for an establishment of an LMS record, and therefore often did not generate outcomes. Approach 3 providers, who were able to refer participants to their own training, were in a better position than those funded only for approach 1 in this respect.

Nonetheless, this is an area where many providers carried out valuable and painstaking work. Many of those assisted by EMO providers had multiple barriers to work. Providers frequently offered clients a highly personalised service, and an intensive level of support, which was vital in helping them overcome labour market disadvantage. Other sources of funding, such as the Ethnic Minorities Flexible Fund, may be well-placed to support these types of work in the future.

9.3.2   Helping people move closer to the labour market

EMO providers were often working with people facing multiple forms of employment disadvantage. Longitudinal interviews with participants revealed a range of trajectories, most of them positive. Of those furthest from the labour market, the majority had made tangible but limited progress towards their goals, and while their employability was enhanced, they often remained disadvantaged. For some participants, EMO was an important means of refining their employment aspirations; some began to focus on longer-term goals, while others came to accept the range of work available to them within their current skill levels.

One issue explored in the evaluation was the benefits of 'ethnic matching' in working with non-employed ethnic minority groups. This emerged as a significant issue for EMO project work with some clients, particularly those with ESOL needs. However, the benefits for other clients were rather less clear, both from the perspective of participants and project workers. The pros and cons of ethnic matching is an issue that will be further explored in ongoing research into ethnic minorities' perceptions and experiences of Jobcentre Plus (Hudson *et.al,* forthcoming).

Providers highlighted the need for additional funding to meet the needs of those furthest from the labour market, and address the barriers faced. These included reimbursement of travel costs, and the provision of free childcare for women with

young children. Providers also noted that some groups were unlikely to participate in a voluntary initiative of this kind without the payment of a financial incentive, for instance for attendance at training.

9.3.3 Helping people into work

Job outcomes were an important aspect of the pilot provision. EMO providers were able to work flexibly, using their own employer networks, and some were able to place some people with particular needs, such as those with acute ESOL needs, those wanting a female-only working environment, and those needing family-friendly hours. The analysis of MI data showed that, overall, 26 per cent of participants entered employment. Project workers commented, and this was confirmed by analysis of longitudinal interviews, that participants, especially those furthest from the labour market, often obtained employment as a result of their involvement with the EMO provider, but well beyond the 13-week period where this could be claimed as an outcome. Developing a mechanism for claiming such outcomes, or linking job outcomes more closely to target group, may be important to sustain a focus on those furthest from the labour market. In its absence, and given the increased emphasis on achieving employment outcomes in the second year of the pilot, projects began to prioritise work with those closer to the labour market. This is confirmed by the MI data which showed that only 16 per cent or participants had been out of work for 2 years or more, while around half had left their last job in the previous six months.

Longitudinal analysis revealed that for many participants, support needs did not end at the point when they became able to access jobs. There was a grey area around the edges of the labour market inhabited by clients who moved in and out of employment. This movement was the result of a range of structural factors. Product market instability and labour market insecurity in areas such as IT meant that redundancies were common, and clients who did manage to get 'a foot in the door' may still return to benefits at some point in the future. Outsourcing, temporary employment, short term contracts and low quality jobs also meant that even those on the boundaries of the labour market continued to experience barriers to sustainable and desired employment; and continued to require support. It is not enough to move clients into work; they also need to be moved through this grey area on the periphery and into secure, good quality employment positions. These types of issues are gaining increasing recognition (for instance in the employment retention and advancement pilot), and the negative long-term consequences of marginal employment history were also vividly illustrated by some of the older EMO participants. Consideration of funding for additional forms of in-work support and training may therefore be merited.

9.4   Issues for EMO providers

9.4.1   Provider capacity

Many EMO providers were voluntary sector community organisations, who were working with Jobcentre Plus for the first time. This had value in attracting new client groups, including those widely recognised as under-using Jobcentre Plus services. However, it also implied a degree of inexperience, and a need for additional support. The evaluation highlighted a number of issues relating to providers' capacities, both individually and collectively, to deliver EMO, which provide indicators of the factors that might be considered in the evaluation of future tenders for similar provision. These included evidence of good management and administrative structures, including budgeting for administrative support and the costs of publicity material. Given the problems associated with the 'lone worker' model, it may be desirable to avoid this as far as possible in future. Issues may also arise where a provider states an intention to serve a particular client group (e.g. Chinese) and a tightly defined geographical area, as the scattered residential patterns of some ethnic groups mean that they cross administrative boundaries.

In thinking about how EMO provision adds value to existing services, issues to consider include the extent to which it complements the work of other local agencies, and whether there is likely to be undue competition or referral gaps. This includes a consideration of additional funding sources within provider organisations, and the extent to which EMO is complementary to, or has the potential to duplicate, existing provision, including statutory provision such as New Deal. Whilst projects that were working on a number of different provisions were likely to be better supported financially and to cross subsidise EMO, there was also a danger that they could fail to engage with the pilot as distinctive from their other initiatives.

Innovative projects take time to develop, and may not generate outcomes during their first months of operation. It would therefore be helpful to allow an element of funding for developmental time prior to the proposed start date for the provision, and for first year targets to reflect the likely pattern of service take-up. It would also be helpful for the funding regime to allow some flexibility within years, so that providers were able to respond to changing patterns of demands as and when they occur (for instance, by recruiting a part-time worker to meet the needs of a new client group, or increasing administrative support as take-up increases). A greater level of clarity from the outset regarding the exact meaning of contract terms would have benefited both providers and Jobcentre Plus staff, and this was an area where a good deal of management effort was expended in the second year of the pilot. This included some quite central issues such as defining the audit trail needed for each payment (which seemed to be particularly problematic for some approach 3 providers), establishing whether the EMO project was intended as stand-alone provision or complementary to other funding, and whether or not providers were permitted to claim simultaneous outcomes under EMO and other funding sources such as ESF under co-financing arrangements.

An additional point, made by providers as the pilot drew to the end of its second year, was the importance of receiving prompt decisions regarding continued funding, so as not to lose experienced staff and capacity.

9.4.2   Implementing the EMO policy

The guidance issued on the delivery of the EMO pilot was regarded by many as complex and difficult to interpret[12], and often resulted in queries being referred to Regional or Head Office, which were frequently not resolved for some time. A lack of clarity about particular issues sometimes led to inconsistencies between regions, and even within Jobcentre Plus districts. Specific changes to policy (such as the change of eligibility for establishing an LMS record from 18 months to six months after a previous record, in May 2003) were not always communicated promptly to all providers, leaving some at a disadvantage. The pilot would also have benefited from greater clarity regarding respective roles of District and Region (and policy team), since providers sometimes felt that they were receiving conflicting sets of messages. This occurred not only in relation to the more technical aspects of delivery, but also in terms of broader policy intentions, and particularly whether or not initiatives were targeted solely or mainly at those who were hardest to engage and furthest from the labour market.

Some of the issues which caused providers the most headaches were ones which might reasonably have been anticipated, and made clear to projects from the outset. These included the question of which providers were eligible for outcome payments where both had worked with a client, and the legitimacy or otherwise of co-financing. Providers wanted to see simpler and more explicit guidance, which might for instance include a 'FAQ' (frequently asked questions) section[13]. At the same time, there was a need for a flexible relationship between the project, JCP and DWP in terms of the way the guidance was interpreted and the amount of leeway projects were given to make the initiative work. Areas were very different, and the strengths and strategies of projects were also distinctive. Projects where local DPQMT had allowed them to rewrite their tender and broaden or tighten particular boundaries were much more successful and satisfied with the initiative overall than those tied to their original bid.

9.4.3   Administration of the EMO pilot

Providers and Jobcentre Plus staff alike argued for a simplification in the paperwork, which was seen to be unwieldy and complex. One suggestion was that a single form be used for all EMO approaches, with a column to indicate which was applicable, while another was to colour code approaches. Providers, especially those new to working for Jobcentre Plus, would have welcomed training in how to complete the appropriate documentation, and for new staff as they joined. Providers also

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[12] This was subsequently redrafted.

[13] The recently introduced EMO newsletter contains a FAQ section.

commented that they needed prompt feedback when they were failing to complete paperwork in the required fashion; in many cases this had not come to light for several months, and it was impossible to revise the records for work already completed, causing problems for both parties. There was considerable evidence of a need for improved tracking of EMO participants. Much demographic information about participants was included in a form which did not trigger payment, and not all projects were systematic about returning these, as is evident from the discussion of missing data in chapter three. Making the link with the outcome payment might improve performance in this respect. Claiming job outcomes, and particularly claiming outcome payments for employment sustained for 13 weeks or more, was a problem for providers. This was because they were dependent upon clients telling them they had found a job (which did not always happen) and on employers confirming the period of employment, which many failed to do, some citing data protection issues as a barrier to compliance. The suggestion was made that providers would benefit from Jobcentre Plus taking a more active role in tracking 'job start' and 'sustained employment' targets.

A point raised by some providers working with particular communities was that the ethnicity data collected, based on the census definition, did not adequately reflect their client base or allow them to demonstrate that they were meeting their stated target group. One example given was a project working with Turkish and Kurdish clients, all of whom were recorded as 'other' ethnic origin.

9.4.4   Management and support issues

All EMO providers argued that they would have benefited from Jobcentre Plus staff (both management and front-line) being more aware and better briefed from the start of the initiative, and from this information being reinforced as new people joined or moved posts. The timing of the initiative, during the period at which the Employment Service and Benefits Agency merged to become Jobcentre Plus, was obviously a factor which militated against this to some degree.

Approach 2 providers felt that their EMO provision was particularly poorly understood, and that the work done was not well captured by the outcome measures adopted for its evaluation. Many outreach (approach 1) providers felt the need for practical input from Jobcentre Plus staff, for instance to attend workshops and outreach sessions, which did not always sit well with Jobcentre Plus priorities and routines. Because of the flexible way providers worked, this could also involve a demand for out of hours working.

Cultural awareness and sensitivity in Jobcentre Plus, for example regarding the effects of fasting in Ramadan and cultural differences in communication also emerged as a theme. Lack of awareness was not ubiquitous, and relationships were very good in some areas, an issue reinforcing the point regarding inconsistency in standards in Jobcentre Plus service provision stet. This is a theme that will be explored further in ongoing research.

It was important for providers to have a designated point of contact for their day-to-day work with Jobcentre Plus, and most did have this in place. Approach 1 and three providers expressed a strong preference for designated (ideally named contact) referral points for clients, in order to avoid disappointed expectations, which tended to reflect negatively on participants' experiences of projects themselves. Providers and Jobcentre staff alike would also have benefited from more clarity about the intended direction (i.e. from Jobcentre Plus to project or vice versa) and purpose of referrals.

In the areas where these existed, provider forums were a valued form of support, as were the two provider events held in January 2003 and January 2004. It appeared that local forums took some time to become established, and in some cases that EMO providers had been the catalyst for their formation, rather than this being instigated by Jobcentre Plus. The tendering process and the information provided to, and gathered from, bidders should ideally form the basis for support structures from an early stage in a pilot of this kind. Some providers argued that those new to working for Jobcentre Plus were at a disadvantage, and that having more experienced providers serve on a steering group or similar structure could help to build capacity. Some projects argued against competition between providers, and suggested that an alternative might include the establishment of city-wide targets, since competition for clients was seen to have militated against the development of synergy and partnership working in some areas.

9.5 Issues for approaches 1 and 3

9.5.1 Lack of clarity over the intended beneficiaries of the EMO pilot

Perhaps the single most important issue to be highlighted by approach 1 and three providers was a lack of clarity as to the intended beneficiaries of the initiative. Many had understood the EMO pilot as being geared towards those furthest from the labour market, and welcomed this remit. However, the nature of the outcome measures created some disincentives to working with the most challenging groups, and meant that most projects were unable to finance their work with the hardest to help. As a result, many moved away from working with this target group over time, and concentrated on participants who would generate outcome measures, who tended to be closer to the labour market. The outcome relating to the establishment of an LMS record was clearly aimed at reaching those who were not in contact with Jobcentre Plus services. However, it did not serve this aim well in practice, for three main reasons. One was that many participants already had LMS records (and were thus ineligible from the point of view of an outcome payment), although they were not necessarily receiving any substantive service from Jobcentre Plus, and in many cases were in need of support in relation to employment issues. The second was that some people were unwilling to register with Jobcentre Plus, because of stigma or previous negative experiences. Thirdly, in order to attain their LMS targets, some providers targeted those who did not have LMS records (such as people leaving

college and workers facing redundancy), but who were least in need of their services. The development of interim measurements capturing distance travelled is important if such work is to be adequately recompensed.

The pressure on providers to obtain rapid employment outcomes also detracted from the 'hard to reach' focus as those clients who were really 'hard to reach' could take two or three years to move into employment and there was no mechanism for rewarding work with participants on a long term basis once they had been outreached and moved into training and job skills provision. What made this aim contradictory was that the projects working with clients a long way from the labour market stressed that the barriers these clients faced necessitated building up long term relationships of trust which could not be achieved if the target mechanisms of the provision entailed simply referring them on to another provision. The issue of whether graduates were legitimate clients for EMO provision was a contentious and caused problems for some projects working with large numbers of graduates. The original remit of EMO was to increase the numbers of black and ethnic minority groups in employment, and whilst this was couched in terms of helping the unemployed there appeared to be some scope within the remit of the initiative to help the underemployed, particularly as this could be a result of discrimination. There was also a real need identified by approach 2 providers and professional employers (lawyers, accountants, IT firms) for highly skilled candidates from the ethnic minority community. However, projects offering high quality IT training courses to ethnic minority graduates found they were unsupported by their local Jobcentre, which had not interpreted worked with graduates as being a legitimate focus for EMO; an understanding that is at odds with the broader Jobcentre Plus aim of tackling underemployment and discrimination. EMO has a role helping ethnic minority graduates to gain quality jobs rather than being forced into marginal or non-graduate jobs, thus avoiding long-term labour market disadvantage.

9.5.2 Valuing multi-dimensional support and measuring interim outcomes

Several projects felt that much of the work they put in with clients was never rewarded because, vital though their support was as a stage in the process of getting someone into work, it was not one of pilot's recognised outcomes: training, Jobcentre Plus registration or employment. These included time invested in informal mentoring, organising placements and job fairs. For example, one project worker explained the importance of work placements for her clients. Many clients had never worked before, at least not in the UK, and wanted to get some work experience. In addition the local training project that this project used as a resource wanted to send their students on work placements, but did not have the resources or the community contacts to set this up effectively. They wanted to refer their clients to the project worker who was particularly good at organising placements. The project worker, however, was spending a large amount of time organising work placements were simply not recognised by the outcomes she was allowed to claim for. She felt a work placement would be a really useful outcome as it was a crucial bridging stage and very time consuming for her.

Job fairs were a key part of the provision provided by specific projects from all approaches. They were particularly useful for employer approach 2 projects, as they provided the projects with a way to get the clients in contact with potential ethnic minority employees, but they were also useful for community projects whose clients were quite close to the labour market and just needed wider opportunities. The important aspect was to ensure that such activities were financed by the EMO initiative, rather than being supported by the project's infrastructure.

9.6   Approach 2 providers and work with employers

Working with employers is a lengthy process and one not well suited to a two-year pilot. However, the work undertaken by the providers (approach 2 and otherwise) in the sample raised some crucial questions with regard to the benefits of working with employers in a mainly client facing outreach provision.

One important lesson that came from the evaluation was that engaging employers, for many providers, was an important part of their work with clients, and the division of approaches into employer and non-employer facing was artificial and not particularly useful. An alternative for the future might be that providers are given the option of taking on and achieving employer related targets, such as running job fairs, setting up recruitment databases or systems for putting employers in touch with clients, and possibly even running workshops putting employers in touch with ethnic minority community groups. There was clearly a need for a more holistic approach, adequately reflecting the processes involved in facilitating an into-work transition. To this end more links might usefully have been forged between organisations working with communities and employers wanting to hire from those communities. Providers were often in a good position to undertake these kinds of networking activities and make connections, building long-term relationships. However, given the work involved in this type of role it is crucial that such activities by providers are adequately resourced and staffed, and are recognised in the outcome structures. It is also clear that such work is not appropriate for all projects and appropriate employer facing targets need only be implemented for those projects that see it as an important strand in their provision, rather than made a requirement.

Other types of employer-facing work less directly concerned with employing EMO clients, such as the provision of diversity training and consultancy, proved very effective, particularly by the later stages of the pilot when networks and relationships had been built. Several of the employers involved were in the process of making changes to their recruitment processes and diversity policies as a result of the training. However, there was a sense that diversity training and consultancy as a separate approach did not sit easily in relation to the client outreach and 'hardest to reach' focus of the initiative as a whole, or with the Jobcentre Plus branding. Such types of provision have an important role to play but they need considerable time and possibly a more appropriate remit, different funding source, and more nuanced outcome structures. In particular, providers working with employers in this way

would need recognise and focus on the needs of different types of employers from small businesses, to large national corporations, from the professional sector to the service sector, and to tailor their provision accordingly. Consideration perhaps needs to be given to whether this work can be more effectively pursued by other agencies, such as the Race Equality Advisory Service and/or the CRE.

Appendix 1

Table 1.1   Longitudinal participants

Participant ID	Number of follow-ups and interview intervals	Notes
Saddam	First intw – October 2002 L1 – March 2003	Problems reaching some clients following the departure of ESOL teacher.
Zeynep	First intw – October 2002 L1 – May 2005	Unavailable for L2 due to family emergency (husband attempted suicide) and asked not to be contacted again.
Zafer	First intw – October 2002 L1 – April 2003 L2 – October 2003 L3 – March 2004	
Sam	First intw – October 2002 L1 – March 2003 L2 - December 2003	Not approached for L3 as L2 took place in Dec 03.
Sugharan	First intw – October 2002 L1 – July 2003 L2 – December 2003	Not approached for L3 as L2 took place in Dec 03.
Ajaz	First intw – November 2002 L1 – March 2003 L2 – October 2003 L3 – February 2004	
Vajra	First intw – November 2002 L1 – July 2003	Client not responding to calls/ letters at L2 or L3.
Dheeraj	First intw – November 2002 L1 – March 2003 L2 – October 2003 L3 – February 2004	
Babu	First intw – July 2003 L1 – October 2003 L2 – February 2004	

Continued

Table 1.1 Longitudinal participants

Participant ID	Number of follow-ups and interview intervals	Notes
Aliyah	First intw – April 2003 L1 – November 2003	Client moved to Germany, following marriage.
Satta	First intw – May 2003 L1 – November 2003 L2 – February 2004	
Firoz	First intw – April 2003 L2 – February 2004	Client did not respond at L1.
Rafiq	First intw – April 2003 L2 – February 2004	Client did not respond at L1.
Afzal	First intw – April 2003 L2 – February 2004	Client did not respond at L1.
Satar	First intw – October 2002 L1 – April 2003	Problems reaching some clients following the departure of ESOL teacher.
Henri	First intw – October 2002 L1 – April 2003 L2 – November 2003 L3 – February 2004	
Alain	First intw – October 2002 L1 – April 2003	Client declined L2, but indicated that he may be available for L3. Phone was disconnected at L3 and the project had no up to date contact details as the client had not been in touch for 9 months.
Esma	First intw – October 2002 L1 – March 2003 L2 – October 2003	Client declined L3, for lack of time.
Iman	First intw – October 2002 L1 – October 2003	Client moved out of London after L1 and did not provide contact details.
Shabdrung	First intw – October 2002 L1 – March 2003 L3 – February 2004	Client did not respond to L2 attempts.
Mahmuud	First intw – October 2002 L1 – March 2003 L2 – November 2003 L3 – February 2004	
Isoke	First intw – May 2003 L1 – October 2003 L2 – February 2004	
Earnest	First intw – April 2003 L2 – March 2004	Client not available for L1.
Teresa	First intw – March 2003 L1 – November 2003 L2 – February 2004	
Sita	First intw – March 2003 L2 – February 2004	Client was abroad at L1.

Continued

Table 1.1   Continued

Participant ID	Number of follow-ups and interview intervals	Notes
Dhab	First intw – May 2003 L1 – November 2003 L2 – February 2004	
Vahdid	First intw – May 2003 L1 – November 2003	Client visited at L2, but unable to interview, as he was extremely distressed re asylum application.
Kai Ti	First intw – October 2002 L1 – March 2003 L2 – December 2003	Not approached in Feb 04 as L2 took place in Dec 03.
Inesh	First intw – October 2002 L1 – April 2003	No further follow-ups due to interviewer issues.
Sulekha	First intw – October 2002 L1 – April 2003	No further follow-ups due to interviewer issues.
Lalaine	First intw – November 2002 L1 – April 2003 L2 – October 2003 L3 – February 2004	
Ruth	First intw – October 2002 L1 – March 2003 L2 – October 2003 L3 – February 2004	
Nellie	First intw – November 2002 L2 – December 2003	L1 conducted, but could not be transcribed for poor quality recording. Not approached for L3, as L2 took place in Dec 03.
Faye Kam	First intw – November 2002 L1 – March 2003 L2 – December 2003	L2 took place in Dec 03. Not approached again in Feb 04
Fu-Chi	First intw – November 2002 L1 – April 2003 L3 – December 2003	Client not available at L2.
An-Xi	First intw – November 2002 L1 – April 2003	Client not available at L2 and had left the country at L3.
Ethibal	First intw – October 2002 L1 – April 2003 L2 – December 2003	Not approached for L3, as L2 took place in Dec 03.
Milat	First intw – October 2002 L1 – March 2003 L2 – November 2003 L3 – February 2004	
Errol	First intw – July 2003 L2 – February 2004	Client did not respond to calls/letters at L1.
Ilesh	First intw – July 2003 L1 – October 2003 L2 – February 2004	
Surya	First intw – July 2003 L2 – February 2004	Participant abroad at L1.

Table 1.1   Continued

Participant ID	Number of follow-ups and interview intervals	Notes
Selena	First intw – May 2003 L1 – July 2003	Client not available at L2.
Odell	First intw – May 2003 L1 – October 2003 L2 – February 2004	
Nandini	First intw – May 2003 L1 – November 2003 L2 – February 2004	
Jennifer	First intw – March 2003 L1 – November 2003	Participant not available for L2 due to health reasons. Hospitalised on day of interview.
Fahmida	First intw – April 2003 L1 – November 2003 L2 – February 2004	

Notes: Following initial interviews, three follow-ups were conducted with phase a, and two with phase b participants. No explanation in the 'notes' column indicates that no particular problems were experienced with those interviews.

Appendix 2
Examples of personal profiles
for longitudinal participants

Figure A.1

Dheeraj
Male, 38
Indian Sikh

Came to the UK 5 years ago. Studied to GCSE level in India. Lives with wife and four kids.

Doesn't feel his English is very good, but says he manages many things (e.g. GP, shopping) without help.

Learned English at school in India. Attended some short courses in England and improved his English. Would consider studying English a bit more, but his priority is to find a job.

Level of English seems to be intermediate. Needs help at the JC and with form filling. Doesn't hold any vocational or higher education qualifications.

Would like to work as a religious teacher, but found the work to be temporary and very poorly paid.

He was a priest in India. Worked in a textile factory in the UK for two years. Also did some temporary religious work in local temple. Never been unemployed before. He's just registered with the JC, but has not yet used the facilities there. Looking for work in factories or transport.

Mainly worked in unskilled jobs. Looking to learn driving for jobs in transport.

He is realising that there are not many factory jobs around and he needs to look at other options.

Doesn't seem very familiar with the UK job-hunting culture. Not made any applications yet. Looking through contacts/ friends.

Feels it's his duty to provide for his family and feels depressed for not being able do so. Will consider any job, though he'd prefer a permanent one.

Picked a leaflet about the EMO provider at a local festival, about a month ago. Decided to go to seek help with job search. Found out about a couple of job opportunities through the provider. Planning to continue using their facilities until he finds a job. Has a good relation with one particular project worker.

Figure A.2

Sam
Male, 37
Chinese

Came to the UK 16 yrs ago. Left school at 15. Lives with wife & 3 children in the NE of England.

No UK recognised qualifications. Level of English is not clear, but he doesn't feel confident of seeking work outside of the ethnic Chinese labour market.

Found studying in English too difficult and did not feel confident to do any further training.

Attended a Business Accounting course when he first arrived, but not completed. Studied English for 3-4 years in total. Hoped to study further to get an office job, but later gave up on the idea.

He doesn't enjoy this type of work any more and would like to try something different, but says '*there is no way out, I cannot speak English*'. Feels under pressure to provide for his family.

Worked in Chinese restaurants as a chef and run his own take-away for a few years. Unemployed for about a year and registered with JC for two months. Wants to open his own take-away again, but also looking for a job as a chef. His wife works and parents in Hong Kong help a bit.

Work skills and experience limited to one type of job, where he did not need to speak English.

Suffered from depression. Felt supported by the EMO provider through this. Also met new people there and feels more optimistic and happier.

His wife told him about the EMO provider (she found a job with their help). He first went to seek help with job search. Received counselling for depression and due to attend a course on hygiene in catering. He has also started doing some voluntary work there.

Looking for work through contacts/friends.

Doesn't want to travel very far. Planning to continue doing some voluntary work for the EMO provider.

Figure A.3

Ajaz
Male, 49
Pakistani

Born in Pakistan. Came to the UK at 13, in 1966. No formal education in Pakistan or in the UK.

No formal training in English language.

'You cannot get that kind of job any more.'

Worked in textiles in Yorkshire until early 1990. Have been unemployed since.

Was nervous at first, but found the people friendly and that he can learn at his own pace.

Got the EMO contact from the Jobcentre 7 months ago. He's been attending English language classes two days a week. Also did some computing and woodwork.

Speaks some English, but cannot read or write. (i.e. cannot write letters, fill in application forms or read job adverts at the Jobcentre.)

'I'm too old to do this kind of work. It's very heavy, very physical work'.

Got a packing job through the EMO project recently. Went in for 1 day. Found it very difficult and did not go back.

Feels that he's got enough to keep him busy, but he is ill and feels unhappy without a job.

Lives with his wife, 3 sons and daughter. One son in work, one unemployed and the other son and daughter at school. He does the school run and has some responsibility for his elderly mother who lives some distance away.

Worries that his age, ill health and poor English disadvantage him even for a job in the mills.

Would like a job in the mills and wants to improve his English. Flexible as to how long he'll attend the EMO project, though his course has finished.

No experience of making formal job applications/ job interviews. Asked his friends working in the mills to tell him about any vacancies.

Figure B.1

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                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │   Salahaddin    │
                        │    Male, 25     │
                        │   Iraqi Arab    │
                        └────────┬────────┘
                                 ▼
┌──────────────────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│ An asylum seeker who arrived in       │      │ Has got          │
│ the UK 6 months ago. Given            │──────│ permission to    │
│ refugee status.                       │      │ stay and work in │
│                                       │      │ the UK.          │
└──────────────────┬───────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
                   ▼
┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ Worries      │   │ Lives with friends (also      │
│ about his    │───│ asylum seekers) he met in     │
│ family in    │   │ England. Stayed in London for │
│ Iraq.        │   │ a month, but now based in     │
└──────────────┘   │ Bradford. No family in the UK.│
                   └──────────────┬────────────────┘
                                  ▼
              ┌────────────────────┐   ┌────────────────┐
              │ Worked on the      │   │ Limited work   │
              │ family farm in     │───│ experience and │
              │ Iraq.              │   │ skills.        │
              └─────────┬──────────┘   └────────────────┘
                        ▼
```

- Generally pleased with the provision, but would like to study English full-time, so he can learn it quicker.
- Registered with the Jobcentre. Heard of the EMO provider through his friends. Attends ESOL and computing classes there.

- Being turned down made him even more determined to improve his English.
- Made some job applications. Would like a job driving or sewing. Was turn down for a job, because of poor language skills.
- Improving his English, but still has ESOL needs. Expresses confidence re: job search skills, but needs likely to come to fore once ESOL problems are solved. Also may need to improve work related skills.

- Feels confident that he'll be able to get a job, once his English is good enough.
- Applies for the jobs recommended by the Jobcentre, but the main priority is to learn English.

Figure B.2

Ajmal
Male
Afgan

'I focused all of my learning to learn English'

Left school in Afghanistan at 20 with a diploma and went into the military. Been in UK 2 and ½ years and in Birmingham 1 year 2 months

Speaks Pushto, Deri Turkish and some Russian Learnt a little English at School in Afghanistan

Disillusioned with TESOL and found the standard of teaching very poor. Ajmal has learned English through computer courses. Says he is still not confident in written English

Spent first year in England just attending English classes and has continued to attended classes in Birmingham

Began looking for a job and joined several agencies but they required qualifications and experience so he decided to go back to college to do an IT course and gain some skills.

Some familiarity with computers so IT was a logical starting point

Registered with the Jobcentre and is only looking for part time work while he finishes his courses. So far he has filled in several applications but not been offered any interviews

He is often called upon by people within his community to help them complete job applications, speak on their behalf to officials, visit hospitals and GP surgeries with them and write/read letters on their behalf.

Feels coming to the EMO project has additional benefits. His English and communication skills have improved because it is a sociable place. The course is modular so he can do lots of hours

Was recommended the EMO project by the training college he was attending. He was looking for a more advanced course

Ajmal is currently (at first interview) attending the EMO project to learn all the Microsoft Office applications as well as some job search training. He is also attending a further education college in Birmingham to learn IT software/hardware systems (e.g. Unix etc)

Ajmal feels he needs to do another year of training to get the skills and qualifications he needs.

Ajmals dream job is in IT. He wants to be a computer technician or engineer

Figure B.3

Angelique
26
Female
Jamaican

Left school at 16 to have a baby and then qualified as a hairdresser and nail technician in Jamaica. Had been working in a tourist shop selling clothes, prior to coming to England

Has been in the UK 7 months – came over to be with her mum who lives here.

Wasn't thinking of staying initially but is enjoying her courses and thinks she will be able to find work in the UK

She is doing an IT course with Learn Direct and an NVQ course at the local college

She is facing a frustrating practical problem as she is waiting for a letter from the home office that will enable her to get a national insurance number. Until then she can't work.

Angelique was hoping to find a part time job while she finishes the courses but is also thinking about getting full time work

Was referred to the project by someone at her college who she went to see about getting a job. The project workers has helped her with job search skills and keeps her informed about jobs but she can not apply for any of them until she an NI card

Feels the project worker has given her lots of confidence for finding work

Angelique is interested in working in the travel industry she also mentioned care assistant work and hairdressing.

Has been to the Jobcentre to look for a job. Was not really aware of the benefits that she might be eligible for.

Feels very frustrated that she can not do anything until she has an NI number

Figure B.4

Henri
26
Male
Black Caribbean

Speaks French and Creole and studied English at School

Grew up in Martinique and studied music to A level before moving to France where he worked a chef and a radio DJ.

He had his own radio show although the work was unpaid.

Feels his English is OK but that he still needs to learn more particularly writing and grammatical structures

Came to the UK 2 and half years ago and worked as a chef.

Went back to Martinique to sort out family problems for two months and so lost his job.

Started studying part time for a certificate in higher education (music) at university in London.

Could not find any work as a chef that paid him enough to live and pay his rent. Decided to go back to college

Henri would prefer to find work in the music industry but will do chef work if he can find a job that pays enough and provides enough hours

Found out about the EMO project from his Jobcentre who had a flyer for the project. Although they themselves were not dealing with the project they referred him to the Jobcentre that was

The EMO Project helped him work on his CV and found him three jobs, which he applied for. He was invited to two interviews but has heard nothing. The project worker has also encouraged him to look for work in the music industry and provided travel costs so he can go and deliver his CV to different places.

Figure B.5

**Jumila
Somali
Female
19**

She remembers that this was really hard saying 'Kids used to make fun of me'

Jumila arrived from Somalia 7 years ago with her sister in law and sister in law's children. She had no English but quickly learned at school

Her English is quite fluent although she feels that she does not have a wide vocabulary

She turned down the places as she thought she needed to gain some work experience and earn some money before going to university

She passed her GCSEs and went on to do a Btech national in engineering at college. Having completed that she had applied for and gained places at three universities to study engineering.

She did voluntary work teaching kids 5-14 and helping with homework at her local Somali Community School. She had also done a two-week placement at school that had given her some secretarial experience.

She responded to a flyer she was given the street and enrolled on an IT course at a college that would provide work experience

The EMO project and the worker had given her a lot of confidence and Jumila felt she really motivated by her.

Was taken to the EMO project by a cousin who knew the project worker who had a reputation for finding people work '(Project Worker) gives out jobs'

Jumila was signing on and said she found the Jobcentre a very 'demotivating' experience. She said 'you feel like you are begging'

Asda had offered her a place on their two week unpaid training course in three weeks time. She was hoping she would have found a job by then

Jumila had sent many CVs to clothes shops and supermarkets in the area and in central London but heard nothing. They all wanted work experience.

Her ideal job in the short term was a secretarial job as she already had some experience

She had seen an IT correspondence course advertised and was planning to do this so she could work at the same time

Figure C.1

Milat
Male, 30
Pakistani

Born in the UK. Part of primary schooling in Pakistan. Qualified as a software engineer in the UK.

'You lose your self-confidence'.

Married with 3 kids. His wife cares for the kids. Got an extended family and close relations with them.

Has got 9 years of work experience as an IT consultant.

Was made redundant 10 months ago. Never been unemployed before.

Got the contact for the EMO project through the Jobcentre.

Feels that the Jobcentre does not cater for people with his skills or provide the job search facilities he needs. (Internet).

Has been visiting the EMO project for 3-4 months. Uses the job search facilities (PC, printer and internet) there.

Considering looking for another place with similar facilities, because he can only use the project facilities after 4pm.

Feels downhearted and low sometimes. Getting job interviews gives him hope.

Objective is to find a job in IT. Makes job applications regularly and has been to a few interviews.

Also considering teaching jobs in the IT field. Made some applications already.

Figure C.2

Ruth
Female, age 26
Other/Sudanese & English

Dream job: **Film production designer**. Wants to have own business and balance two activities

Grew-up/schooling in England and overseas (Including boarding school)

Went to university in England.

Obtained Technical arts degree.

Ruth 'slightly agrees' that she is has lots of skills relevant to work experience and that she does well at job interviews

Worked overseas, in several countries, holding a variety of short term contracts in film industry. Difficult to survive financially, building up debts …

Temp jobs often short-term. Worked for nothing in one job. In last job was a 'prop buyer'.

Ruth feels neither EMO project or Jobcentre has wide selection of jobs/jobs suitable for her. It's lonely out of work. Wants paid work. Enjoys meeting other unemployed people at EMO project. Very helpful to have access to a computer/the Internet, social networking.

Returned to England and worked in bar up north for a while. Then moved south and had temp jobs in film industry, in and out of work…

Paints pictures. Sometimes sells them

Out of work for one year, registered with Jobcentre, living in a shared house.

Has started evening class to help her develop skills for running own business

Ruth is feeling down about not being in paid work and in debt. Concerned about her financial situation. Thinking about finding short-term bar/clerical work to help her reduce debts

Had been using site of EMO project before it was funded for EMO. Had walked past, saw bright window, found it friendly - and been visiting project daily to use resources for about one year

Applying for many different types of jobs. Has been offered part-time teaching assistant post (one day per week). Not started yet

Figure C.3

Sulekha
Female, age 26
Indian

Preferred job: programming visual basic. Sulekha wants paid work, a challenge and job security.

Grew-up / schooling in England

Spent four years at university in hometown, achieving a degree in Business Information Systems.

Left university at age 22 and was unemployed for a few months

Slightly agrees that she is has good job search skills/relevant work experience and skills: 'These days employers are asking for X amount of programming skills before they offer you an interview'

Moved to another part of the country to work for an Internet company. Was made redundant after two years

Been registered with Jobcentre for over one year (moved back to home town and into parental home)

Sulekha feels Jobcentre has no jobs for people educated to degree level. Doesn't feel Jobcentre understands that her current training course is a positive thing: 'They want to push me into some kind of job that doesn't even require a degree'. Feels if she takes a clerical job it will harm her career.

Got involved with EMO project (made contact via university careers service)

Doing a three month visual basic training course with EMO project

Figure C.4

Wants to work as a driving instructor, but needs to transfer qualifications from Portugal

**Loh
Male, 39
Chinese**

Worked as a driving instructor in Macau

Originally from Macau. Lived in Portugal & Ireland, before moving to UK 3 months ago

Lives in shared flat

Insecure work, so looking for something else via Jobcentre

Working on a construction site – found work immediately

Referred to EMO project when arrived in UK.

Found paid work himself – thinks EMO would be more useful for people who don't speak fluent English

Signed up but didn't use

Figure C.5

Kai Ti
Female, aged 47
British Chinese

Kai Ti hopes to eventually find or driving job or work in a hospital

Grew up in Hong Kong, where spent six years in education. Left school at age of 11 because family was in debt and could not afford to keep all five children in school. In adulthood worked as a promoter and salesperson

Part of schooling involved evening classes, so that she could work during the day. Kai Ti speaks Cantonese and Mandarin

Wanted to improve her English, new start (divorced quite recently)

Migrated to the UK in 1997, alone. Worked in Chinese restaurants, taking part-time jobs so could combine work and study. Then homecare assistant for three years

Took English classes in Hong Kong in mid 1990s in anticipation of her migration but did not learn much. Began lessons again when came to UK. Took some Pitman courses

Kai Ti would like to develop computer skills but English classes take up to the hours threshold that she is allowed to study while in receipt of benefits. Hopes that EMO project will organise some voluntary work opportunities. She likes to help people in need.

Kai Ti left this job because of ill treatment and friends recommended she go to the EMO project, which she has been visiting for a year, prior to the start of the pilot

Recently found a part-time cleaning job at a clinic without the help of the Jobcentre or EMO project. Does informal voluntary work and is involved with her local church.

Wants a full-time job. Feels that her priority must be to improve her English so that she can get her ideal job. Also feels hampered by ill health. Continues to need a lot of help filling in forms etc. Needs an interpreter to use the Jobcentre

Figure C.6

In the longer term Celeste would like to be an actuary.

Celeste
Female aged 26
Black African Caribbean

Celeste is from Trinidad & Tobago and was educated there.

She recently completed a maths degree and then applied for a special two-year graduate student visa to work in the UK

Celeste has come to the UK to gain life and work experience

Her application was successful and she came to the UK in 2003 - and is living with her aunt

Celeste is a confident and articulate young woman, enjoying her new job. She plans to return to Trinidad and Tobago when her visa runs out.

Celeste got in touch with the EMO project soon after her arrival, through an outreach worker. She has received job search help, eg. Help with CV, free use of newspapers, telephones, and computers.

Recently found a temporary full-time job as a medical secretary in a psychiatric hospital. She found it through a recruitment agency, but help from the EMO project with her CV did contribute. Celeste has been in post for one month.

Appendix 3
Labour Market Analysis

Introduction

Following on from the discussions in chapter one, this chapter provides a more detailed description of the labour market position of ethnic minority groups in the five selected areas for the Outreach programme at the time of the introduction of the programme. It is based on analysis of Labour Force Survey (LFS) data from Spring 2002, covering the period from March to May 2002. The analysis focuses on people of working age, that is men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16 to 59. A small number of survey respondents did not report their ethnicity. They accounted for only 0.03 per cent of the population of working age and have been excluded from all the analysis that follows.

In general, due to the limited sample in the LFS, it is not possible to consider specific ethnic groups in each area. Therefore, the approach adopted considers the labour market situation for ethnic groups as a whole within the five EMO areas, then considers differences for each ethnic group in England and, finally, looks at the concentration of different ethnic groups in the five EMO areas.

There were just over 2.8 million people of working age from ethnic minority groups in England in Spring 2002. Figure 3.1 shows the breakdown of these 2.8 million people by EMO area and the rest of England. Over one half of all ethnic minorities lived in Greater London, a further 11 per cent lived in the West Midlands Metropolitan County, six per cent in the East Midlands, and five per cent lived in each of West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. Thus over three-quarters of working age adults from ethnic minority groups in England lived in the five selected EMO areas.

Figure 3.1   Residence of Ethnic Minorities in England

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002
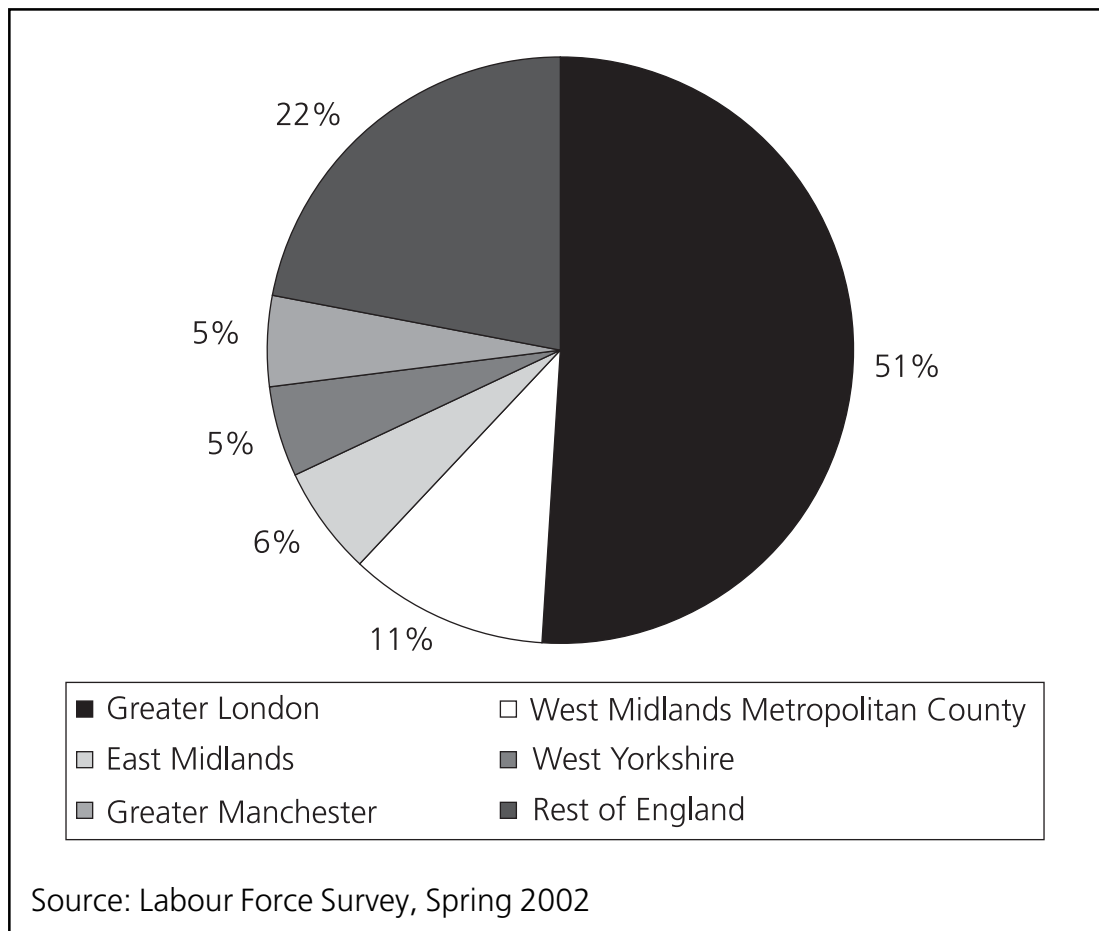
It is also useful to establish how much of the population in each area is made up of people from an ethnic minority group. Figure 3.2 indicates that, in England, 9.2 per cent of the working age population were from ethnic minority groups. There is considerable variation by area. In Greater London three out of ten people of working age were from ethnic minority groups and in the West Midland Metropolitan County roughly one-in-five adults were from ethnic minority groups. Elsewhere, in West Yorkshire the share of ethnic minorities was above the figure for England at 11.4 per cent, whilst in Greater Manchester 8.1 per cent of the population were from ethnic minority groups and in the East Midland the share was just six per cent. Even this relatively low figure was nearly double the share for the rest of England, where just 3.3 per cent of the population of working age were from ethnic minority groups.

Figure 3.2   The ethnic minority share of the population of working age, by EMO area

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002
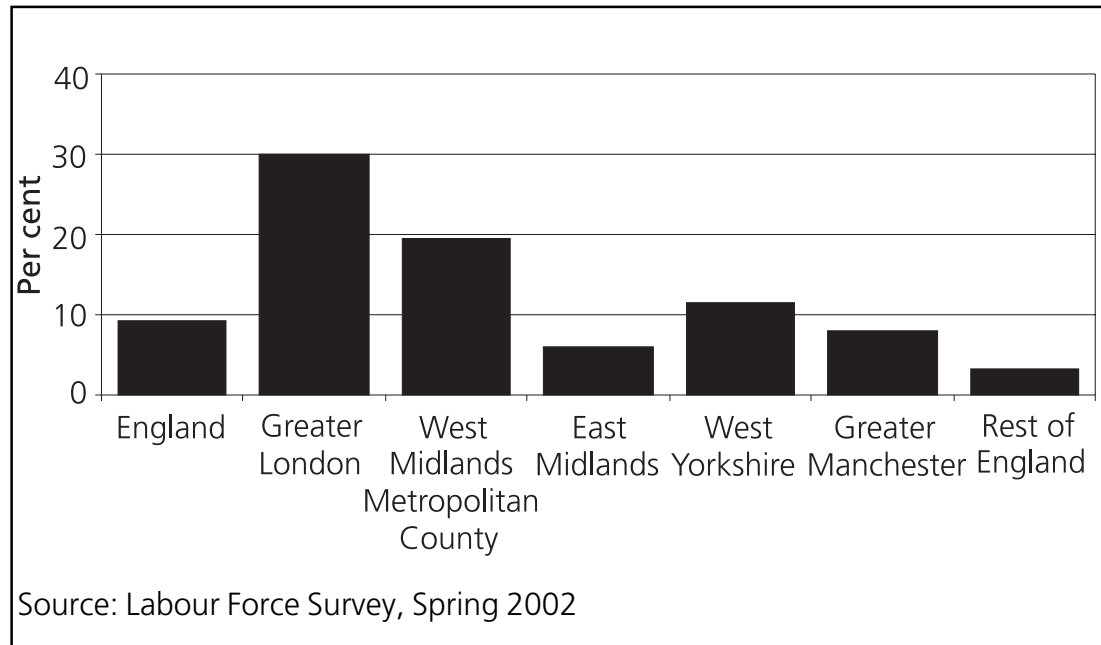
The EMO initiative aims to support jobless people from ethnic minority groups who need help in making the transition into employment. The target group of the initiative covers both people who were economically inactive and people who were unemployed. The remaining analysis in this section will first focus on economic activity rates by ethnicity and then go on to consider the labour market position in terms of unemployment.

Economic Activity

Table 3.1 reports the economic activity rates in England and for the five EMO areas, for all people, for the white population and for ethnic minority groups. An indication of the relative position of ethnic minority groups compared with the white population is also shown through the difference in activity rates for the two groups.

The economic activity rate in Spring 2002 in England was 79.0 per cent. For the five EMO areas, only the East Midlands had a higher rate at 79.8, whilst the lowest overall activity rate was found in the West Midlands at 75.3 per cent.

In England the activity rate for the white population was much higher at 80.4 per cent than for ethnic minority groups at 65.5 per cent, a difference of 14.9 percentage points. This pattern of higher activity rates for whites was evident throughout England. The final column of Table 3.1 indicates, however, that the difference did vary considerably by area.

The economic activity rate for the white population showed relatively little geographical variation. It was highest in the East Midlands at 80.7 per cent and lowest in Greater Manchester at 78.0 per cent, a range of just 2.7 percentage points.

However, for ethnic minority groups the range was 10.6 percentage points from the high of 66.2 per cent in Greater London to a low of 55.6 per cent in West Yorkshire.

Thus it is predominantly the variation in economic activity rates for ethnic minority groups that determines the white - ethnic minority difference by area. Given the low activity rates for ethnic minority groups in West Yorkshire, it was here that the highest difference was found at 24.2 per cent. Similarly, the second highest difference was found in Greater Manchester at 19.9 percentage points, the area with the second lowest ethnic minority activity rate. The smallest difference was found in Greater London at 13.9 percentage points. This variation can be explained by two well-known factors: differences by gender and differences for particular ethnic groups.

Table 3.1 Economic Activity Rates by Ethnicity and by Area

	All (1)	White (2)	Ethnic minority Groups (3)	Difference (2) – (3)
England	79.0	80.4	65.5	14.9
Greater London	75.9	80.1	66.2	13.9
West Midlands Metropolitan County	75.3	78.8	60.8	18.0
East Midlands	79.8	80.7	65.7	15.0
West Yorkshire	77.0	79.8	55.6	24.2
Greater Manchester	76.4	78.0	58.1	19.9

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002

Differences by Gender

Table 3.2 reports economic activity rates separately for men and for women. The top panel gives the figures for men and the bottom panel the figures for women. For all groups activity rates were much higher for men than for women. In England the activity rate for all men was 84.3 per cent and for all women it was 73.2 per cent.

For the white population for both men and women economic activity rates across all areas were fairly close to that for England as a whole. Thus again, for both men and women, it was variations in activity rates for ethnic minority groups that determined the white – ethnic minority differences across the areas.

For men the differences were much smaller than for women. In England, the male difference was 10.3 percentage points, compared with 19.3 percentage points for women. There was also much less variation in ethnic minority activity rates by area for men than for women.

For men the highest rate was 75.1 per cent in Greater London, whilst the lowest was 66.6 per cent in Greater Manchester, giving a range of 8.5 percentage points. For

women the highest activity rate for ethnic minority groups was 58.1 per cent in the East Midlands, whilst the lowest was 41.4 per cent in West Yorkshire. Thus the range for women, at 16.7 percentage points, was nearly double that for men.

The white – ethnic minority group differences were highest for both men and women in West Yorkshire. For men the difference was 15.6 percentage points, whilst for women it was 33.6 percentage points. It is worth noting that in West Yorkshire the activity rate for white women was close to the highest in the EMO areas, but for ethnic minority women it was considerably lower than for all other areas.

For women, large differences in activity rates were also evident in Greater Manchester (26.4 per cent) and the West Midlands (25.8 per cent) where activity rates for ethnic minority groups were well below 50 per cent.

Table 3.2   Economic Activity Rates for Men and Women by Ethnicity and by Area

	All (1)	White (2)	Ethnic minority Groups (3)	Difference (2) – (3)
Men				
England	84.3	85.2	74.9	10.3
Greater London	82.7	85.8	75.1	10.7
West Midlands Metropolitan County	82.1	83.8	74.4	9.4
East Midlands	84.9	85.7	72.9	12.8
West Yorkshire	82.2	84.0	68.4	15.6
Greater Manchester	80.3	81.5	66.6	14.9
Women				
England	73.2	75.0	55.7	19.3
Greater London	68.4	73.6	57.1	16.5
West Midlands Metropolitan County	67.6	72.9	47.1	25.8
East Midlands	74.1	75.2	58.1	17.1
West Yorkshire	71.2	75.0	41.4	33.6
Greater Manchester	72.1	74.2	47.8	26.4

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002

These gender differences help to explain the overall differences in ethnic minority activity rates by area, but to get a clearer understanding it is necessary to consider the ethnic minority groups in some detail.

As discussed above, the size of the LFS does not allow for a thorough examination of activity rates by area, ethnic group and gender. However, we can explain the above patterns by first looking closely at data for England for each of the separate ethnic

groups and then by looking at the concentration of different groups in different areas.

Economic Activity in England by Ethnic Group and by Gender

The LFS allows analysis of ethnic minority groups at three levels. The broad picture for ethnic minority groups as a whole has already been described. The analysis that follows first considers the five key minority groups separately and then looks in more detail at the largest two of these groups.

Figure 3.3 reports activity rates by ethnic group and gender in England. There was more variation in activity rates across ethnic groups for women than for men. For men activity rates vary from around 76 per cent for the Asian, Black and Mixed groups to roughly 70 per cent for Chinese and Other groups. For women the activity rates for the Black and Mixed groups were around 65 per cent, but for the other groups they were much lower at 55 per cent for Chinese women, 54 per cent for Other women, and 50 per cent for Asian women.

Figure 3.3   Economic Activity Rates in England by Ethnic Group and Gender

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002
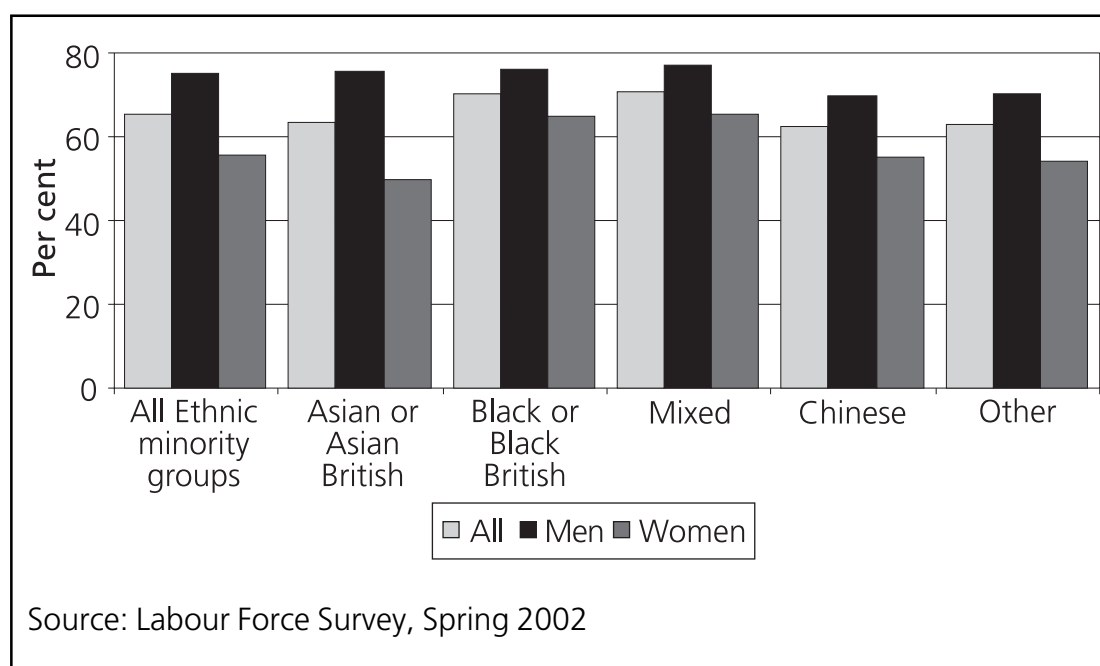
This variation by ethnic group, particularly for women, is extremely important in the context of EMO and warrants further investigation. Analysis for England shows that roughly one half of all ethnic minorities of working age were from Asian groups, whilst a further quarter were from Black groups. Of the remaining quarter, seven per cent were from Mixed groups, five per cent Chinese and 13 per cent from Other groups.

For the Asian and Black groups we can look further at detailed ethnic groups. Figure 3.4 considers activity rates in England for the Asian groups by gender. Across the Asian groups there was relatively little variation in activity rates for men compared with the variation for women. For men, the highest rate was 78.2 per cent for Indian men, with the lowest rate at 69.1 per cent for Bangladeshi men.

Figure 3.4   Economic Activity Rates in England by Asian Ethnic Group and Gender

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002
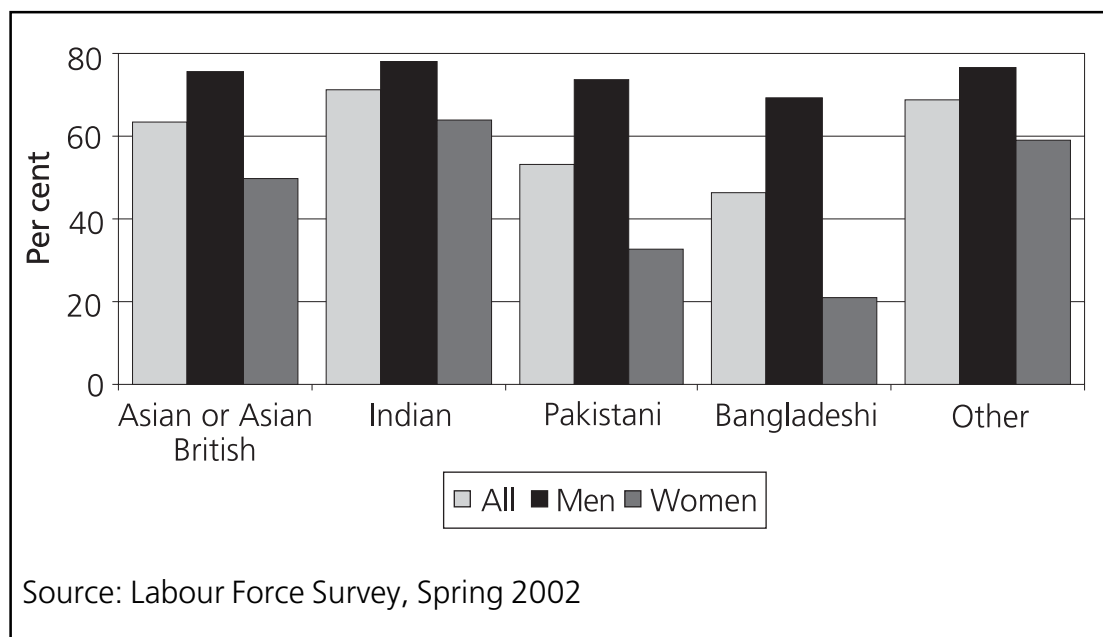
The most striking features of Figure 3.4 are the extremely low activity rates for Bangladeshi and Pakistani women. Whilst Indian women had an activity rate of 64 per cent, the rate for Pakistani women was just 32.6 per cent and for Bangladeshi women it was lower still at 20.8 per cent. These low activity rates for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women will be the prime driver behind variations in activity rates for ethnic minority groups by area.

Figure 3.5 presents a similar piece of analysis for Black groups. Here there was considerably less variation than for Asian groups. Activity rates were slightly higher for Caribbean men (78 per cent) than African men (74 per cent). African women had the lowest activity rates (58 per cent) compared with 69 per cent for Caribbean women and 77 per cent for Other Black women.

Figure 3.5   Economic Activity Rates in England by Black Ethnic Group and Gender

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002
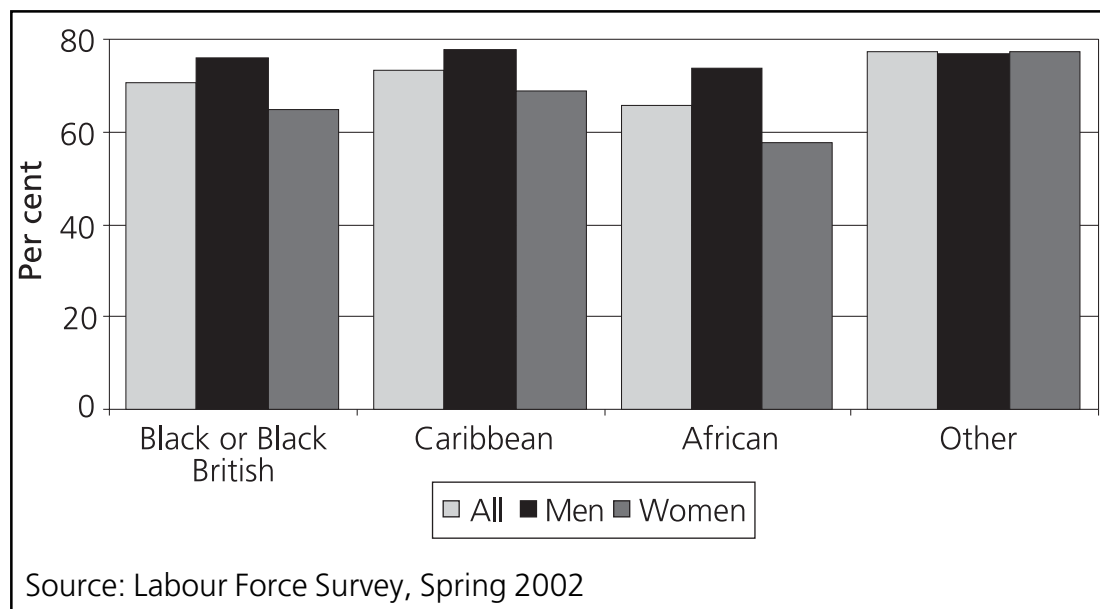
The composition of Ethnic Minority Groups

Having identified particular ethnic minority groups with low activity rates we need to identify the areas in England where they live. Here we consider the composition of ethnic minority groups in England and each of the five EMO areas. As noted above, in England roughly one half of all minority groups were Asian or Asian British, with a further quarter Black or Black British.

We are particularly interested in the Asian or Asian British groups across the areas because women from these groups had considerably lower activity rates. Figure 3.6 shows that 74 per cent of ethnic minorities in West Yorkshire were Asian. In the West Midlands 70 per cent of ethnic minorities were Asian and in the East Midlands the figure was 62 per cent and Greater Manchester 61 per cent. The only EMO area with a concentration of Asian people lower than for England was Greater London. Here 43 per cent of ethnic minorities were Asian.

Black or Black British people were predominantly in Greater London. Roughly one in three ethnic minorities in Greater London were Black compared with roughly one in five in Greater Manchester, East Midlands and West Midlands. In West Yorkshire less than ten per cent of ethnic minorities were Black.

Figure 3.6   The composition of Ethnic minority groups by area

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002
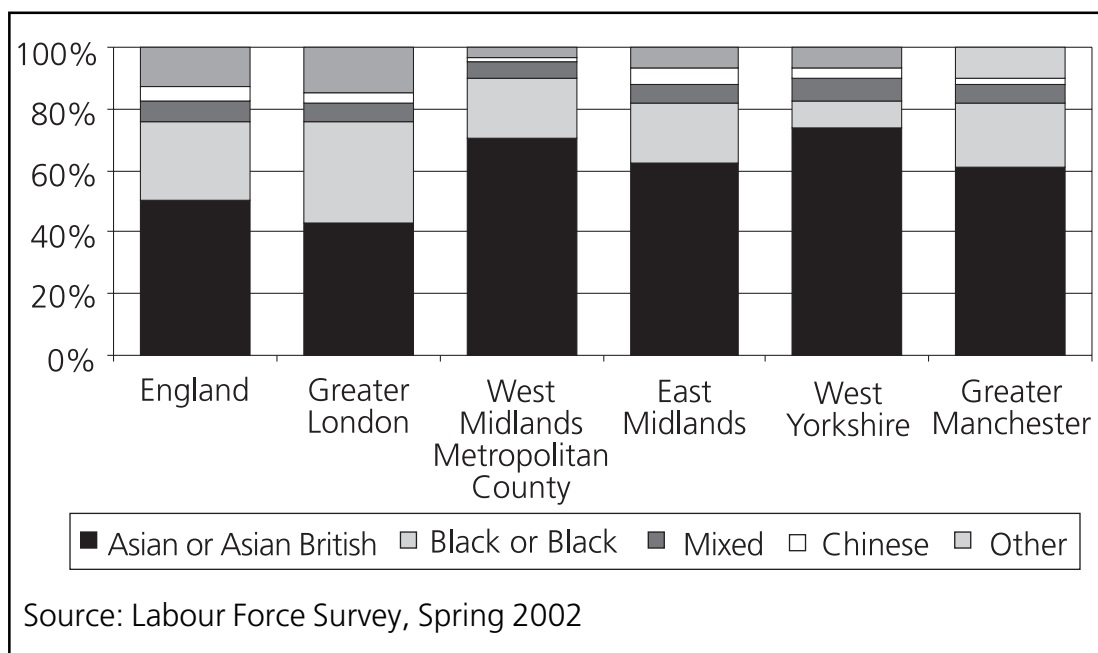
There was relatively little variation in the representation of Mixed and Chinese groups by area, but some variation for Other ethnic groups. In Greater London 15 per cent of ethnic minorities were from Other groups. In greater Manchester the figure was ten per cent, but in the West Midlands only three per cent of ethnic minorities were from Other groups.

This analysis points to an explanation of low activity rates in some areas, but to get a fuller understanding it is necessary to identify where Pakistani and Bangladeshi women live.

Figure 3.7 presents the composition of Asian groups by area. In England 47 per cent of the Asian population was Indian, 27 per cent was Pakistani, 11 per cent was Bangladeshi and 15 per cent from Other Asian backgrounds. Figure 3.7 clearly shows where different ethnic groups live. 78 per cent of Asian people in the East Midlands were Indian compared with just 27 per cent in West Yorkshire and 29 per cent in Greater Manchester.

Figure 3.7   The composition of Asian minority groups by area

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002
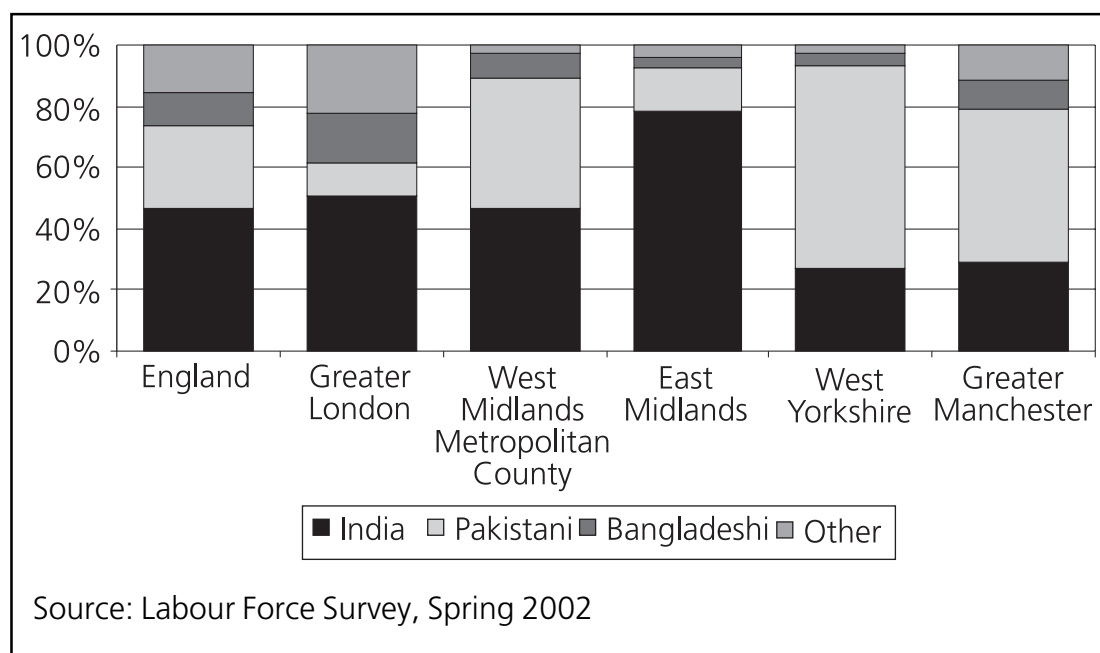
In West Yorkshire two thirds of Asian people were Pakistani. High proportions of Pakistani people were also found in Greater Manchester (50 per cent) and the West Midlands (43 per cent). Greater London had the highest percentage of Bangladeshi people (16 per cent) compared with low concentrations of Bangladeshi people in the East Midlands (three per cent) and West Yorkshire (four per cent).

Greater London also had the highest proportion of people from Other Asian backgrounds at 22 per cent, whilst 12 per cent of Asian people in Greater Manchester were from Other Asian backgrounds. In the other three areas less than five percent of Asian people were from Other backgrounds.

The same analysis for Black groups is shown in Figure 3.8. In England 52 per cent of Black people were Black Caribbean. In the West Midlands, East Midlands and West Yorkshire over 75 per cent of Blacks were Black Caribbean compared with 45 per cent in Greater London. In England 42 per cent of the Black population were African. Only in Greater London was there a higher percentage of Black people who were African at 49 per cent.

Figure 3.8   The composition of Black minority groups by area

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002
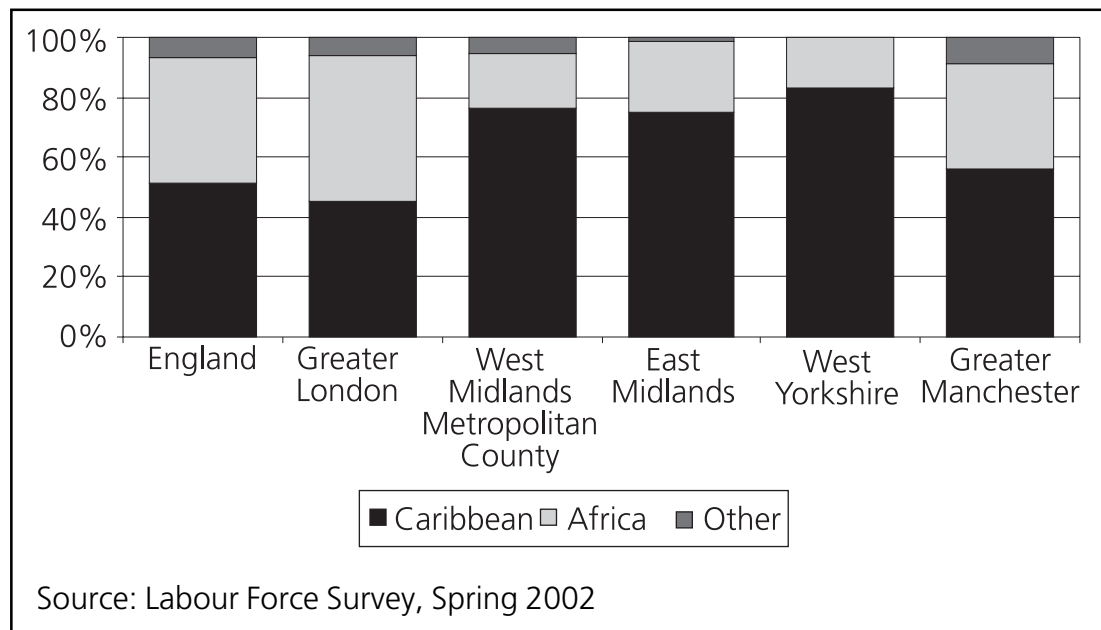
Explaining the variations in Economic Activity rates for Ethnic minority groups

Table 3.1 indicated that the lowest economic activity rate for ethnic minority groups was in West Yorkshire at 55.6 per cent. For women in West Yorkshire the activity rate was especially low at just 41.4 per cent (Table 3.2). The concentration of Asian people was highest in West Yorkshire at 74 per cent of all ethnic minority groups (Figure 3.6), Furthermore, two-thirds of Asian people in West Yorkshire were Pakistani (Figure 3.7) and Pakistani women had an exceptionally low activity rate at just 33 per cent (Figure 3.4). Thus the high concentration of Pakistani people in West Yorkshire goes a long way to explain the low economic activity rates for ethnic minorities in the area.

The next lowest activity rates for ethnic minority groups was in Greater Manchester at 58.1 per cent again mainly due to low activity rates for women, although Greater Manchester had the lowest rate for both white men and men from ethnic minority groups. Greater Manchester had a high proportion of Asian people, half of whom were Pakistani. The low activity rate for ethnic minority groups found in Greater Manchester was most likely driven both by the high concentration of Pakistani residents and also by overall relatively poor labour market conditions as indicated by the low activity rate for white men.

West Midlands Metropolitan County also had a low activity rate for ethnic minority groups at 60.8 per cent. Here the white – ethnic minority group difference was lowest for men (Table 3.2), but the West Midlands did have a very low activity rate for women from ethnic minority groups at (47.1 per cent). 70 per cent of ethnic minorities were Asian and 43 per cent of these were Pakistani again suggesting that the low activity rates may be due to a high percentage of Pakistani residents.

The East Midlands and Greater London had relatively high activity rates for ethnic minorities. In both areas they were close to the rates for England and five percentage points higher than the other three EMO areas. Both areas had higher than average activity rates for women from ethnic minority groups, almost ten percentage points higher than the highest of the other three EMO areas. The composition of the population, however, was different for the two areas.

Greater London had the lowest concentration of Asian people, although they still constituted 43 per cent of all ethnic minorities. Greater London had the highest share of Black or Black British residents at 33 per cent and also had a high share of people from Other Ethnic backgrounds. For the Asian population roughly one half were Indian who had fairly high activity rates, whilst Greater London had the lowest concentration of Pakistani residents with low activity rates. This mix would lead to higher activity rates than the other areas.

The East Midlands had by far the highest concentration of Indian residents, constituting nearly half of the ethnic minority population in the area. In contrast the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African populations were all fairly low. Given that Indians had fairly high activity rates and Pakistani's, Bangladeshi's and African's had low activity rates then the composition of the ethnic minority group explains the overall high activity rate in the area.

ILO Unemployment

The LFS allows analysis of ILO unemployment rates by area, gender and ethnicity. The analysis is presented in the same way as for the analysis of economic activity. Table 3.3 reports ILO unemployment rates for the whole population, for men and for women by area and ethnicity. This Table is analogous to Tables 3.1 and 3.2 above.

The unemployment rate in England was 4.9 per cent with a slightly higher rate for men at 5.4 per cent compared with the rate for women of 4.3 per cent. Unemployment rates were lower for the white population than for ethnic minority groups both for men and for women. The difference for England was 6.9 percentage points for men and 5.8 percentage points for women. So here there is little difference by gender. As with economic activity rates this difference varied by area, and again this was primarily due to variations in unemployment rates for ethnic minority groups.

Unlike the figures for economic activity, for ILO unemployment it is typically variations in male rates that determine the white – ethnic minority group difference. The highest unemployment rate for ethnic minority groups was 16.3 per cent in Greater Manchester, driven by a rate of 20.2 per cent for men. This was 15 percentage points higher than the rate for white men.

At the other extreme the ILO unemployment rate for ethnic minority groups in the East Midlands was just 5.1 per cent, only one percentage point higher than the figure for white people in the East Midlands.

Table 3.3   ILO unemployment rates by gender, by ethnicity and by area

	All (1)	White (2)	Ethnic minority Groups (3)	Difference (2) – (3)
All				
England	4.9	4.4	10.9	-6.5
Greater London	6.6	4.8	11.8	-7.0
West Midlands Metropolitan County	7.2	6.2	12.5	-6.3
East Midlands	4.2	4.1	5.1	-1.0
West Yorkshire	5.2	4.5	13.4	-8.9
Greater Manchester	5.5	4.8	16.3	-11.5
Men				
England	5.4	4.9	11.8	-6.9
Greater London	7.0	5.2	12.1	-6.9
West Midlands Metropolitan County	8.0	6.8	14.1	-7.3
East Midlands	4.6	4.6	4.8	-0.2
West Yorkshire	5.9	4.8	15.7	-10.9
Greater Manchester	6.2	5.1	20.2	-15.1
Women				
England	4.3	3.9	9.7	-5.8
Greater London	6.0	4.1	11.3	-7.2
West Midlands Metropolitan County	6.2	5.6	9.8	-4.2
East Midlands	3.6	3.5	5.5	-2.0
West Yorkshire	4.3	4.0	9.1	-5.1
Greater Manchester	4.7	4.4	9.7	-5.3

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002

It was noted above that roughly one half of all ethnic minorities in the East Midlands were Indian. Figure 3.9 shows that with the exception of the Chinese, Indians had the lowest unemployment rate. Thus it should come as no surprise that the East Midlands had the lowest unemployment rate.

The high unemployment rate in Greater Manchester is less easily explained. Roughly 30 per cent of ethnic minorities in Greater Manchester were Pakistani. Figure 3.9 indicates that people of Pakistani origin had a slightly higher unemployment rate than average. This cannot explain the overall high rate in Greater Manchester. Further examination of rates within Greater Manchester indicated particularly high rates for Asian groups in general (the LFS data does not allow any further break down than this whilst maintaining robust statistics). In England the rate for Asian or Asian British was 9.3 per cent, but for Asian or Asian British people in Greater

Manchester the rate was 19.9 per cent. From this it seems that the unemployment position for Asian or Asian British people in Greater Manchester was particularly bad.

For the other EMO areas the unemployment rates are not dissimilar to the rates for England.

Figure 3.9   ILO unemployment rates in England by Ethnic minority group and by gender

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002
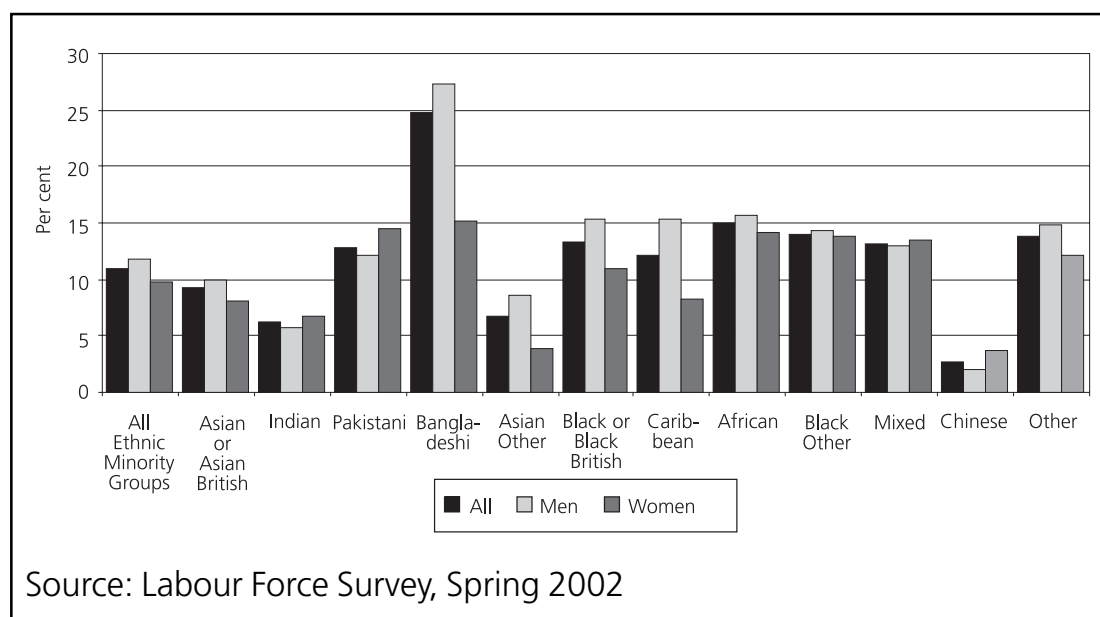
Claiming State Benefits

The LFS also asks about whether respondents claimed any state benefits. There are well known problems with the recording of such information from household survey data. Typically there is an under count of the number of people claiming such benefits of around 30 per cent. Despite this problem, analysis of this information is still useful to consider patterns across areas, gender and ethnicity. This must assume that the under reporting is the same, or at least similar for each group.

Table 3.4 shows that fewer white people claim state benefits than people from ethnic minority groups. This is not surprising given the lower economic activity rates and higher unemployment rates for ethnic minorities. In England 32.5 per cent of people of working age claim state benefits, of which 32 per cent of white people claim and 37.3 per cent of ethnic minorities claim. Whilst there were difference in claiming rates by gender, for men 19.7 per cent claimed compared with 46.7 per cent of women, the white – ethnic minority gap was roughly the same (5.1 per cent for men and 4.9 per and for women).

Table 3.4   Percentage of respondents claiming state benefits by gender, by ethnicity and by area

	All (1)	White (2)	Ethnic minority Groups (3)	Difference (2) – (3)
All				
England	32.5	32.0	37.3	-5.3
Greater London	29.2	26.4	35.9	-9.5
West Midlands Metropolitan County	38.2	36.5	45.3	-8.8
East Midlands	32.1	31.9	35.7	-3.8
West Yorkshire	34.5	34.1	38.0	-3.9
Greater Manchester	36.3	35.0	51.2	-16.2
Men				
England	19.7	19.2	24.3	-5.1
Greater London	17.6	15.8	22.0	-6.2
West Midlands Metropolitan County	25.2	23.5	32.7	-9.2
East Midlands	19.5	19.5	20.5	-1.0
West Yorkshire	22.4	21.1	32.8	-11.7
Greater Manchester	23.3	21.8	40.8	-19.0
Women				
England	46.7	46.2	51.1	-4.9
Greater London	42.0	38.3	50.3	-12.0
West Midlands Metropolitan County	52.8	51.4	57.9	-6.5
East Midlands	46.1	45.7	52.0	-6.3
West Yorkshire	48.0	48.5	43.8	4.7
Greater Manchester	50.8	49.7	63.9	-14.2

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002

Looking at these differences by area, the largest difference is found in Greater Manchester, where 16.2 per cent more ethnic minorities claimed state benefits than the white population. By contrast, in the East Midlands the difference for men was small at just one percentage point. Not surprisingly, these patterns are consistent with the area profile for unemployment described above.

In West Yorkshire, fewer women from ethnic minority groups claimed state benefits than white women, the one case where this occurred. Analysis of data for West Yorkshire indicates that this was due to low claiming rates for Indian women in the area, although, for England, Figure 3.10 does not indicate an especially low claiming rate for Indian women.

Figure 3.10 **The percentage of people claiming state benefits in England by Ethnic minority group and by gender**

Source: Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002
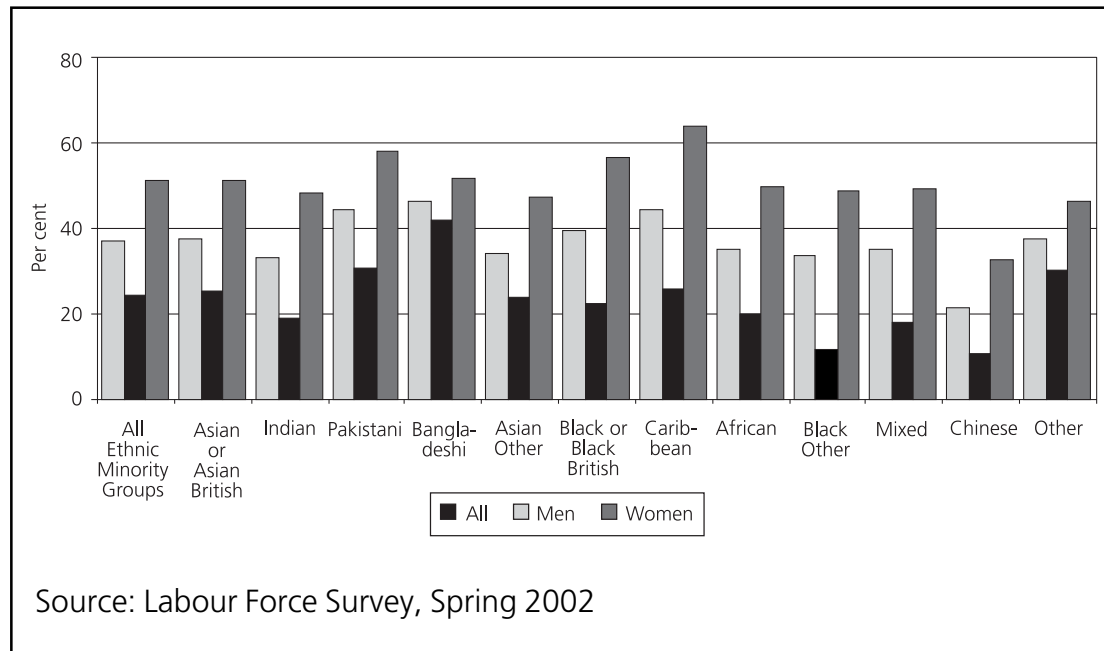
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