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Flexible New Deal evaluation: customer survey and qualitative research findings

Sandra Vegeris, Lorna Adams, Katie Oldfield, Christine Bertram, Rosemary Davidson, Lucia Durante, Catherine Riley and Kim Vowden

A report of research carried out by the Policy Studies Institute and IFF Research on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

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Research report

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by Sandra Vegeris, Lorna Adams, Katie Oldfield,
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Catherine Riley and Kim Vowden

Department for Work and Pensions

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---------------------------------------------|
| CSCS | Construction Skills Certification Scheme |
| DWP | Department for Work and Pensions |
| ESA | Employment and Support Allowance |
| ESOL | English for Speakers of Other Languages |
| FJR | Fortnightly Jobsearch Review |
| FND | Flexible New Deal |
| IB | Incapacity Benefit |
| IS | IncomeS |
| ILA | Individual Learning Account |
| JRFND | Jobseekers Regime and Flexible New Deal |
| JSA | Jobseeker's Allowance |
| JSAg | Jobseeker's Agreement |
| MDRC | Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation |
| MWRA | Mandatory Work-Related Activity |
| ND | New Deal |
| ND25+ | New Deal 25 Plus |
| NDYP | New Deal for Young People |
| NJI | New Jobseeker Interview |
| PSI | Policy Studies Institute |
| SIA | Security Industry Authority |
| WP | Work Programme |

Summary

This report presents process study findings from the evaluation of the Flexible New Deal (FND), introduced in 28 Jobcentre Plus districts in England, Scotland and Wales in October 2009 as part of the Labour government's employment reforms. FND was the first provision implemented under the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Commissioning Strategy for contracting out employment assistance services.¹

FND was the fourth stage within the revised Jobseekers Regime, typically experienced between the 52nd and 104th week of a claim to Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Whereas stages 1, 2 and 3 of the regime were delivered through Jobcentre Plus,² the FND was delivered by contracted employment programme providers under a 'prime provider' delivery model. Following a minimum prescription ('black box') approach, providers were granted the freedom to design a personalised package of work preparation and job search support to address the needs of the customer balanced with the needs of the local labour market. As a minimum, providers were required to meet with each customer every fortnight and arrange at least four continuous weeks of full-time Mandatory Work-Related Activity (MWRA) for each customer. They were also expected to monitor customer activities and report non-compliance to Jobcentre Plus for possible sanctioning. Throughout FND, jobseekers were also required to attend Jobcentre Plus on a fortnight basis to sign a declaration detailing that they were available for employment and were actively seeking work.

The report is part of a broader evaluation of Jobseekers Regime and Flexible New Deal (JRFND). The overall aims of the evaluation are to:

- assess the delivery of JRFND by Jobcentre Plus and contracted providers;
- examine the customer experience of JRFND and to determine what elements of JRFND appear to help customers;
- compare the customer experience of JRFND to the experience of customers at similar points in their claim in Phase 2 areas;
- contribute to future policy development.

Methodology

The research consisted of qualitative evidence on customer and provider experiences of FND delivery and a quantitative survey of customer experiences of FND in Phase 1 areas compared with customers at the same points in a claim under the policy in Phase 2 areas. Comparisons between the two areas provide an indication of FND services in contrast to JSA/New Deal services but they do not constitute an impact assessment.

¹ The FND was discontinued when the Work Programme (WP) was launched in June 2011.

² Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the Jobseekers Regime were rolled out in two phases in April 2009 (Phase 1) and April 2010 (Phase 2). The FND was only rolled out in Phase 1 areas.

In total, 6,009 telephone interviews were conducted with a representative sample of Phase 1 (FND) and Phase 2 (JSA/New Deal) customers between December 2010 and March 2011, at a point when Phase 1 customers with a continuous claim had just completed FND.³

A case study approach was adopted for the qualitative research, focusing on three Jobcentre Plus districts and four FND prime provider service networks. Seventy-one FND staff members were interviewed between September and November 2010. Forty-four depth interviews were conducted with current or former FND customers between October and December 2010.

Flexible New Deal processes

The qualitative research studied two types of FND delivery model. The delivery approach predetermined the minimum number of agencies a customer would encounter on FND. In an end-to-end model providers managed the entire customer journey, supplying almost all their services under one roof. Under the staged process approach, customers transferred to different advisers or organisations at set time points in the programme. All FND providers offered a similar sequence of customer activities: initial advisory meeting, induction, assessment, Action Plan, advisory meetings with offers of services, MWRA, more advisory meetings with offers of services, and in-work support.

Customers generally accepted having to sign fortnightly at the Jobcentre as a condition of benefit receipt but observed that these shortened Fortnightly Jobsearch Reviews (FJR) lacked content and some questioned their value. The requirement for customers to attend two separate organisations led at times to confusion as to who had responsibility for checking Action Plans and evidence of job searching. The quality of relations between FND and Jobcentre Plus office staff was dependent on established provider practices and the past experiences of staff. Where communication existed, most FND staff were positive about their experience, but a minority considered Jobcentre Plus staff to be unresponsive to information requests.

Services and take-up

Providers across the four studied FND networks offered customers a similar range of services beyond regular meetings with an adviser. These services fell into four categories: employability training and support, other skills training, specialised support and MWRA. Employability training and support (as defined in Table 3.1) tended to be delivered in-house. Other skills training and specialist services were usually delivered by external organisations.

According to providers, MWRA usually took the form of a work placement in the private sector or a charity. These placements tended to be low-level positions. Some providers could not secure placements for all their customers, and in some cases they delivered a four-week training course instead. Customers were encouraged to find their own placements, with providers stepping in if they were unsuccessful. The MWRA usually took place around six months after a customer joined FND. Providers were mostly enthusiastic about the benefits of a work placement for customers, but they found some customers resistant to the concept and believed that it was not always appropriate – for instance, for customers with alcohol or drug problems, or for highly skilled jobseekers.

³ For Phase 2 customers, the nature of support over this period differed by age group. Main-track customers aged 18-24 would usually have been completing their first New Deal for Young People (NDYP) cycle and embarking on a second cycle if they were still claiming JSA. Those aged 25+ claiming throughout this period in Phase 2 areas would normally have experienced six further months of regular JSA signing followed by the first six months of the New Deal 25 Plus (ND25+).

From the survey findings, two services were offered and taken up by a majority of customers: help with CV writing, job applications or interview skills; and drawing up an Action Plan. All other of services or support were taken up by fewer than half of all customers. Provision and take-up of sessions relating to confidence or motivation, and financial support to help cover the costs of looking for or taking work, were more prevalent in FND areas than in Phase 2 areas. However, Phase 2 customers were more likely to have undertaken training or voluntary work than their Phase 1 counterparts.

The customer survey found that the proportion of FND customers who undertook MWRA after a year of FND was somewhere between 46% (work placements only) and 63% (any potentially qualifying activity). Take-up of MWRA-qualifying activity was reasonably consistent across all customer subgroups but the figures suggest that numbers fell short of contractual expectations.

Most of the different forms of FND support, including the four-week MWRA, were rated as useful by just over half of the customers. Help with CV writing, job applications and interview skills stood out as the most useful forms of help. Customers who had ended their claim and entered paid work were more likely to feel that the support received from their FND provider had played a role than was the case among the Phase 2 comparison group. This view was particularly likely to be held by those in Phase 1 areas who had entered part-time employment.

The services which customers in the qualitative sample valued most were referrals to training, support from an employment engagement officer and the MWRA. There were mixed views about the quality of in-house employability training and CV writing services. Compulsory group job search sessions were widely disliked, but some respondents welcomed the opportunity to use providers' job search facilities on a voluntary basis. Customers had strong feelings about the MWRA. Some of those who had not experienced one objected strongly to the idea of unpaid, compulsory work placements, while others were disappointed not to have had a placement or – if they were still on FND – were looking forward to having one. Those who had experienced an MWRA were positive about it when it was a work placement which used their skills and/or gave them experience in a new field. Ideally, they wanted a work trial – a placement with the prospect of a job at the end. Customers assigned to what they considered to be inappropriate placements gained little or nothing from the experience.

Support and conditionality over time

All FND providers in the sample assigned customers to a key case worker or 'adviser'. Customers would normally see their adviser at regular one-to-one meetings for the duration of their time with the provider organisation. The customer survey results indicated that not all FND customers received the fortnightly face-to-face meetings that providers were contracted to offer. Among those who completed a full 12 months of FND, just under half reported at least 20 face-to-face meetings.⁴ Insights from the customer qualitative interviews suggest that high customer volumes and staff turnover may have contributed to this.

Adviser continuity was viewed by staff as essential for developing a relationship of trust and rapport. Familiarity was needed to break down barriers and move the customer closer to work. At the same time, it was acknowledged by FND staff that in certain circumstances a change of adviser could add momentum and 'refresh' the process. A change in adviser was a regular occurrence within the staged FND delivery model where customers were assigned to a new adviser with each new stage.

⁴ It should be noted that under the terms of the FND contract, face-to-face fortnightly meaningful contact did not necessarily have to involve a meeting with an adviser but could also include short job-focused training, events/activities to improve job search skills or a period of work experience. Customer contact figures are therefore likely to be an underestimate.

Staff considered negative attitudes towards work as the biggest barrier they had to overcome for meeting job outcomes. Addictions, homelessness and criminal records were seen as other barriers that challenged staff efforts to produce job outcomes. Some advisers also questioned whether people with severe mental health issues were on the correct benefit.

Based on the survey results, customers experiencing FND provision had a greater level of contact with an adviser than those at the same point of their claim in Phase 2 areas. FND customers attended more face-to-face meetings with an adviser, were more likely to see the same adviser for these meetings and to have had some additional contact with an adviser via telephone, text and/or email communication. FND customers were also more likely than Phase 2 customers to say that they received about the right amount of support and to say that their adviser could not have done anything further to help them back into work.

FND staff said they used various strategies to maintain customer momentum through the programme. These included increased conditionality around job goals and the number of job applications submitted as well as greater access to employability and soft-skills support. Survey results revealed that the four-week work placement was most closely associated with mandation. Customers also commonly recalled that the Action Plan, employment skills activities and a skills assessment were mandatory. At an overall level, however, FND customers were no more or less likely to have experienced mandation than their counterparts in Phase 2 areas.

Sanctioning

Missed adviser meetings were reported by FND provider staff as the most common reason for instigating a benefit sanction. Advisers commonly used their discretion before making a referral, taking into account customers' personal circumstances and previous behaviour. The paperwork and the delay between making a referral and the sanctioning of benefit were issues identified by staff.

Staff reported that many customers' initial reactions were negative but acknowledged that, in some cases, sanctions prompted customers to comply with the regime and increase their job search activity. Among the customers in the qualitative study, there was evidence that the financial impact of the sanction had prompted some to change their behaviour to comply with the regime. However, benefit sanctions could also have a negative effect on the adviser-customer relationship and result in disengagement from the job-seeking process. Longer-term JSA claimants were considered by staff to be less likely to change their behaviour following a sanction and appeared unfazed by loss of money.

Customer destinations

Younger FND customers (aged 18-24) were more likely to still be claiming JSA at the end of the survey compared to their counterparts experiencing the previous regime (JSA and NDYP) in Phase 2 districts. Overall, younger people were more likely to be in paid work in Phase 2 areas. However, there were variations by subgroup. There were no area differences in employment rates for young people with low or no qualifications and for those with a long term illness or disability. It was more common for younger people to leave FND for short-term work before returning to JSA ('JSA recyclers') than for customers aged 25 or over. Young people who were re-claiming tended to have a shorter spell in work in FND Phase 1 areas compared with Phase 2 areas.

Customers aged 25 or over were equally likely to be in paid work at the time of the interview in FND Phase 1 areas as in comparison areas under the JSA/New Deal regime. While Phase 1 customers were slightly more likely to be claiming JSA at the time of interview, higher proportions were claiming other out-of-work benefits (or in the process of setting up a new JSA claim) in Phase 2 areas. Claim rates for out-of-work benefits were therefore broadly even for customers aged 25 or over across the two Phases.

It is too early to say whether these represent true differences between the benefit and employment impacts of FND and the previous regime because this may be due to differences in characteristics between JRFND Phase 1 and 2 areas. An impact assessment to determine the employment and benefit impacts of the JRFND will be available in 2012.

Those who entered employment

There were variations between Phase 1 and 2 areas according to age group in terms of self-employment, full- and part-time work, employment sectors and types of contract. There were no significant differences in terms of type of occupation or salary. The majority of customers felt that their job was a good match for their experience, skills and interests, with the exception of those qualified to degree level who were less likely to be satisfied. Customers in Phase 1 areas were marginally more likely to agree that their job offered opportunities for progression and that their employer would offer training to enable this.

FND providers in the qualitative study offered in-work support which was described as ongoing help to target issues that may threaten retention. Contact was usually made via phone or email. Staff acknowledged that not all customers wanted to remain in contact with their FND provider, although they felt that those who received the support welcomed it. The survey showed that just over half of those who left FND for employment had some form of in-work contact with their provider. The majority of these considered the amount of contact to be about right. An exception to this was workers from a minority ethnic background who reported receiving insufficient in-work support. A quarter of workers in FND Phase 1 areas reported that the in-work support had some impact on work retention. However, those with higher-level qualifications were less likely to feel that such support had any influence on their decision to remain in work.

From the experiences of those who entered work in the qualitative research there was some evidence to suggest a subtle role FND had in securing their employment, either through practical or emotional support. Accounts of workers who had received in-work support provide examples where the contact was unwelcome but also instances where in-work contact had been expected but did not occur. This suggests that more direct communication with customers may be necessary to identify the preferred level and intensity of in-work support.

Overall views

Overall, customers who experienced FND provision were slightly more positive about their experiences with employment services than those in comparison areas. They were significantly more likely to report:

- having received enough support;
- finding the support received useful;
- considering the support as well matched to their needs and circumstances;
- not feeling under pressure to participate in unsuitable activities.

FND customers were correspondingly more likely to report an improvement across the majority of soft-skill areas associated with looking for work such as confidence, motivation and awareness of employment options.

Views on FND provision did vary according to customer type – while customers qualified to Level 4 or 5 were more sceptical of the influence of the FND support, those qualified to below Level 2 and younger customers were more positive. This finding also reflected in the qualitative sample where it was felt that FND services were more suited to younger people, those with less job search experience and those seeking lower-skilled jobs.

Staff identified numerous strengths with their FND provision, praising their capacity to deliver an employment service characterised by personal, one-to-one customer attention that was delivered by a highly-skilled team. Staff identified weaknesses in their operations relating to heavy caseloads, administrative burden, an inability to help customers who needed specialist support, and problems with the sanctioning process.

Conclusions and policy implications

The evaluation studied staff and customer experiences on the Flexible New Deal, with data covering months three to 15 of programme operations. On the whole, the results reflect a programme that was still under development. It should also be noted that the announcement to terminate FND may have curtailed full implementation of the programme.

Relative to the earlier stages of JSA services, FND was designed to place greater obligations on the jobseeker while at the same time increasing opportunities for employment support. The evaluation found little evidence to suggest that FND increased expectations on jobseekers. Customers perceived similar pressures to take part in activities in the comparison areas and most customers in the qualitative study stated that expectations for job search activities did not escalate during their time with the FND provider. The provision of more intensive advisory support was a major strength of the programme. Based on FND customer experience, the nature and frequency of advisory contact qualitatively differed from that received from Jobcentre Plus earlier in a claim and from that received by customers in comparison areas. Yet this service, along with the four-week MWRA, fell short of expectations as set out in the guidelines for providers. There is also evidence to suggest that the choice of services on offer was narrow and did not address the full range of customer needs, contrary to what might be expected from a ‘black box’ approach.

From these evaluation findings the following recommendations for the design of black box employment programmes can be drawn:

- **Regularly monitor the design, delivery and distribution of services across the customer spectrum to ensure minimum standards are upheld.** Monitoring will ensure that the purchasing authority gains an understanding of the ‘black box’ and retains information about what does and does not contribute to employment outcomes. Closer monitoring will also provide feedback on how fairly distributed services are to those with greater labour market disadvantage.
- **Understand that a minimum prescription (‘black box’) approach to contracting employment services does not necessarily equate to more innovation and a wider choice or variety of services.** The main observation of this research was that the intensity of advisory support varied between customers and during the 12-month period of participation. Despite limited prescription on what providers should deliver, little innovation was evident in the design and content of services. This suggests there is room to improve the match of services to customers and to develop further innovations in service design/content. This has implications for other black box employment programmes expected to serve a wide range of customer groups.

- **The nature of any ongoing relationship between providers and customers who have entered work needs to be agreed in advance on a case-by-case basis.** Under outcome-based funding, providers are incentivised to provide in-work support to those who find work. This evaluation found some positive evidence that this extra support can help mitigate issues that prevent people from staying in work. But customers did not always welcome the contact and some were sceptical of their provider's motives. Explaining to customers how providers are paid may help them to understand why providers want to give them further support after they start work. Furthermore, providers should consider using less intrusive systems for confirming the employment status of their customers.
- **An intensive period of work-related activity may not be practical or beneficial for all customers.** Although full-time work-related activity can be valuable and useful for jobseekers, it may not be practical or beneficial to make this mandatory for all customers, especially if placements do not relate to a customer's skills or provide experience in a new field. A more flexible approach to delivery may be more effective, where the interests and circumstances of the jobseeker are considered. Furthermore, if the work-related activity takes the form of a work placement, brokers would need to manage the system so that the demand for placements does not outstrip the supply of positions within participating organisations. This is particularly relevant in a weak economy where there may be a high volume of jobseekers seeking placements.
- **Delivery models that segment the customer journey can negatively impact customer-adviser relations.** The research identified weaknesses in a segmented or staged FND delivery model in which customers transferred to different advisers or organisations at set time points during the 12-month programme period. Under this model there was limited adviser continuity, a highly valued feature of FND. Additionally, when the mainstream FND service was delivered by different organisations, customers were required to repeatedly explain their personal circumstances to new people, which they found very unhelpful. This may have been partly due to current data protection rules which do not enhance partnership working within multi-agency service delivery.

1 Introduction

This report presents process study findings from the evaluation of the Flexible New Deal (FND), part of the Government's reforms to the Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) regime and the New Deals. The revised Jobseekers Regime and Flexible New Deal (JRFND) was rolled out in two phases, the first from April 2009 and the second from April 2010.⁵ The Jobseekers Regime was delivered by Jobcentre Plus and the FND⁶ by external providers. Further details of the reforms are set out in the Command Paper, *Ready for Work: Full employment in our generation* (DWP, 2007a).

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) commissioned a research consortium, led by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI), to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of JRFND⁷. This report presents qualitative evidence on both customer and FND-provider experiences of FND delivery and quantitative survey findings from customers on their experiences of FND in Phase 1 areas compared with the same points in a claim under the former JSA regime in Phase 2 areas. However, these comparisons **do not** constitute an impact assessment.

This chapter sets out the policies underpinning the reforms, provides an overview of the employment initiatives under study and outlines the research methods used.

1.1 Policy context and background

The implementation of JRFND was integral to developments in the Labour government's welfare to work and skills agendas that included reforms for lone parents, people with a life-limiting health condition or disability, and older workers. The overall aims of the reform agenda were to increase employment and end long-term worklessness and the cycle of repeated returns to unemployment and benefits that some people experienced.

Building on the recommendations from the Freud Report (Freud, 2007), the key principles of the reform agenda were:

- a stronger framework of rights and responsibilities; increasing obligations on JSA recipients progressively throughout a claim while giving them the support needed to gain (and progress in) work;
- maximising innovation in all sectors, contracting on the basis of what works, leading to more and better employment outcomes; and
- helping jobseekers find work with opportunities for progression – to ensure all who need help to develop their skills have access to relevant pre-employment training.

The approach applied the concepts of personalised conditionality, increased adviser flexibility and mandatory work-related activities, and involved a substantial shift in expectations for both the service providers and customers of labour market programmes.

⁵ Due to the implementation of the Work Programme (WP), Phase 2 roll-out did not include the FND; only stages 1 to 3 of the Jobseekers Regime.

⁶ In June 2011 the FND was discontinued and by the WP was introduced.

⁷ The evaluation consortium consists of PSI, IFF Research, PricewaterhouseCoopers Social, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) New York, Professor David Greenberg of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and Professor Jeff Smith of the University of Michigan.

The Government also set out proposals to build on existing employment and skills commitments, to place a greater focus on the role of individuals and employers. It reinforced the need to develop a skills system, shaped by employers, which put individuals in charge of their learning.

Through these reforms, the Government introduced greater employment requirements for lone parents so that, by October 2010, lone parents with a youngest child aged seven or older, who claimed benefit, would be required to claim JSA rather than Income Support (IS).⁸

Reforms for people claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) and IS paid on incapacity grounds included the new Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) which was introduced for most new and repeat claimants in October 2008. At the same time, a new Work Capability Assessment introduced a higher threshold for determining a person's functional capability for work.

In addition, changes to statutory State Pension age between April 2010 and 2020 will gradually equalise working age rules for men and women. As this happens, increasing numbers of people aged 60 to 64 will become eligible for JSA, if they claim benefits.

As a result of these reforms, Jobcentre Plus and FND providers were expected to be able to deliver work-focused support to increasing numbers of lone parents, older jobseekers and JSA customers with mild to moderate health conditions and disabilities.

1.1.1 Implementation of the Work Programme

In June 2010, the new Government announced its intention to overhaul and further streamline the employment welfare and benefit systems. From June 2011, the FND was discontinued and a new WP was implemented across Great Britain to provide a holistic and comprehensive range of services for all customers regardless of the benefit they are claiming. It provides personalised help to a wide range of customers on JSA, ESA and IS benefits, including lone parents, those who have a health condition or disability and jobseekers through to pension age.

1.2 The policy initiatives

1.2.1 The Jobseekers Regime and Flexible New Deal

The JRFND had the aims of increasing the support offered to JSA customers while also increasing the obligations of these jobseekers. The Jobseekers Regime replaced the former JSA regime; the FND combined the New Deal 25 Plus (ND25+), the New Deal for Young People (NDYP), the New Deal 50 Plus, the New Deal for Musicians, Employment Zones and Self-Employment provision. JRFND was introduced across Great Britain in two phases. In April 2009, Phase 1 commenced in a set of Jobcentre Plus districts in England, Scotland and Wales.⁹ Phase 2 began in the remaining Jobcentre Plus districts in April 2010.¹⁰ Jobcentre Plus remained at the centre of the system, managing the enhanced regime and working in partnership with providers who delivered the FND.

⁸ In the June 2010 Budget statement, the Government announced that the same conditions will apply to lone parents with a youngest child of age five or older, commencing from early 2012.

⁹ Twenty-eight districts were assigned to Phase 1 and 20 districts to Phase 2. See Table B.3 for the list of Jobcentre Plus districts in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of JRFND.

¹⁰ Only the first three stages. FND was not rolled out in Phase 2 areas.

10 Introduction

A number of considerations were taken into account in the division of Jobcentre Plus districts into Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas¹¹ including:

- incorporating into Phase 1 as many areas as possible with higher percentages of JSA customers claiming for 52 weeks or more in order to target those areas with greatest need first;
- ensuring that each phase included at least one large urban contract package area served by a single prime FND provider;¹²
- placing some of the areas with more complex provision structures into Phase 2 areas to allow time for issues surrounding the delivery of the FND in these locations to be addressed;
- incorporating most of the Jobcentre Plus-led Pathways to Work areas (most of which were IB hotspots) into Phase 2; and
- accommodating other departmental initiatives.

Ultimately, some of these practical considerations in the allocation of districts to Phase 1 or Phase 2 areas may impact on the comparability of the JSA caseloads between the two phases.

The JRFND programme comprised four stages based on the length of a JSA claim:

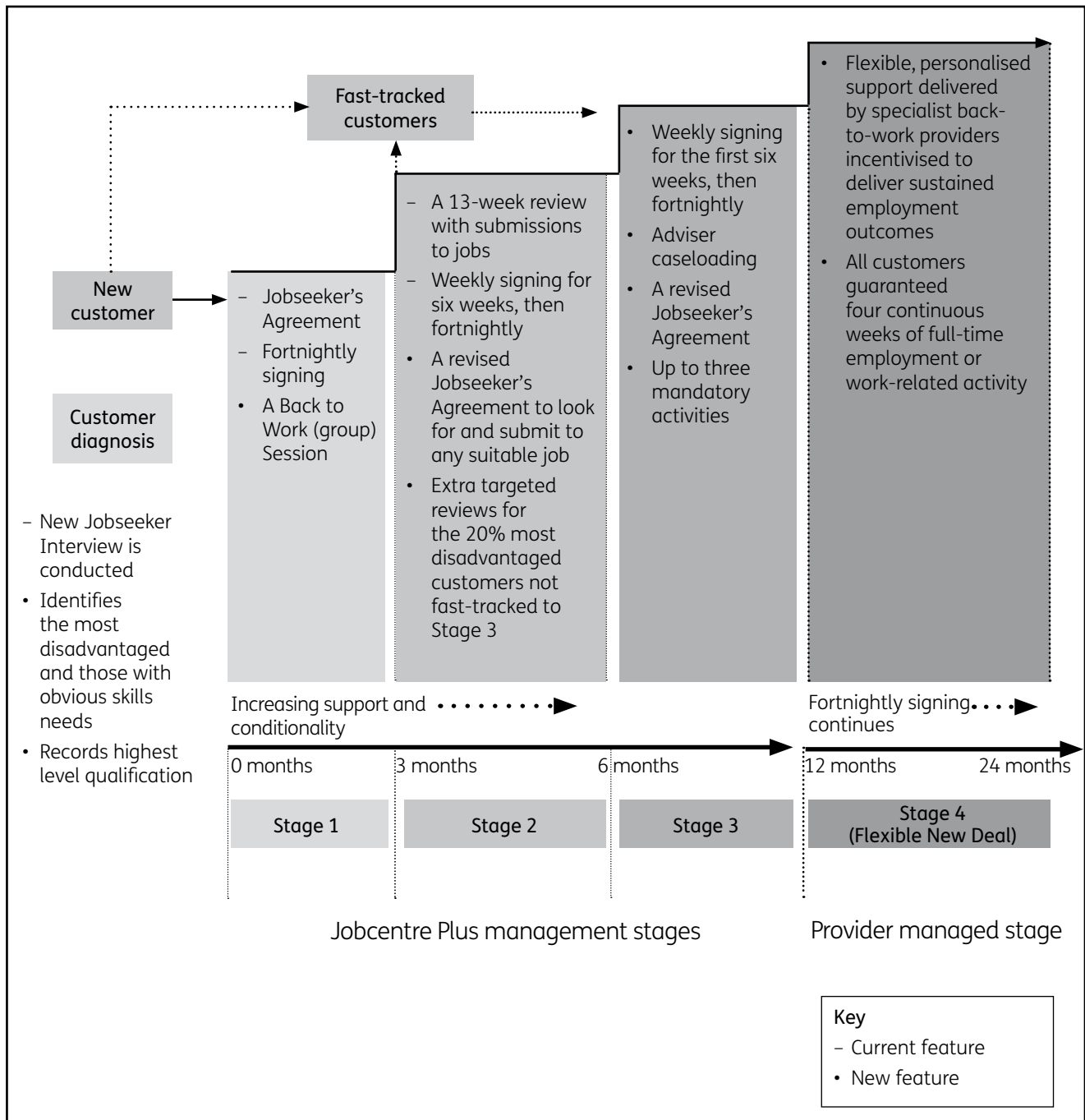
- Stage 1: 0 to 13 weeks;
- Stage 2: 13 to 26 weeks;
- Stage 3: 26 to 52 weeks;
- Stage 4 (FND): 52 weeks to two years.

The first three stages were delivered by Jobcentre Plus, and lasted up to 12 months. If a person was still claiming JSA after 12 months they were then referred to a FND provider for further work preparation support. The four stages are summarised in Figure 1.1 and described in more detail below.

¹¹ See Table C.2 for the list of Jobcentre Plus districts in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of JRFND. It should be noted that the districts in the table do not reflect the current organisation of Jobcentre Plus.

¹² The majority of contract package areas were served by two competing prime FND providers to test whether competition can influence service quality and value for money. A monopoly supplier arrangement in selected areas provided the comparison.

Figure 1.1 Diagrammatic representation of JRFND



Stage 1 – Day one to 13 weeks

As under the former JSA regime, all new JSA customers were required to attend a New Jobseeker Interview (NJI) with a Jobcentre Plus adviser, during which customers were required to sign a Jobseeker's Agreement (JSAG) containing agreed job goals and job search activities. All customers were then required to attend 'Fortnightly Jobsearch Reviews' (FJR) to demonstrate that they were actively seeking and available for work.

Some customers (i.e. those on JSA for 22 out of the last 24 months, 18-year-olds not in employment, education, or training and disadvantaged customers) were fast-tracked to Stage 3.

Stage 2 – 13 to 26 weeks

If a customer was still claiming JSA after three months they attended a 30-minute meeting with a Jobcentre Plus adviser to review their JSAG and training needs. Customers were expected to extend their job search in terms of travel to work distance, working hours and occupations considered. Customers were also required to attend weekly job search reviews for six weeks (after which FJRs continued as normal). More disadvantaged customers would be offered two additional 'Targeted Reviews' during Stage 2 to provide extra support for those identified as likely to benefit from it.

Stage 3 – 26 to 52 weeks

After six months on JSA, customers were required to attend more regularly for one-to-one support from a Jobcentre Plus adviser (an average of 3.5 hours per customer throughout Stage 3). At the Initial Stage 3 Review, the customer agreed an Action Plan, outlining the activities they should undertake in order to enhance their employability and enter work. In a similar way to Stage 2, customers were required to attend weekly job search reviews for six weeks (after which FJRs continued as normal).

Stage 4 – Flexible New Deal (52 to 104 weeks)

Customers in Phase 1 areas who did not find work by the end of Stage 3 were referred to the FND, which was delivered by external providers. The nature of this service was expected to vary by provider. Following a 'black box' approach, providers were granted the freedom to design a personalised package of work preparation and job search support to address the needs of the customer balanced with the needs of the local labour market.

FND customers were also eligible for training and other support from a range of national schemes, for example, funding through the European Social Fund, the Skills Funding Agency, LearnDirect, the Prince's Trust and, in Scotland only, the Individual Learning Account.

The FND was the first employment programme that was designed, commissioned and implemented using the principles of the DWP Commissioning Strategy (DWP, 2008). The aim of the Strategy was to achieve increased efficiency and performance of employment services through the introduction of market structures. FND was commissioned across 14 contract package areas with a total of 24 contracts awarded to prime providers and their subcontractors. A separate report presents findings on the influence of the Commissioning Strategy on FND providers and the welfare-to-work service market in general (Armstrong *et al.*, 2011).

The DWP issued *Flexible New Deal Supplier Guidance*¹³ which sets out the minimum requirements for service standards:

- A face-to-face initial meeting to include an individual assessment of needs and an agreed Action Plan. Customers were to be made aware of possible sanction activity if they failed to attend.
- Meaningful fortnightly contact with each customer.¹⁴

¹³ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplying-dwp/what-we-buy/welfare-to-work-services/provider-guidance/flexible-new-deal-guidance.shtml>

¹⁴ This was a recessionary measure implemented at the start of FND alongside increasing the contract service fee from 20 to 40%.

- Every customer was to undertake a minimum of four weeks continuous full-time work-related activity within their 52 weeks of participation, if the customer had not previously had at least four weeks continuous full-time paid work since starting FND. This could take the form of a work trial, work experience (including test trading in support of a move to self-employment), community work, voluntary work or certain types of work-focused training. During this activity the customer was transferred onto a training allowance (because full-time activity made it impossible to meet with the eligibility requirements for JSA).
- If a customer failed to attend/comply/participate, or if the customer's actions raised doubts about their entitlement to JSA, the FND provider should consider a referral to Jobcentre Plus for possible sanctioning.

FND contracts were issued to prime providers who supplied employment services together with subcontracted and partner agencies. Under an outcome-based contract, payments were partly linked to performance on work starts and work retention – the funding was divided 40:30:30% for services, job starts and job retention at six months¹⁵. This was designed to incentivise and promote sustained work outcomes.

Throughout the FND, jobseekers were required to attend Jobcentre Plus on a fortnightly basis to sign a declaration detailing that they were available for employment and were actively seeking work. FND providers typically supported a customer for up to 12 months. Customers who completed FND without finding work returned to Jobcentre Plus where they continued with weekly signing.

1.2.2 The New Deal for Young People

In Phase 2 areas where JRFND had not been rolled out, young people typically started the NDYP 'Gateway' at around the same time that their counterparts in Phase 1 areas started JRFND Stage 3 (after six months on JSA), whereas customers aged 25 and over continued with fortnightly signing for up to 18 months.

NDYP was a programme of assistance for 18–24-year-olds who had been unemployed for six months or more.¹⁶ Its aim was to increase employability and help young jobseekers find lasting work. NDYP began with the 'Gateway', during which jobseekers met with a personal adviser on a weekly basis to help them find a job. The Gateway lasted up to four months, though jobseekers were expected to find work or enter one of the following New Deal Options before four months had passed:

- Full-time Education and Training Option;
- Voluntary Sector Option;
- Environment Task Force Option.

Those who returned to claim JSA after one of the Options would be required to enter the 'Follow-through' for at least 16 weeks beginning with a series of weekly interviews focusing on moving people into work quickly. It provided an intensive period of job search activity and access to Gateway-type provision to build on and capitalise on the investment made in the Option.

¹⁵ The service fee and outcome funding split was changed from 20:50:30% to 40:30:30% to help providers through the recession.

¹⁶ For further details on NDYP refer to: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Jobseekers/programmesandservices/DG_173757

1.2.3 The New Deal 25 Plus

In Phase 2 areas where JRFND had not been rolled out, jobseekers aged 25 and over were required to join the New Deal 25 Plus (ND25+) if they had not found work after 18 months of claiming JSA. (By this time their counterparts in Phase 1 districts would have been participating in FND for six months.) Jobseekers on ND25+ were required to participate in four stages of job preparation:¹⁷

- an initial interview and assessment;
- a four-month 'Gateway' period that combined job search, advice, training, or other specialist help;
- an 'Intensive Activity Period' of training, work placement, and job search lasting at least 13 weeks; and
- a six-week 'Follow-Through' of continuing advice and support.

Gateway lasted up to four months and consisted of regular advisory meetings and possible referral to basic skills training and specialist help to address other work barriers. The IAP entailed mandatory work-related activities which included work-focused training, work placements and workshops to bolster motivation and confidence. Follow-through was similar to that delivered under NDYP, but lasted only six weeks.

1.3 The evaluation plan

The overall aim of the evaluation is to test the extent to which JRFND leads to additional employment outcomes for individuals and to provide possible explanations for the outcomes. The full evaluation to be delivered by the research consortium consists of a mixed method design. It includes a process study (research with customers, Jobcentre Plus, service providers); quantitative impact analyses; and a synthesis of the evidence.

Findings in the current report contribute to the evaluation process study which aims to address the following objectives:

- to assess the delivery of JRFND by Jobcentre Plus and contracted providers;
- to examine the customer experience of JRFND and to determine what elements of JRFND appear to help customers;
- to compare the customer experience of JRFND to the experience of customers at similar points in their claim in Phase 2 areas; and
- to contribute to future policy development.

The process study combines qualitative and quantitative evidence on operations and participant experiences. It will provide data to inform the interpretation of outcomes and impacts. The customer surveys will provide quantitative data for the impact analyses.

The focus of this evaluation report is on the FND stage of the JRFND programme. The customer survey compares outcomes and services in FND with those for customers with similar durations under the JSA/New Deal in Phase 2 areas. The qualitative research presents the experiences of FND services from customer and provider perspectives. The research should be considered together with previously reported findings from the full evaluation (refer to Adams *et al.*, 2010a and 2010b; Knight *et al.*, 2010; Vegeris *et al.*, 2010a and 2010b). Findings on the welfare-to-work marketplace under FND and the Commissioning Strategy are published in Armstrong *et al.* (2010 and 2011).

¹⁷ For further details on ND25+ refer to: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+www.direct.gov.uk/en/employment/Jobseekers/programmesandservices/DG_173718

1.4 Methodology

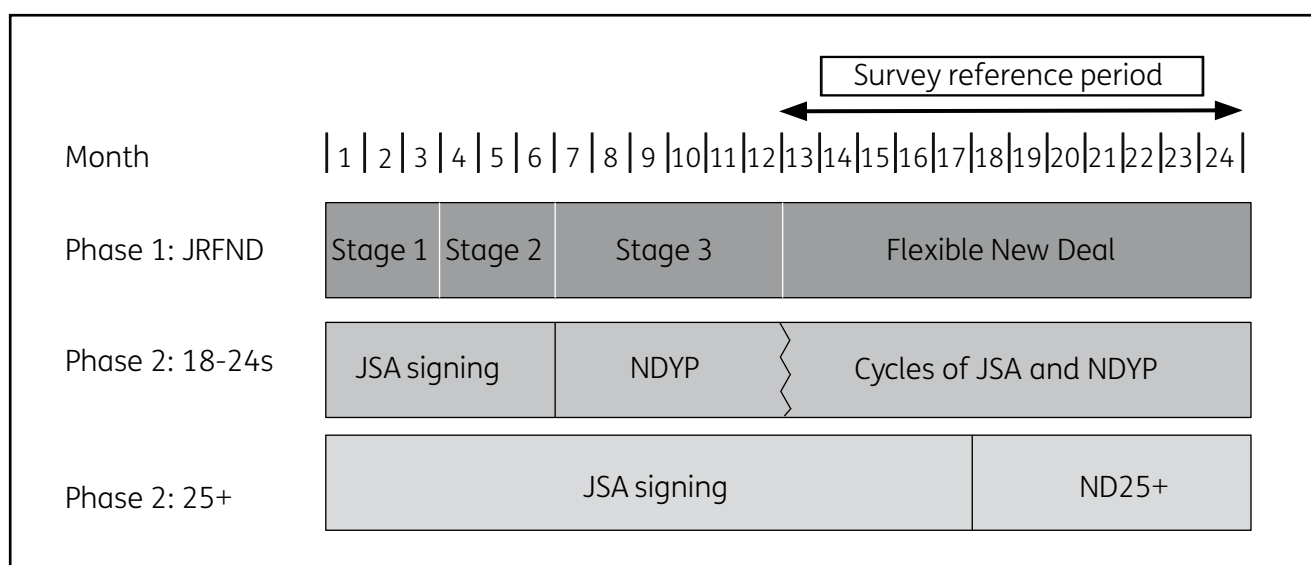
Evaluation research for this report consisted of a quantitative survey of customers and qualitative interviews with FND customers and provider staff.

1.4.1 Survey fieldwork

Customers were eligible for the FND (Stage 4)/comparison survey if they had entered FND (or reached their 52nd week of continuous JSA claiming in Phase 2 areas) between the weeks commencing 14 December 2009 and 8 March 2010. Customers were interviewed around 12 months later at a point when Phase 1 customers with a continuous claim had just completed FND.

In the interview, customers were asked to discuss their experiences over the preceding 12 months. This period was selected as it covered all FND experiences for Phase 1 customers. For Phase 2 customers, the nature of support experienced over this period differed by age group. Main-track customers aged 18-24 would usually have been completing their first NDYP cycle and embarking on a second cycle if they were still claiming JSA. Those aged 25+ claiming throughout this period in Phase 2 areas would normally have experienced six further months of regular JSA signing followed by the first six months of the ND25+. The differing nature of support experienced is summarised in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 Survey cohort



The intended evaluation design involved comparing the experiences of customers aged 25+ experiencing FND in Phase 1 areas with a cohort of customers aged 25+ in Phase 2 areas experiencing standard FJR, rather than New Deal 25 plus. Due to the implementation of the WP it was not possible to prevent the Phase 2 survey cohort from accessing New Deal 25 plus, hence the comparison used was the one illustrated on Figure 1.2.

The survey sample was drawn from the population of all eligible customers using a stratified sampling approach (stratified by Phase and age), with customers randomly selected within each stratum. Fast-track customers were excluded from the survey sample population from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas to enable a 'cleaner' comparison between customer experiences under the two regimes (with differing rules for fast-tracking under JRFND than under the previous regime, drawing comparisons would have been more complex if fast-trackers had been included).

An opt-out exercise was undertaken prior to the survey fieldwork commencing. The full sampling strategy is detailed in Appendix B.

A small number of pilot interviews were conducted before the main survey fieldwork to test the questionnaire structure and to ensure that respondents fully understood the nature of the questions being asked.

Telephone interviews were conducted from the IFF on-site computer-assisted telephone interviewing centre in central London. The FND survey took place between 12 January and 27 February 2011.

Customers were eligible for interview irrespective of whether they were claiming JSA at the time of the interview. Interviews were conducted in the evening and at weekends, as well as during normal working hours, to ensure customers who may have entered work were able to participate.

A total of 6,009 interviews were achieved (3,004 with Phase 1 customers and 3,005 with Phase 2 customers) as detailed in Table 1.1. The overall response rate was 74% (completed interviews as a percentage of completed interviews plus refusals).

Table 1.1 Achieved interviews by Phase and age at start of claim

| Stage 2 | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | ALL |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Under 25 | 1,002 | 1,000 | 2,002 |
| 25-49 | 1,002 | 1,005 | 2,007 |
| 50 or over | 1,000 | 1,000 | 2,000 |
| All | 3,004 | 3,005 | 6,009 |

A breakdown of customers interviewed by Phase based on demographics reported during the interview is also in Appendix C. Alongside this is shown the overall profile by age, gender, ethnicity and disability of all customers who started claims in the same weeks as the sample used for this survey, based on population counts provided by the DWP.

Quotas on Phase and age were set to ensure robust findings at the subgroup level. Data have been weighted to ensure findings are representative of the population of customers in each Stage and Phase. Further details can be found in Appendices B and C. Descriptive survey findings on customers aged 50+ are available in Appendix A. The customer survey questionnaire is available in Appendix D.

1.4.2 Qualitative fieldwork

The research used a case-study approach focused on three Jobcentre Plus districts in England and Scotland. Within these districts, four FND provider networks were studied. The fieldwork sampled staff and customers within these networks.

Jobcentre Plus districts

The three Jobcentre Plus districts selected for study provided sufficient variation by key characteristics such as population density, age profiles, ethnic diversity, rural and urban mix, principal industries, key employers and unemployment rates. Significant employers included the public sector, financial services, tourism and leisure, retail, and health and social care. To varying degrees across the sample districts, further growth was expected in the retail, housing, leisure, construction and manufacturing sectors.

FND providers

Four of the fourteen FND prime provider networks were purposively selected. These represented different approaches to programme delivery offering a mix of end-to-end and subcontracted providers for study. The four provider networks operated in three FND contract package areas, including choice and non-choice areas.¹⁸ They were characterised as follows:

- a prime provider that delivered an end-to-end service and accessed additional support from subcontractors and specialist partners;
- a prime provider that delivered an end-to-end service but also subcontracted other agencies to supply an end-to-end service. FND providers accessed additional support from subcontractors and specialist partners;
- a prime provider that delivered most of the programme but subcontracted one of the stages. FND providers accessed additional support from subcontractors and specialist partners;
- a prime provider that acted as a ‘managing agent’ using a number of subcontractors across distinct programme stages. FND subcontracted providers accessed additional support from other subcontractors and specialist partners.

Seventy-one FND staff were interviewed across the four provider networks. Respondents were experienced with the day-to-day delivery of the programme and were situated in either prime provider or subcontracted FND and specialist organisations. The vast majority of these organisations were in the private sector, with a small number of subcontracted specialists belonging to the public or third sectors (e.g. charities, education). The interviews were carried out in person or by telephone and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Fieldwork was conducted between September and November 2010.

FND customers

To gather more detail on the job seeker experience of FND, 44 depth interviews were conducted with current or former FND participants. Interviewee quotas were equally distributed across the four FND providers in the study. Interviews were conducted between October and December 2010. Customers were selected from two cohorts who had experienced FND at different times in relation to programme maturity and for different durations. Twenty-four customers had started the programme in May 2010 (6-month group) while the remaining twenty had begun FND close to the launch of the programme in November 2009 (12-month group).

This meant that by the time the customers were interviewed the 6-month group had experienced no more than 6 months on FND and the 12-month group no more than 12 months; less for customers who had found work.

Participants were identified from DWP administrative records and the fieldwork followed a postal opt-out exercise and telephone screening to identify employment status. The achieved sample reflects variation by gender, age, ethnicity, disability and work status (refer to Table 1.2). As an incentive and acknowledgement for their time, respondents received a £20 gift voucher.

¹⁸ Multiple provider (choice) areas were intended to stimulate competition which might, hypothetically, contribute to the quality of FND services. However, due to the decision to end FND, customer choice was not implemented so referrals continued to be shared between prime providers operating in these areas.

Table 1.2 Customer qualitative sample characteristics

| | FND 6-month group | FND 12-month group | All |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 20 | 17 | 37 |
| Female | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| Age | | | |
| 18–24 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| 25–34 | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| 35–44 | 8 | 9 | 17 |
| 45–54 | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| 55+ | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Ethnicity* | | | |
| White | 23 | 15 | 38 |
| Black and Minority Ethnic groups | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Disability | | | |
| Yes | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| No | 22 | 15 | 37 |
| Employment | | | |
| Yes | 9 | 4 | 13 |
| No | 15 | 16 | 31 |
| Total | 24 | 20 | 44 |

* Missing data due to respondent's preference not to state.

All qualitative interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed with respondent consent. Anonymised transcripts were collated and analysed thematically. The qualitative research instruments are available in Appendix E.

1.5 Report outline

The remainder of the report is organised as follows:

- Drawing from the qualitative interviews with FND staff and customers, Chapter 2 explores the different delivery models and a typical customer journey. Other processes are described: referrals between Jobcentre Plus and within provider networks, fortnightly signing at Jobcentre Plus and communications between these agencies.
- Chapters 3 and 4 report operational findings on service offer and take-up, the nature of advisory support and perceptions on conditionality. These sections combine data from the survey and qualitative interviews to provide a broad picture, comparing activities in Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas, as well as in-depth FND experiences.

- Chapter 5 presents qualitative findings on the sanctioning process from provider and customer perspectives.
- Chapter 6 draws on the survey data to examine the destinations of customers, presented separately for younger (18-24 years) and older (aged 25 and over) groups.
- Chapter 7 focuses on customers who entered work during the study period, comparing employer characteristics in Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas. It explores provider in-work support practices as well as workers' experiences of the support.
- Chapter 8 presents overall views from providers on the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. Customer views about the usefulness and appropriateness of support, with suggestions for improvements, are drawn from the survey and qualitative data.
- Chapter 9 discusses the key research findings with implications for future policy and employment programmes.

2 Flexible New Deal processes

This chapter uses the qualitative data to map out the Flexible New Deal (FND) delivery models and the basic structure of a customer journey. It describes the referral processes from within the supplier networks. It then explores the generic activities that constitute a customer journey, more details for which are provided in successive chapters.

2.1 Referrals from Jobcentre Plus

Customer referrals from Jobcentre Plus were fairly uniform and consistent across prime providers, a finding that supports previous research on the handover process (Vegeris *et al.*, 2010b). Referrals were received electronically through the Provider Referral and Payments system to a central administration office of the prime provider which then allocated customers to local FND provider offices based on geographical proximity or, in some cases, based on a provider specialism. The local provider would then establish contact with the customer via a letter inviting them to an induction session, followed up in some cases by a telephone call. An exception to this occurred with one prime provider network where initial contact was made by the central administration office. In this case the first contact the customer had with their local provider was at the first meeting.

The previous research identified warm handovers as a means for managing a more seamless customer transfer between Jobcentre Plus and FND provision. In this practice both the Jobcentre Plus adviser and an adviser from the FND provider were present at the handover or there was telephone contact while the customer was being told about the transfer by their Jobcentre Plus adviser. However, one year into FND operations, warm handovers were found to be rare. This procedure was followed when customers were considered dangerous, potentially violent or particularly vulnerable. FND adviser opinions on warm handovers diverged greatly. Some FND staff welcomed the opportunity to introduce their services at the handover stage and saw it as an opportunity to engage with customers early on. Others indicated that due to time constraints warm handovers would not be feasible.

2.1.1 Customer views

Customers in the sample all said that they were given no choice of FND provider.¹⁹ This applied to both prime providers and subcontractors. No customers expressed surprise or disappointment at the lack of choice. Customers also said that the transfer went relatively quickly – the gap between notification and their first appointment with the provider ranged from a few days to two or three weeks, confirming that providers were adhering to the contractually agreed engagement targets.

Recall of the referral process itself was often poor. Some customers remembered their Jobcentre Plus adviser telling them that they were about to join FND and that the provider would be contacting them. This was followed by a letter in the post (and sometimes a telephone call) from the provider with details of a first appointment. However, there were inconsistencies over how customers were notified about the transfer to FND. Although most customers received this information from their Stage 3 adviser, some said that they first heard they were about to join FND during a Fortnightly Jobsearch Review (FJR) meeting. Others reported that they received a letter from the provider

¹⁹ Originally designed to include choice in FND multiple-provider contract package areas, this element was not implemented once it was decided that FND would not continue. However, the research also found that customers were not generally presented with a choice of sub-contracted services either.

without prior warning from Jobcentre Plus. These people were surprised to hear from an unfamiliar organisation telling them that they had to attend a meeting on a certain date or their benefits might be stopped.

Some FND staff felt Jobcentre Plus Stage 3 advisers needed more understanding of FND so that they could better prepare customers for the transition to the new employment service. This echoes findings from earlier research (Vegeris *et al.*, 2010b) and suggests that after a year of operation, new FND customers still had limited information. However, this may also be a consequence of the ‘black box’ approach to service design.

Customers in the qualitative sample generally had very little idea of what to expect from FND. Most said that they were given only the sketchiest details – the name of the provider, the fact that the provider would be giving them extra help to find a job, and that they were required to attend regular meetings with the FND provider as a condition of receiving Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA).

2.2 Flexible New Deal structural models

An overview on the various ways in which FND delivery was organised across prime and subcontracted supplier networks can provide important context for the evaluation as well as for understanding the range of customer journeys depicted in the customer survey data. The qualitative study collected detail from a sample of these networks.

Separate research has studied the structure of FND delivery across the 14 contract package areas (Armstrong *et al.*, 2011). All prime providers managed the FND service as a whole and stated that delivery structures were developed to reflect previous experience of best practices in the welfare-to-work market. Delivery models ranged from one prime provider delivering all services in house (end-to-end) to one prime provider subcontracting almost all FND services (outsourcing). Altogether, just over half of the prime providers delivered the majority of FND services. To various extents primes subcontracted specific elements of mainstream services and specialist provision. Subcontractors also accessed specialist providers and delivery partners. But supply chains were generally short, with almost all contracts held between the prime provider and the subcontractor and virtually no further subcontracting from subcontractors.

In the current qualitative study the four FND provider networks were purposively selected because they offered slightly different routes for customers to follow over the 52 weeks of the programme. These can be distinguished by the degree to which the customers’ journey through the programme was organised into stages of support and, consequently, the minimum number of provider organisations a customer would encounter during the process: single (end-to-end) provider and multiple provider models. The end-to-end providers in the sample generally did not identify such stages while those with a chain of providers used a multi-stage approach, with stages delineated by the length of a JSA claim. Under one delivery structure, for example, customers transferred to a different organisation as they reached a new stage of the programme. Both of the prime providers which operated a staged model subcontracted the Mandatory Work-Related Activity (MWRA) component of FND.²⁰

Table 2.1 shows the structural classification for the prime providers included in the research sample.

²⁰ This section presents only limited detail on the nature of the separate FND delivery models in order to protect the anonymity of the prime provider organisations that participated in the study.

Table 2.1 FND structural models in the qualitative study

| FND model | Provider delivery structure |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| End-to-end = single provider | <p>Prime provider delivered an end-to-end service. Accessed additional support from subcontractors and specialist partners.</p> <p>Prime provider delivered an end-to-end service but also subcontracted other agencies to supply an end-to-end service. FND providers accessed additional support from subcontractors and specialist partners.</p> |
| Staged = multiple providers | <p>Prime provider delivered most of the programme but subcontracted one of the stages. FND providers accessed additional support from subcontractors and specialist partners.</p> <p>Prime provider acted as a ‘managing agent’ using a number of subcontractors across distinct programme stages. FND providers accessed additional support from subcontractors and specialist partners.</p> |

All FND provision included a network of subcontracted agencies and menu partners which delivered specialist services, for example: CV writing or mentoring services; specialist help for drug and alcohol addiction problems, lone parents or homeless people; and specialist sector industries (e.g. construction, creative occupations), specific qualification profiles (e.g. graduates or professionals), or support for people interested in self-employment. Providers typically used call-off contracts to pay for these services when needed.

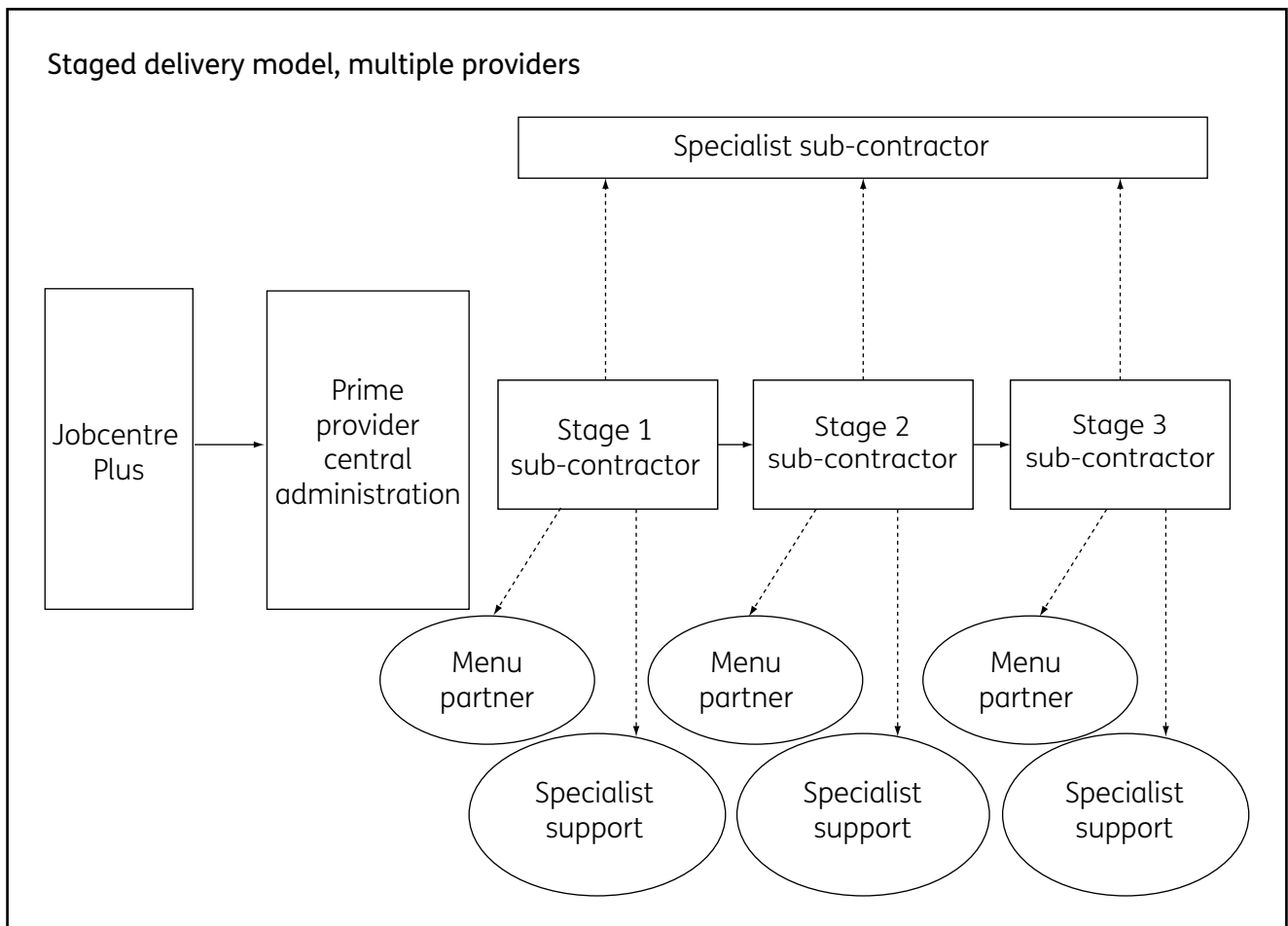
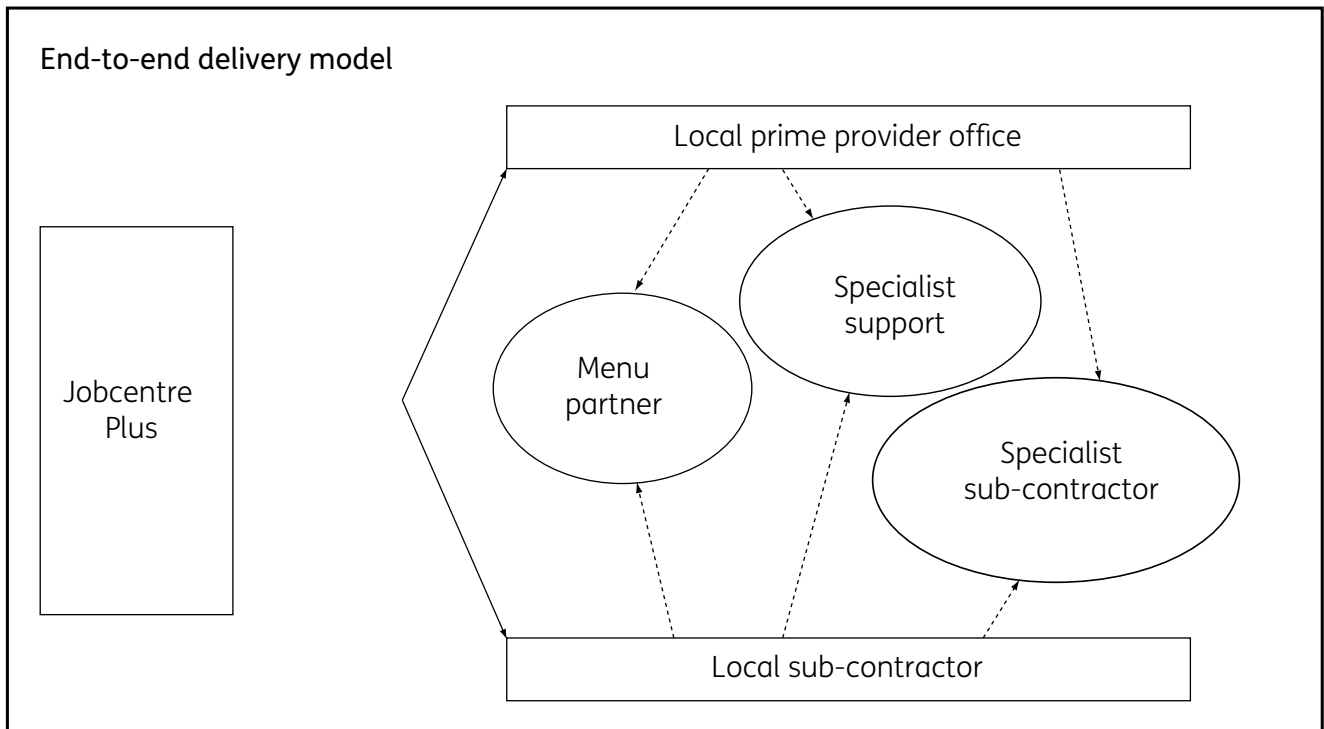
These FND delivery models translate into two distinct structural routes through the FND. From the customers’ perspective, these routes are depicted in Figure 2.1.

2.2.1 Referrals within FND networks

For the most part, prime provider and subcontracted staff considered the referral process to be straightforward. The majority of referrals for additional services and support were conducted by telephone. Less common were referrals via email, signposting customers and customers proactively seeking services. Warm handovers, when they occurred, were usually conducted via telephone with the customer present, ‘*so they know what’s being discussed*’. In some cases the customer was given the option to speak with the referral organisation directly. It was felt this practice gave customers information and reassurance about the intended service and it enabled the service provider to immediately assess the suitability of the customer. All staff made it clear that, unless the customer was transferring to an end-to-end service, they were still required to report to their FND provider for regular advisory meetings.

Separate evidence on customer flows within FND supply chains has found that subcontractors generally perceived the volume of customer referrals as lower than anticipated (Armstrong *et al.*, 2011). Common concerns related to inconsistencies in the amount of referrals and the quality of referrals. In a survey of subcontractors, about half indicated that they were finding the commercial viability of the FND contract to be a challenge because of the low level of referrals received. This was most evident among suppliers who were not receiving guaranteed levels of referrals.

Figure 2.1 FND structural journeys



The referral process was integral to customer journeys under the staged FND delivery model. Customers were normally assigned to the next stage provider located closest to their home address. The transfer of a customer to the next stage was recorded on a shared computer system and customers would receive notice of an appointment with the new provider through the post. But the manner of the referral was not consistent across subcontracted provider organisations. Some staff reported they arranged telephone contact between the customer and the next stage provider. Others said that they supplied literature and discussed the transfer to the next provider with the customer at their last advisory appointment. Proximity to the referring organisation was also important. Where Stage 1 and 2 providers were located in the same building it was possible to conduct a warm handover with all three parties present. Another provider reported that the induction for the next stage was carried out on their premises. Within the FND network, customer files were usually available electronically (intranet system or email) but there was also mention of sending a hard copy of customer details through secure post.

Specialist subcontractors offering services such as CV writing or self employment support, described the referral process on the whole as unproblematic. One staff member reported initial delays due to negotiations with the prime provider. When referrals started to come through, only essential information on customers was given to the subcontractor, although this person did not perceive it as an issue:

'So it's pretty basic information that I get from the [prime] when I'm going to see the client for the first time. But I don't have any problems with that because it leaves the field free then for me to do my own assessment of the client, rather than somebody else saying to me what their opinion might be.'

(FND provider staff)

2.2.2 Staff skills and training

Generally it was expected that FND customers would encounter a variety of in-house staff as they accessed various forms of support during the course of the programme. These might include: administrators, managers, advisers, employer engagement officers, work placement co-ordinators and trainers.

Within the sample of providers, advisory staff reported relatively high caseloads, reflecting the volumes of customers moving on to FND. Caseloads ranged from 60 customers per adviser at a small end-to-end subcontractor to 120 customers at a prime provider office. One adviser who supported customers with severe barriers to work such as addiction and homelessness reported a caseload of 90 customers, indicating that staff who supplied specialist services were also dealing with high volumes.

The majority of staff in the sample started work for the organisation when FND was launched or sometime during the life of the programme. There were few examples where staff had served with the company for longer than two years. Staff backgrounds varied greatly with the majority having extensive experience in the industry as advisers in welfare-to-work programmes (e.g. the New Deal programmes), job brokers, recruitment officers and trainers. Others had completely different backgrounds (e.g. construction industry). One adviser was a former FND customer with the provider and believed this to be an advantage because they had *'seen it from both sides'*.

Staff training on FND provision varied greatly among providers. Most staff said they had received instruction on the prime provider's IT software and systems to enable them to record and process customer accounts. Some staff reported they had extensive guidance on FND procedures and processes, often provided by the prime provider directly. In some cases this included specific training courses (e.g. conflict management) while others had continuous training on FND-related issues (e.g. sanctioning, Action Plans). In contrast, a small group of staff in the study said they received no formal training on FND procedures or processes and were expected to 'just roll with it' while learning on the job or shadowing a colleague.

Some staff had professional qualifications (NVQ Level 3 or 4) in advice and guidance or staff indicated their organisation expected them to work towards these qualifications to enable them to assess customer needs adequately and provide the necessary support. However, staff at other providers questioned their role in relation to providing advice and guidance to customers. They saw their role as job brokers who placed people into employment, not as guidance professionals:

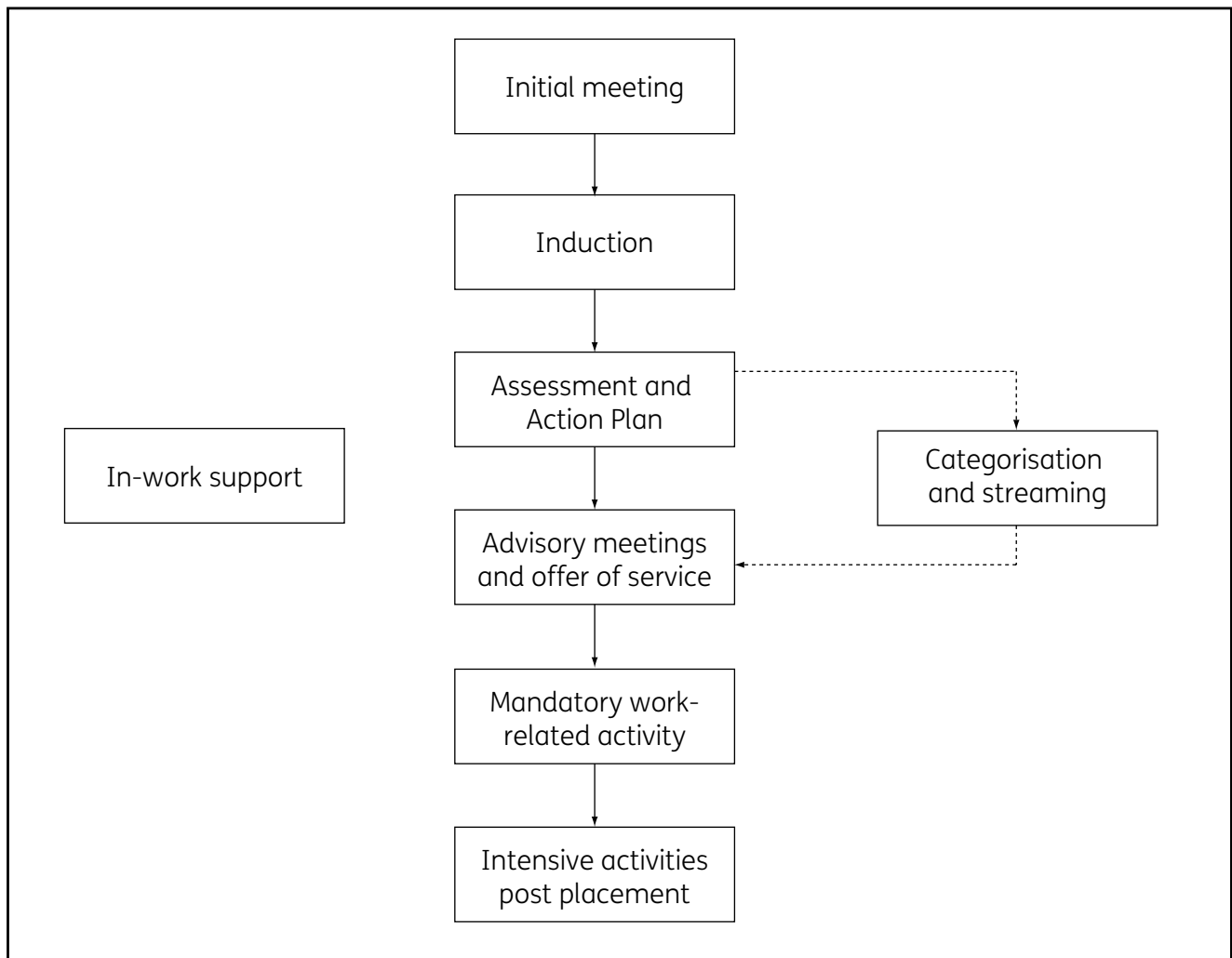
'I mean we're not really made to be advice and guidance [sic] because we're not qualified to give specific advice.'

(FND provider staff)

2.3 Mapping the Flexible New Deal process

Across all FND providers included in the research, the customer journey through the programme followed a similar sequence of activities: initial advisory meeting, induction, assessment, Action Plan, advisory meetings with offers of services, MWRA, more advisory meetings with offers of services, in-work support (for customers in employment). This process is depicted in Figure 2.2.

The following sections provide an overview on each of these activities. More detailed findings are presented in later chapters of the report.

Figure 2.2 Generic FND process

2.3.1 Initial meeting and induction

Initial one-to-one meetings

Data from both provider staff and customer accounts portrayed a similar picture on what occurred during initial FND contact. After being invited by letter and sometimes personally through a phone call, the customer attended an initial meeting. This took place with a personal adviser. The initial meetings differed in length and could be as short as 20 minutes or as long as 90 minutes, in which case they functioned as the induction session. Shorter meetings allowed for a brief introduction and general meet and greet, while the longer meetings often included some initial assessments (literacy and numeracy, other functional skills) and the drafting of an Action Plan. The adviser might also check the customer's CV and offer suggestions. Discussions centred on the job search, work goals and help needs. The adviser might book the customer onto an in-house training course. Customers' feelings about the usefulness of this initial meeting and subsequent advisory meetings depended largely on their view of the personality and skills of the adviser concerned. (See Chapter 4 for further details.)

Induction

In the induction, which was sometimes carried out as a one-to-one meeting but more often as a group activity, providers typically introduced their organisation and explained the rights and responsibilities of customers, as well as the services available to them. The length of the induction differed substantially across the organisations in the case study districts. In some instances, the induction was condensed into a 90-minute to half-day workshop that included the introduction and rights and responsibilities information, some form of skills assessment and sometimes a CV workshop. Other organisations had full day inductions where a broader range of workshops (including motivation building, for instance) were offered. One end-to-end provider initially conducted an induction including an intensive job search workshop over three days, but due to the volume of customers flowing onto the programme the workshop had to be cut down to half a day.

Customers reported that group induction sessions were generally held in the provider's offices. They covered similar topics regardless of whether the provider was delivering the whole of FND or just one stage of the process. In the districts where FND was divided into stages delivered by different organisations, customers received an induction with each organisation. According to customers, the content of the induction was fairly standardised. The presenter would introduce the FND provider organisation and tell them what support they could expect to receive. Customers would also be warned that if they did not do what was asked of them the provider would inform Jobcentre Plus, who might stop their benefits. Customers would fill in forms with their personal details, qualifications, skills, work experience, what sort of work they were looking for and any help they wanted – with basic skills, for instance. Often customers would take a basic skills test. Sometimes the presenter would give a talk about job-searching or a related subject.

Some jobseekers commented on the presenters' upbeat tone. Customers who had not been with a provider before often found it helpful to be told at the start of the programme about the services available to them. Some, however, found the sessions patronising (e.g. 'they treated us like kids') or were angered by the warning that they could be sanctioned if they did not co-operate.

Inductions in staged delivery models

Customers who had experienced induction sessions at several providers said that presenters often claimed that their organisation was different from Jobcentre Plus and other employment services. Customers were cynical about such claims, and one was put off by what she described as the presenter's uncomplimentary comments about Jobcentre Plus services, which she felt were unjustified and a crude attempt to bond with customers.

Another common grievance was that customers had to fill in forms asking for the same information and take the same basic skills tests every time they went to a new provider. In cases where the programme was comprised of different stages delivered by separate providers, customers were frustrated that the organisations did not pass on this information. This finding contradicts staff accounts on provider referral practices (see Section 2.3.1). To customers, repeating the same routine steps added to the sense of being 'processed' or 'just a number':

'They [the new provider] were okay. At least they treated us like a kind of person and not a number, but even then they had like eighty million forms to fill out. You had blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, number, number, number, number...Number One should give Number Two all your forms and details...You do it again and again and again. You get sick of this.'

(FND customer)

2.3.2 Assessment

During either the initial meeting or the induction session, providers generally carried out a baseline assessment of a customer's basic skills and barriers to work. The assessment was self-completed in either electronic or paper format. Advisers said they took these results into consideration, together with the Action Plans and other information submitted by Jobcentre Plus, when recommending support and services. Advisers' own diagnostic judgements about a customer were also said to be a key element in determining appropriate services. In some cases, providers did not carry out a formal skills assessment. One adviser commented on the provider's reliance on advisers' capabilities to assess customers appropriately:

'I don't think we have very good diagnostic tools...essentially we are the diagnostic tool[s]...'

(FND provider staff)

Providers generally categorised customers according to their distance from the labour market, often using a traffic light (red-amber-green) system, to identify how much support a customer needed. The support given to customers was said to vary by category, with customers closer to the labour market being directed to more intensive job searching while customers with barriers to work were directed towards workshops or specialist support.

There were some concerns among staff about how a traffic-light system could be interpreted, as one adviser commented:

'The imagery it conjures up is obviously that of a traffic light, is of "stop", and I don't think that's particularly helpful.'

(FND provider staff)

One subcontracted, end-to-end provider specialising in the creative industries streamed customers according to their interests rather than their job readiness, as this was thought to lead to more supportive, cohesive workshops. Staff indicated that there were no formal tools available to categorise customers appropriately and for this reason they avoided any kind of categorisation.

Customers in the sample generally recalled an assessment of their basic skills and employability needs (CVs, IT capability) as outlined by the provider staff. It was rare for customers to be aware of provider categorisation or segmentation schemes. Customers with higher-level qualifications pointed out that the basic skills tests were irrelevant to them. But some customers with lower-level qualifications found the tests intimidating, commenting that the purpose was to *'find all your weak points'* and that *'we were being judged'*. This unease may be partly due to the lack of information provided on the outcomes of the assessment exercise. For most customers there was no understanding of how or if the assessment was linked to skills training or other skills enhancing activities while some expressed disappointment that there was no follow-on provision of training. One person, previously a factory worker with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) needs was told that the skills needs assessment was just *'paperwork'*. One exception was a man with a history of low-skilled work who had been unemployed for eight years. He was referred to a literacy course following the assessment.

2.3.3 Action Plans

The Action Plan was used as the principal tool for documenting and monitoring customer progress. Provider-arranged assessments, together with any information received from Jobcentre Plus, contributed to a customer profile. Activities carried out were compared to 'agreed actions' (e.g. attendance at training courses, help received with CVs or reading and writing) and this was generally documented at each advisory meeting. The Action Plan enabled advisers to start with customers

where they left off. The information was stored on internal computer networks which made them easily accessible to staff and permitted the transfer of information between advisers within the same organisation. Although there were inconsistencies reported, this information generally travelled with the jobseeker when they were referred to another provider.

The Action Plan was also considered to be a tool for '*constant evaluation*'. Depth knowledge of the customer was important for performing informal diagnostics when matching services to customer needs. Ongoing reviews and monitoring of progress were needed to maintain customer momentum; customers needed to be reminded of the progress they had already made. The record was useful for reviewing what steps were taken and what strategies were working. Action Plans were also used to monitor and revise provider services and workshops to ensure they were benefiting customers.

Most customers in the sample recalled having an Action Plan developed by their FND provider, although this was also referred to as '*a print out of job searches*' or as a continuation of the Jobseeker's Agreement. The Action Plan usually specified the types and numbers of job searches and the number of job applications submitted each week. Based on customer accounts, there was limited evidence that the Action Plans included specific activities relating job search tasks to the targeted work sector. For example, one customer who had previously worked in graphic design had the development of a website included in his Action Plan. Another individual who was previously employed in the film and television industry said his logged activities were based on a business plan for generating funds to produce films.

Customer views on the usefulness of Action Plans were mixed. For example, one person, a factory worker, found the Action Plan to be useful as it increased the pressure to find work as did the knowledge of sanctions. One customer viewed the targets as helpful because it was '*sometimes easy to let things slide.*' Another customer felt the Action Plan was not relevant since he kept his own records and said it was appropriate for the '*less motivated.*'

The extent to which the Action Plan was updated varied considerably. A few customers claimed that it was never updated while for others it was amended fortnightly. Some reported that they were doing more than required but that the adviser had not amended the Action Plan to reflect this extra effort. In areas where FND was delivered by multiple providers, most customers recalled that their new provider discussed the existing Action Plan and agreed any changes with them.

2.3.4 Regular advisory meetings

All staff reported that advisory meetings took place at least fortnightly, if not more frequently. This aligns with the minimum service agreement as stated in the FND service contract. The length and frequency of these meetings varied across providers and over time, or by FND stages (where relevant). Within these parameters adjustments to the timetabling of meetings could also vary according to customer needs. The reported frequency of meetings ranged from twice weekly to fortnightly while the duration of meetings ranged from 30 minutes to two hours. Additionally, advisers urged customers to frequent the provider premises and make use of the job search facilities.

More details on contacts with advisers and how this changed over the course of FND are provided in Chapter 4.

2.3.5 Offer of services

All provider networks in the sample included a 'tool box' of in-house and off-site services and supports which advisers could draw on to help their customers into work. A detailed analysis of these FND services with staff and customer views is available in Chapter 3.

2.3.6 Mandatory Work-Related Activity

Providers were required to ensure that all customers undertook an MWRA. According to the FND guidance, this could take the form of a work trial, work experience, test trading in support of a move to self-employment, community work, voluntary work or certain types of work-focused training. The activity was expected to be full time (at least 30 hours) and take place for four weeks sometime during the 52-week programme. In the study, the MWRA typically took the form of a work placement, although a substantial number of customers did not experience this. In the staged delivery models, the MWRA was arranged by a subcontracted agency and tended to occur between weeks 21 and 34 of FND. There was more flexibility over the timing of the MWRA when arranged by the end-to-end providers. A more detailed account of the MWRA is presented in Chapter 3.

2.3.7 In-work support

All providers delivered in-work support. This was intended to help people deal with transitional issues that may make work difficult for them during the initial months. FND providers were incentivised to provide work retention services through the outcome-based payment system. Both staff and customers reported that this support was not always welcome by working individuals. More details on the nature of in-work support and worker experiences of support are provided in Chapter 7.

2.4 Other processes

This section addresses other aspects of the FND process – experiences of travel between FND service suppliers, fortnightly signing at Jobcentre Plus and ongoing communications between providers and jobcentre staff.

2.4.1 Travel

Most provider staff did not view customer travel as an issue. This was because most services were located within a reasonable travel distance from the customer's home and in easily accessible locations. Provision tended to be located close to Jobcentre Plus offices or near public transport links, which providers believed added to the convenience. Additionally, most staff reported they reimbursed travel expenses. In the network where customers attended multiple providers at various stages of the FND process, providers were often located in the same building or within close proximity so transfer to the next stage was not seen as an issue. Providers in this network did however, acknowledge that some customers were reluctant to travel, in which case attempts were made to find another provider closer to their home or even to deliver the service at an alternative location.

These views were echoed by customers in the sample who had found their travel to be straightforward as FND offices were conveniently located in town or city centres. Some were wary of travelling to unfamiliar areas. Customers who changed providers sometimes had problems finding their way the first time, and in a few cases felt unsafe in the neighbourhood where their provider was based.

Yet, in rural and large catchment areas, travel was a concern. In some cases customers had to travel substantial distances to get to their provider. For instance, one person who had no car and lived in an area with a poor bus service said that it took her an hour each way, and two bus transfers, to get to her provider for what she said was usually a five- or ten-minute meeting. A man who lived in an isolated village had an 80-mile round trip to his provider. He used a car for this and said that the provider had at first been reluctant to refund his full fuel costs. Other customers reported problems reclaiming their expenses for travel-to-work placements or when they accessed provider facilities

on a drop-in basis. Staff acknowledged that funding long-distance travel costs was a burden on finances. This is explored further in Chapter 4.

To make rural services more accessible, one provider was considering starting outreach work so that customers had easier access to their services. Others considered opening or had already opened branch offices in more convenient locations. However, among FND providers there was no mention of using more innovative communication technologies, such as the internet, to improve service access in rural areas.

2.4.2 Childcare

Childcare provision varied greatly across providers. Services tended to be arranged reactively, in response to need. Overall, prime provider staff appeared to respond as flexibly as possible to customers with family commitments. A similar picture emerged for specialist subcontracted providers.

One manager described a policy of working around customer's timetables where possible, but offering provision where required, *'we're flexible firstly, but if we do need to cover childcare, then we will do that'*. Children were often welcome at providers, where there were either play areas or colouring books and toys on offer for amusement. Some providers offered childcare for customers attending their meetings whereas others did not have this facility. One provider issued guidelines which prohibited advisers from booking childcare for customers, but offered a list of registered childminders and paid for the session. A number of staff described having contracted provision at their disposal but had yet to deal with customers who required help with childcare.

Staff listed a range of ways that they could support parents looking for work. For example, advisers would ask about a customer's childcare needs at their initial assessment; perform an in-work financial calculation for customers; advise on suitable work (sometimes part time) to balance with childcare commitments; avoid recommending jobs with unsociable hours; provide information or websites for working parents; provide information on employers with crèches and those who offered flexible working.

2.4.3 Fortnightly signing at Jobcentre Plus

While attending the FND provider, customers were required to continue FJRs at Jobcentre Plus to monitor their eligibility for JSA. According to customers, FJRs were brief meetings, lasting between two and ten minutes. A small number of customers in one district said that their Jobcentre Plus office had replaced face-to-face meetings for FND customers with a 'drop box' system, which was viewed favourably as a time saver.

FND customers remarked that their FJRs were more cursory than in the past. Some put this down to greater customer numbers or fewer members of staff at Jobcentre Plus. Others had been told, or assumed, that it was because Jobcentre Plus had passed the task of helping them to the FND provider:

'[The Jobcentre Plus adviser said] "We're handing you over to [the provider]" ...You still needed to go in every two weeks to sign on but anything to do with finding work now, finding training or anything like that, [the provider] dealt with that.'

(FND customer)

The content of the meetings was similar for customers across the three study districts. The signing officer would ask the jobseeker if they had worked during the past two weeks, check their job search record and then ask them to sign. Some were not asked to produce their job search record. Time permitting, some customers said that the signing officer might perform a short job search on the data base.

Unsurprisingly, customers did not usually find the FJR meetings useful but they tended to accept signing on as something they had to do to maintain their benefit. As one jobseeker remarked, *'If I don't go, I don't get no money'*. A minority did question why they had to sign on at Jobcentre Plus given that they were attending their FND provider at least once a fortnight and the provider was expected to report them to Jobcentre Plus if they did not do so:

'The jobcentre could have said, "Right, well we're going to pay you from then until then and don't come to sign on for a year because you're with FND now." ...Because [the providers] share their information with the jobcentre anyway.'

(FND customer)

Similarly, some FND staff suggested it would be far easier and more practical if customers could sign on at the provider's premises. The requirement for customers to attend two places led at times to confusion as to who had responsibility for checking Action Plans and evidence of job searching. One FND adviser described a lack of co-ordination between Jobcentre Plus and the FND provider on what actions were agreed with customers.

Clashes between FJRs and meetings with FND providers did not appear to be a significant problem. FND staff did not perceive the FJRs to be impacting on their own interventions. Some indicated that they would try and schedule meetings on the same day customers had to sign on in order to reduce the burden of travel, but this was not always possible. Some provider staff did report clashes with the scheduling of their services and customers' signing on times. On occasion customers had missed workshops because of this, or it was difficult to book courses. One adviser at an end-to-end provider felt that Jobcentre Plus was inflexible about rescheduling customer signing appointments.

2.4.4 Communications with local Jobcentre Plus staff

Previous research conducted during the first months of FND implementation (Vegeris *et al.*, 2010b) found that communications between FND prime providers and Jobcentre Plus generally took place at the district level. Several prime providers considered Jobcentre Plus as a local strategic partner. Jobcentre Plus had an important role in communicating job vacancies and by ensuring a smooth flow of customers onto FND. But Jobcentre Plus office staff had expressed concern about their lack of contact with local FND providers.

In the current research, the nature of communications between FND delivery staff and Jobcentre Plus office staff appeared to be dependent on established provider practices and past experiences of staff. Although not all FND delivery staff reported having contact with Jobcentre Plus office staff, those who did tended to describe good relations with local jobcentres. Contact was considered useful for progressing customers through FND, to request information, seek clarifications or check if customers were actively seeking work, for example. Open and frequent communication with Jobcentre Plus allowed both parties to share testimonials, case studies and provide feedback. For some providers, this was a natural continuation of practices that had been established when they were involved in the delivery of the previous New Deals. There were incidences of collaboration where an FND provider had organised a jobs fair at a local jobcentre and where signing officers came to FND premises to conduct fortnightly signing.

Others reported minimal or no interaction at all. This was not always viewed as an issue, however. Subcontracted staff connected with one of the prime provider networks reported they were instructed not to contact Jobcentre Plus. It was not clear from the data whether a prohibition on contacting Jobcentre Plus was contained in their organisation's contract with the prime provider. In any case, this situation was considered unfortunate as it was felt that communications across these organisations could enhance customer services.

A minority of staff described less positive relations, usually because they described Jobcentre Plus staff as unresponsive to information requests. In reference to unreturned phone calls, one staff member described this interaction, *'like getting blood out of a stone'*. One FND adviser commented that jobcentre staff use the Data Protection Act *'to their advantage'*, thereby limiting their contact with the provider. Another adviser suggested that the capacity of provider staff to spend far more time with customers was a possible source of tension for relations:

'I think the jobcentre is a bit dubious as to what we do sometimes, although we're trying to meet with them and get to know them on a personal level, so they know we're not out to try and get rid of them or take their jobs.'

(FND provider staff)

2.5 Examples of customer journeys

The journeys of three jobseekers, one from each of the three study districts, are described below. These are not intended to represent typical customer journeys but rather to illustrate the wide range of experiences of those who took part in the qualitative research.

Box 2.1 Customer journey 1 – single-provider delivery

Jill was in her late 50s and had been in and out of work since finishing university as a mature student fourteen years ago. She wanted to become a teacher but had large debts and could not afford to take a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course. She stayed with one FND provider organisation, a further education college, throughout her 12 months on FND.

Box 2.2 Customer journey 2 – two-provider delivery

Alastair was a chef in his 30s who was willing to take unskilled work in another field.

For the first six months of FND, Alastair's interaction with the prime provider, an international welfare-to-work company, consisted of weekly one-to-one meetings. He had two advisers throughout this period. One conducted job searches for him and the other coached him in job-searching, basic IT and soft skills.

Alastair was then transferred to a local training company for around three months. They arranged a four-week work placement at a furniture removal company, which Alastair found useful and enjoyed.

At the time of the interview Alastair was back with the prime provider and was about to finish his allotted 12 months on FND. He was still seeing the same two advisers, who he liked and thought were helping him (*'I get a good laugh with the two of them'... 'they want to help me out... everything that they're doing just now is just helping out'*). The provider had put in an application for an extension, which Alastair hoped would be approved because he appreciated the level of one-to-one support he was receiving and believed that he could not get this at Jobcentre Plus.

Box 2.3 Customer journey 3 – three-provider delivery

Bill, a construction worker in his late 40s, became unemployed after a knee injury. He was looking for work which was less physically demanding.

Bill's initial provider was a local branch of an international welfare-to-work company, where he spent one day every week attending group job-search sessions. This branch was closed down after several weeks and Bill was transferred to another branch, which itself closed soon afterwards, at which point he was moved to the prime provider's central branch. According to Bill, the first company lost its contract with the prime provider after he had been with them for around three months. His activities at the central branch again mainly consisted of group job-search sessions.

After five months on FND Bill was transferred to a second-stage provider, a national welfare-to-work company. According to the prime provider's model, this provider should have organised an MWRA, but Bill said that this was never mentioned and did not take place.

At around the eight-month point Bill was transferred to a third-stage provider, a regional social enterprise based in another part of the city. Here he told his adviser that he was interested in starting a business as an artist and agreed to be referred to a provider specialising in self-employment. After ten months on FND, Bill was transferred to a small, specialist self-employment provider in the city centre. He attended a voluntary one-day course on setting up a business and together with his adviser he put together a business plan. But he had no savings and could find no way of raising the money he needed to cover the start-up costs of a business, so he was not able to put the plan into action. After 12 months Bill was referred back to Jobcentre Plus. At the time of the interview he was still looking for work.

During his time on FND Bill saw five providers at seven different locations. He was angry about being passed from one provider to another and felt that he was treated like a 'number'. He said that the only useful support he received was from his specialist provider and wished that he had been referred there earlier.

2.6 Summary

This chapter used the qualitative data to map out the FND process and customer journey. More detailed analysis is available in the proceeding chapters.

From the provider sample, two structural models were identified which predetermined the minimum number of agencies a customer would encounter on FND. End-to-end providers managed the entire customer journey, supplying services under one roof. Under a staged FND model, the programme was delivered by multiple providers and a move to the next stage adviser (or provider) coincided with certain points in a JSA claim. All providers referred to a network of subcontractors and menu partners for specialist services.

All FND providers offered a similar sequence of customer activities: initial advisory meeting, induction, assessment, Action Plan, advisory meetings with offers of services, MWRA, more advisory meetings with offers of services, in-work support (for customers in employment).

Customers started the programme with an initial meeting. These ranged from 20 to 90 minutes. Shorter meetings allowed for a brief introduction and general meet and greet, while the longer meetings often included some initial assessments (literacy and numeracy, other functional skills) and the drafting of an Action Plan. Discussions would centre around the job search, work goals and the help needed.

An induction, typically in group format, was used to relay customer rights and responsibilities and to complete administrative tasks. These could range from a few hours to a full day. During longer induction sessions, customers would encounter workshops on job searching or CV writing. In staged delivery models, customers went through an induction session with each change of provider. This repetition was considered monotonous and inefficient by the customers.

Self-completed skills assessments were used to identify training needs and to categorise customers, although customers were generally unaware of this process or of the results of their skills tests. Staff reported this information was included in a personalised Action Plan which recorded agreed activities and was used to monitor progress. Customers often recalled an Action Plan, although in many cases its purpose and usefulness was unclear to them.

During the 12-month programme, regular meetings with a personal adviser typically occurred on a fortnightly basis, as per the FND contractual agreement. But the length and frequency of these meetings varied across providers and over time, as well as over the FND stages (where relevant).

All FND networks in the study included provision to arrange a MWRA. This typically took the form of a work placement but also included work trials, test trading to support a move to self-employment, voluntary work or work-focused training. In the staged delivery model, the MWRA was arranged by a subcontractor and tended to occur during a set period of time. End-to-end providers offered more flexibility with the timing of the MWRA.

In-work support was offered by all providers to support customers' transition into work. This was a measure to help promote sustainable employment, a goal tied to the outcome-based contract agreements. Both staff and customers reported that this support was not always welcome by working individuals.

Travel to services was generally not seen as an issue with the exception of rural areas. Most provider offices were located in city and town centres easily accessible by public transport. Customers in more rural areas reported problems with travel times, lack of public transport and issues reclaiming travel expenses. From customer reports, there were inconsistencies over what travel costs were reimbursed by different providers.

In general, fortnightly signing at Jobcentre Plus was not seen to interfere with FND processes. Customers generally accepted this responsibility as a condition of their benefit but observed that the FJR meetings lacked content and some questioned their usefulness. However, the requirement for customers to attend two separate organisations led at times to confusion as to who had responsibility for checking Action Plans and evidence of job searching. The quality of relations between FND and Jobcentre Plus office staff was dependent on established provider practices and the past experiences of staff. Where communication existed, most FND staff were positive about their experience, but a minority considered Jobcentre Plus staff to be unresponsive to information requests.

3 Services and take-up

This chapter looks at the services offered to Flexible New Deal (FND) customers. It begins by setting out the range of services available, as described by the providers themselves. The second section focuses on the levels of take-up of different services, variations in take-up by customer group, and differences between Phase 1 (FND) and Phase 2 (non-FND) areas. After this, customers' views on services are examined in detail. The final section covers provider and customer perspectives on the Mandatory Work-Related Activity (MWRA).

3.1 Range of services

As minimum services standards, providers were required by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to hold fortnightly face-to-face meetings²¹ and to arrange a MWRA²² for each customer. Beyond this, the 'black box' approach gave providers the freedom to offer services tailored to the needs of individual customers and local labour markets.

Across the four prime-provider delivery networks in the study, the services offered to customers can be categorised into four types: employability training and support, other skills training, specialised support and the MWRA. These are set out in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 FND services and activities

| Employability training and support | Other skills training | Specialised support | MWRA |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Training in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job searching (e.g. CVs and interview skills) • confidence and motivation • time management • literacy and numeracy • basic IT skills CV writing service | Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence Short work-related training courses (e.g. food hygiene, moving and handling, customer service, first aid) | Referral to partner organisation for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mentoring • support for lone parents Referral to another FND provider specialising in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-employment • graduates and professionals • creative industries • construction industry Signposting to help with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addiction • homelessness • debt | Work placement Voluntary work Work trial Test trading with a view to self-employment Four-week intensive job-search course |
| Group job-search sessions Support from employer engagement staff | Signposting to Individual Learning Account (ILA) Scotland scheme (Scotland only) | | |

²¹ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/fnd-section-3.pdf>

²² <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/fnd-section-6.pdf>

3.1.1 Employability training and support

Employability training and support were widely offered, with some providers routinely signing up new customers to training sessions. Topics included job searching (job-search techniques, CVs, application forms, covering letters, interview skills and self-marketing); confidence and motivation building; time management; literacy and numeracy; and basic IT skills.

Employability training sessions were typically delivered in-house to groups of customers in a workshop or classroom format. They ranged in duration from one hour to a full day. Training in literacy, numeracy and basic IT skills was delivered in-house by some providers; others referred customers to outside organisations such as further education colleges. Several providers offered an in-house CV writing service, usually delivered by a dedicated team or member of staff. Other providers used a contracted partner for this service. Some providers had dedicated teams (sometimes called 'Employer Engagement Officers') who made links with employers and encouraged them to recruit their customers.

Group job-search sessions were a common practice. Many providers also allowed customers to use their computing, printing and postage facilities outside these sessions.

Workshops and classroom-style sessions were usually offered on a regular basis. Some staff indicated they generally discussed the options available with the customer and jointly decided which sessions would be suitable. Some organisations had a dedicated day of the week for training. Others offered training on an *ad hoc* basis, depending on customer numbers. One end-to-end provider placed all customers on an intensive training programme consisting of workshops on job searching and other aspects of employability. This programme lasted two weeks when it was introduced but was later condensed into three days. This was mainly due to high customer volumes but also took into account negative feedback from customers about the course content which had been adapted from the company's provision in another country.

Where customers had been flagged by Jobcentre Plus as potentially violent or when customers were not confident in group settings, providers offered most of their courses on a one-to-one basis, often in condensed format – 30 minutes instead of one hour, for instance.

3.1.2 Other skills training

Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards and Security Industry Authority (SIA) licences were common training options. Options for other types of training were rare, particularly for qualifications which required longer-term customer engagement. This was attributed to high costs and limited training availability. Providers who offered a wider range of training usually had strong links with a further education college. CSCS and SIA courses were delivered in-house by some FND providers, but most referred customers to external training providers for these and other courses.²³

Providers in Scotland encouraged customers to apply for an ILA Scotland account, which offered £200 per year towards training costs.

3.1.3 Specialised support

Providers said they drew on contracted partner organisations (sometimes called 'menu providers') who offered services such as mentoring or support for lone parents, as well as professionally-written CVs. Customers with serious barriers to work such as alcohol or drug addiction, homelessness or debt issues were signposted to organisations offering help with these problems. In these cases

²³ The Skills Funding Agency, which was set up in 2010 to regulate and fund adult further education and skills training in England, does not fund CSCS or SIA courses.

responsibility for delivering FND remained with the provider – customers continued to attend meetings with the provider while receiving specialist support from the other organisation.

In some areas there were specialist end-to-end providers to which customers could be referred at any point during the FND programme. These subcontracted providers then assumed responsibility for the remainder of the customer journey. Specialist providers focused on certain customer groups (such as recent graduates and professionals), on a specific sector (such as the creative industries or construction) or on customers who were interested in self-employment. Self-employment providers helped individuals by giving legal advice as well as support with creating a business plan and advice on marketing, sales pitches and financing.

3.1.4 Selection and tailoring of services

Providers claimed to tailor the services they offered to individuals. They drew on various sources of information to help them do this. Many providers conducted skills assessments (either on paper or IT-based) at the induction stage. Advisers took these results into consideration together with Action Plans and any other information submitted by Jobcentre Plus. Advisers' own judgement about a customer was also said to be a key element in determining appropriate services.

Some staff said they did not inform customers in detail about the full range of services they offered. Instead each customer was told about services which might be relevant to them once their skills and needs had been assessed and their adviser had found out more about them:

'They'll get a general [overview] to start with and as we go through [the programme] and we get to know the person, by the time of the fourth work-focused interview we'll agree which is the best strand, which is the best course of action. [...] It is very much horses for courses. Everybody is different so what might be right for one person might not be right for another.'

(FND provider staff)

All providers within the studied networks commented that ongoing tailoring of support was based on regular reviews of an individual's Action Plan. These reviews were also used to maintain momentum for the customer and to monitor compliance in order to initiate sanctioning, if this should become necessary.

3.1.5 Access to workshops made conditional on active job searching

One specialist provider working with customers who aimed to enter jobs in the creative industries reported that it was necessary to adapt their initial programme structure. Some individuals were attending workshops but were not engaging in job-searching activities. To address this, the provider stipulated that only customers who attended meetings regularly and complied with job-search requirements were invited to workshops and networking sessions:

'If they are creative and they're active, that's the carrot. If you're doing your job search and applying for this, you then get to attend the workshop on copyright or marketing, all that kind of thing...so the idea is if the customer's doing well and they're attending that and doing what they need to, they then get the golden ticket to the fun bit.'

(FND provider staff)

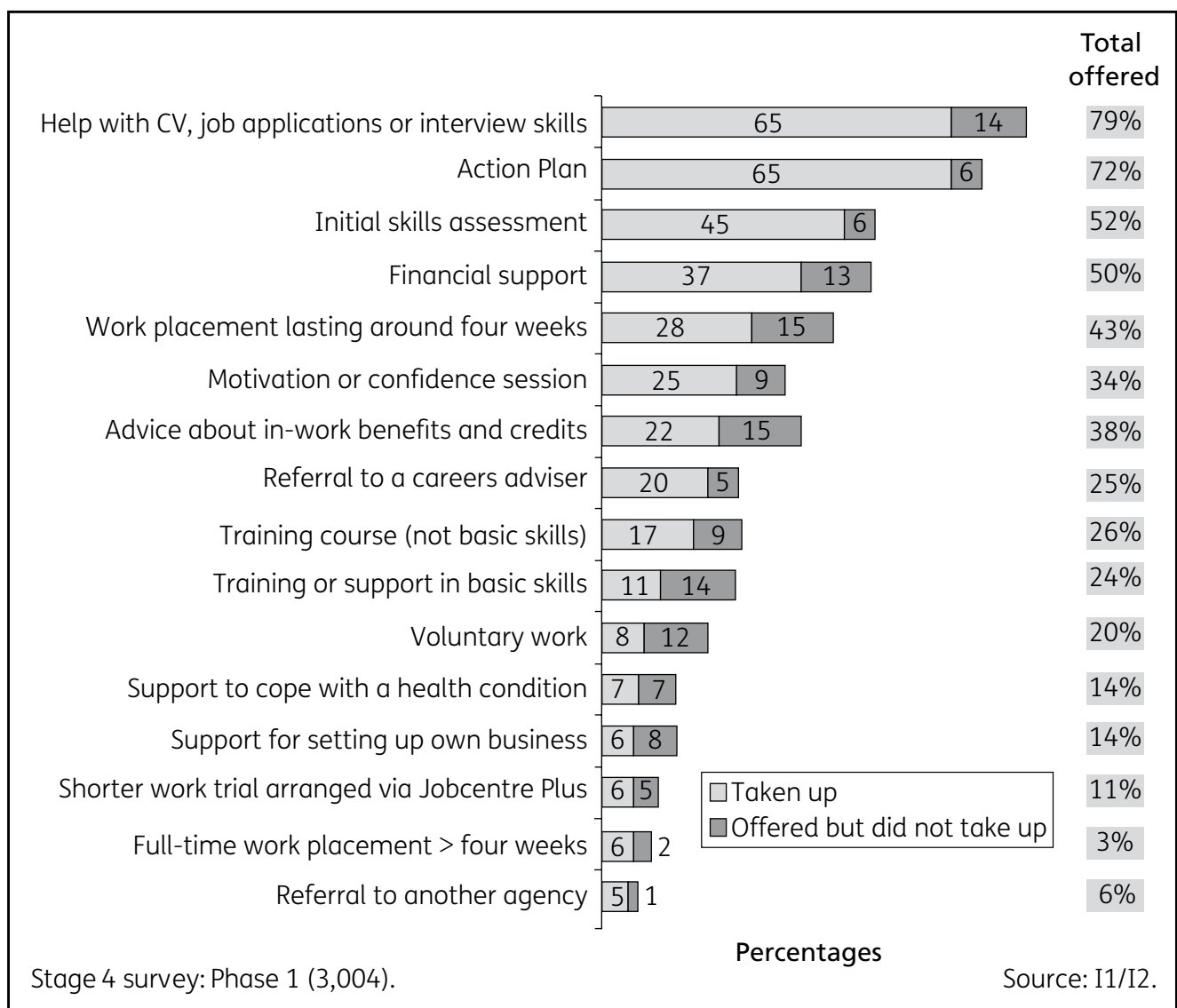
3.2 Take-up of services

The customer survey prompted people with a range of services and support types and asked which had been offered to them since starting FND. Customers were also asked whether they had taken up each of the services offered.

Figure 3.1 shows the proportion of FND customers who said they had taken up each support type, as well as the proportion who were offered that support type but did not take it up. The boxes to the right of the graph show the total proportion of customers who could recall being offered each support type by their FND provider (irrespective of whether or not they took it up).

Two services were offered to a majority of customers: help with CV writing, job applications or interviews skills (79%); and drawing up an Action Plan (72%). The proportion taking up each of these services was similar: around two-thirds (65% in both cases) of all FND customers said they had taken up these types of support. All other types of services or support were taken up by fewer than half of all customers.

Figure 3.1 Support offered and taken up – all FND customers



There were some services where the proportion of customers who reported not taking up an offer of support was equal to or greater than the proportion who did take up the offer, namely training or support in basic skills (11% offered and took up, 14% offered but did not take-up), voluntary work (eight % compared to 12%), support to cope with a health condition (seven % compared to seven %) and support or advice to help with setting up a business (six % compared to eight %). It is not possible to tell from the survey why these forms of support were not accepted but relatively high proportions of customers declining an offer of a particular support type may point to either

inappropriate targeting or, perhaps more likely, providers needing to work more with customers to overcome barriers to taking up particular types of support. By comparison, in Phase 2 areas during the same period, 12% of customers had taken up basic skills support compared to nine % who had been offered but had not taken it up (i.e. similar proportions of customers had taken up this form of support as in Phase 1 areas, but a smaller proportion being offered it without taking it up perhaps points to better targeting of customers and/or more effective introduction or discussion of the offer in Phase 2 areas).

Figure 3.1 also shows the proportions of all customers surveyed who could recall being offered and who took up each service. The customers surveyed had all started FND during the same period²⁴ but by the time of interview around a year later were doing a range of different activities. As described later in Chapter 6, some were still claiming and receiving support from their FND provider, whereas others had left JSA and were in work, training, claiming another benefit or were engaged in some other activity.

Given that the survey cohort had left FND at different points, it is also useful to look at take-up of services just among those customers who had been claiming continually by the time of the interview (i.e. customers who had been with an FND provider for around a year and had, therefore, reached the end of the programme). This allows us to present the proportions of customers that had experienced a year of FND that could recall being offered and taking up each support type (Figure 3.2).

By the end of one year of FND, almost three-quarters of customers (73%) reported taking up help with a CV, job applications or interview skills. A further one in ten (ten %) had been offered this support but did not take it up. Seven in ten (71%) could recall drawing up an Action Plan, with the vast majority of customers who could recall being offered this support having taken it up.

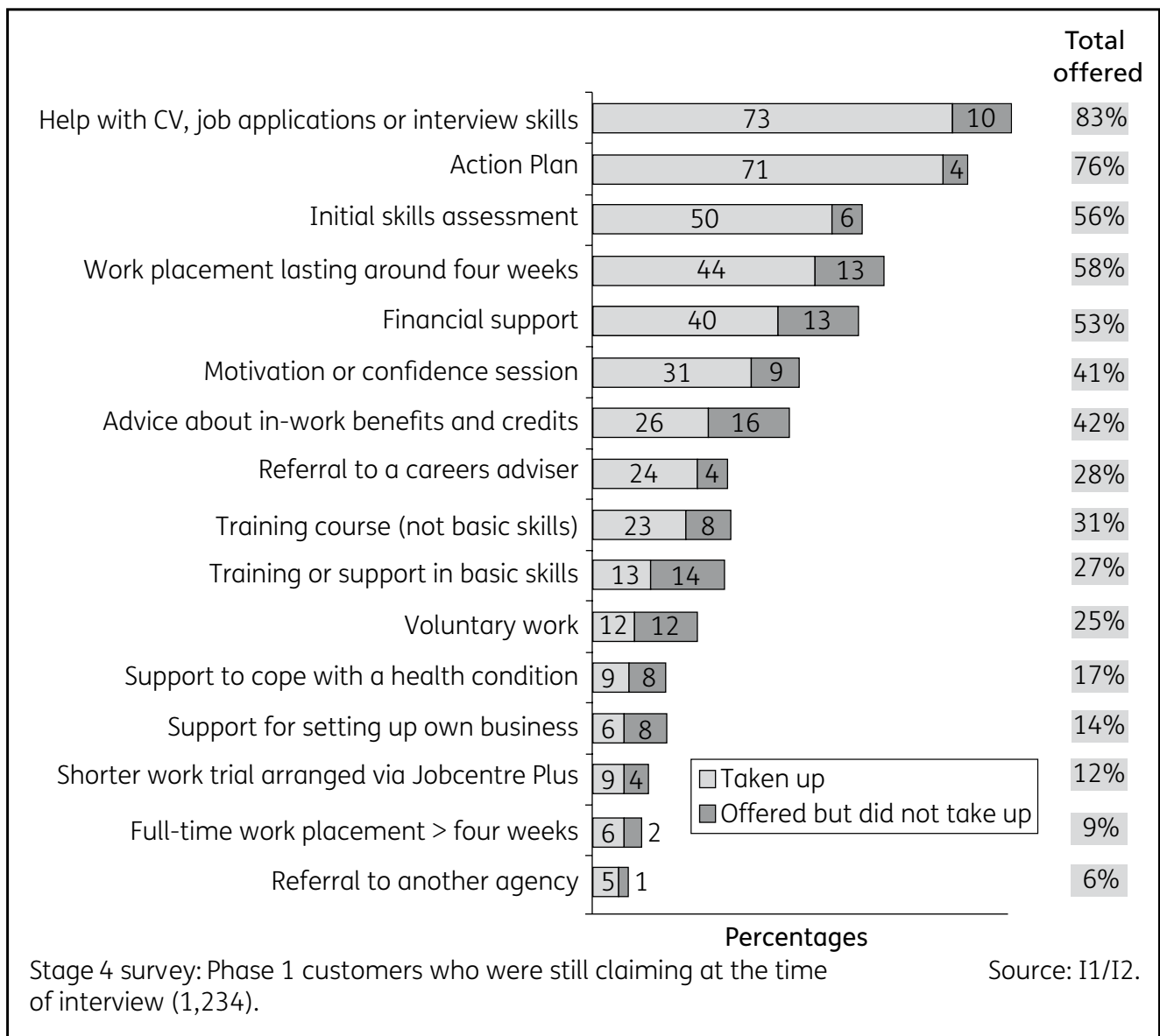
A range of support types had been offered to between a quarter and a half of all customers who reached the end of FND. These are listed in the order of prevalence:

- an initial assessment of skills (50%);
- a work placement arranged by the FND provider lasting around four weeks (44%);
- financial support to help cover the costs of looking for or taking work (40%);
- a session on motivation or confidence (31%);
- advice about the benefits or credits entitled to once in work (26%);
- a referral to a careers adviser (24%);
- a training course at a local college or other training provider (not in basic skills) (23%).

One in 20 customers (five %) reported being referred to another agency for support or advice (this is likely to have been another FND provider but may also have included specialist support agencies offering financial advice or support for drug and alcohol addiction, for example).

²⁴ See Appendix B for details on the survey cohort and sampling window.

Figure 3.2 Support offered and taken up – customers who had experienced one year of FND



3.2.1 Variation in support by customer group

The likelihood of taking up several of the FND support types varied notably by customer group. Take-up among all FND customers (irrespective of whether or not they got to the end of FND) displayed the following patterns.

- **Customers with Level 4 or above qualifications** (equating to a degree or post-graduate qualification) were less likely to take up many of the services, including help with a CV, job applications or interview skills (47% compared to 65%), a training course (13% compared to 17% of all customers), basic skills support (four % compared to 11%), referral to a careers adviser (14% compared to 20%) or a session on motivation or confidence (20% compared to 25%). They were however, more likely to have had an initial skills assessment (53% compared to 45% of all customers) or to have taken up support or advice for setting up their own business (11% compared to six %).

This pattern largely holds when looking at customers with Level 4 or above qualifications who reached the end of FND. But this group were only slightly (and not significantly) less likely than other customers to have had a session on confidence or motivation or a training course. This suggests that while these support types may not have seemed immediately relevant to the provider and/or the customer, as time on FND increased they were more likely to be offered and taken up. These customers were no more likely than others to have had an assessment of their skills (suggesting that higher qualified customers were more likely to get this early on in the FND journey but by the end of a year this had evened out).

- As might be expected, **customers with a long-term illness or disability** were more likely to take up support or advice to help them cope with a health condition; however, the difference was reasonably small (12% compared to seven %). This suggests that there was perhaps scope for greater numbers of customers with a long-term illness or disability to have been offered this support. Customers with a long-term illness or disability were less likely to take up several other support types: a place on a training course (14% compared to 17% of all customers), basic skills support (eight % compared to 11%) or a session on motivation or confidence (21% compared to 25%). These small differences are statistically significant.

Looking just among customers who had been on FND for a year, some additional differences emerged: customers with a disability or long-term illness who were still with their FND provider after a year were less likely than other customers who had reached this point to have had an assessment of their skills (42% compared with 50% overall) or to have received any financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for or taking work (31% compared with 40% of all customers reaching the end of a year of FND).

- **Younger customers** (aged 18-24) were more likely to take up help with their CV, job applications or interview skills (73% compared to 65% of all customers) and a referral to a careers adviser (26% compared to 20%). They were less likely to receive advice on in-work benefits and credits (19% compared to 22%), perhaps because this group on the whole may have fewer financial or family commitments.

These patterns by age were also evident among the group of customers who reached the end of a year of FND.

- Overall, **older customers** (aged 50 or above) were less likely to have taken up a number of support activities, including a work placement lasting around four weeks, help with a CV, job applications or interview skills, drawing up an Action Plan, a session on motivation confidence, referral to a careers adviser, a training course or basic skills support. In fact, one in ten (ten %) 50+ customers who had entered FND during the sampling period had not taken up any support at all, slightly but significantly more than other age groups.

Looking only among customers who reached the end of FND, many of these differences by age had evened out (although customers aged 50+ were still less likely to have had a referral to a careers adviser or a place on a training course), suggesting that older customers who continued claiming were more likely to take up support services nearer the end of the programme compared with younger customers.

- **Lone parents** were significantly less likely to have drawn up an Action Plan (54% compared to 65% of all customers).

Overall, one in ten (ten %) of customers who had ended their claim and found paid work by the time of the interview reported that they did not take up any support services from the FND provider. This is higher than the proportion of those still claiming at the time of the interview who had not (yet) taken up any support (five %) – although at least in part this will be explained by the fact that

the longer someone participates in FND, the more opportunities they are likely to have to take up support.

Among the five % of customers who even by the end of FND had not taken up any support, there were some indications that customers with no qualifications were over-represented (43% of the customers who had reached the end of FND without taking up any support at all had no qualifications compared with 34% of FND customers as a whole²⁵).

3.2.2 Phase 1 and Phase 2 comparisons

This section compares the support taken up in FND Phase 1 areas with the support taken up by customers undergoing the same period of claiming (months 13 to 24) in Phase 2 areas. The nature of the Phase 2 comparison group and the regime they were following during the survey reference period is discussed in Chapter 1. In summary:

- Customers aged 18-24 would have been part-way through the New Deal for Young People (NDYP) at the 13th consecutive month of claiming (potentially participating in a NDYP option or follow-through) or would have been starting a second NDYP cycle.
- Customers aged 25+ were required to participate in regular signing under the old regime until 18 months of consecutive claiming. At this point they would have been referred to New Deal 25 Plus (ND25+).

Customers aged 18–24

Table 3.2 looks first at the experiences of young people in both phases, and shows the support or services taken up in FND Phase 1 areas compared with the picture in Phase 2 areas where NDYP was still in place.

²⁵ This difference is statistically significant at the 92% level of confidence (a 95% level of confidence is used as standard throughout the report).

Table 3.2 Support types taken up by young people aged 18-24

| | Phase 1 18-24 % | Phase 2 18-24 % |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Help with CV, job applications or interview skills | 73 | N/A |
| Drawing up an Action Plan | 66 | N/A |
| Initial skills assessment | 44 | N/A |
| Referral to a Gateway to Work course | N/A | 55 |
| Financial support to help cover costs of looking for or taking work | 37* | 26 |
| Work placement lasting around four weeks | 30 | N/A |
| Referral to a careers adviser | 26 | N/A |
| Motivation or confidence session | 26* | 17 |
| Advice about in-work benefits and credits | 19 | 21 |
| Training course (not basic skills) at a local college or other provider | 18* | 29 |
| Subsidised employment as part of New Deal (ND) option or recruitment subsidy voucher ¹ | N/A | 12 |
| A place on an Environment Task Force | N/A | 4 |
| Training or support in basic skills | 12* | 16 |
| Voluntary work | 9* | 16 |
| Support to cope with a health condition | 7 | 6 |
| Support for setting up own business | 5 | 7 |
| Shorter work trial arranged via Jobcentre Plus | 7 | 9 |
| Full-time work placement > four weeks | 8* | 12 |
| Referral to another agency for support or advice | 5* | 9 |
| 12-month Restart interview with Jobcentre Plus adviser | N/A | 16 |
| Any of the support types listed above | 94* | 83 |

Base = all customers aged 18-24 (Phase 1: 1,002, Phase 2: 1,000).

N/A = not asked.

* = a statistically significant difference from Phase 2 at the 95% confidence level.

¹ The New Deal Employment Option was withdrawn in December 2009, and the Recruitment Subsidy was withdrawn at the end of June 2010. As such, these measures would not have been available to Phase 2 customers throughout the full survey reference period.

Due to the different regimes operating across the two phases it is not possible to make straightforward like-for-like comparisons between the types of support or services accessed. However, the following differences stand out where comparisons were possible:

- Younger customers in FND Phase 1 areas were more likely than their Phase 2 counterparts to have received financial support to help cover the costs of looking for or taking work (37% compared to 26%) and a session on confidence or motivation (26% compared to 17%).
- On the other hand, customers in Phase 2 were more likely than their FND counterparts to have received basic skills support over this period (16% compared to 12%). They were also more likely to have taken up voluntary work (16% compared to nine % of young people in FND Phase 1) and more likely to have participated in a training course at a local college or with another provider (29% compared to 18%)²⁶.

Customers aged 25+

Table 3.3 presents the same analysis for customers aged 25 or over.²⁷ As was the case for younger people, provision and take-up of sessions relating to confidence or motivation, and financial support to help cover the costs of looking for or starting work, were more prevalent in FND Phase 1 areas than in Phase 2 (where customers aged 25+ attended regular signing between months 13 and 18, before entering ND25+ if they entered the 19th consecutive month of claiming). Again, mirroring the picture for young people, Phase 2 customers aged 25+ were more likely to have undertaken training or voluntary work during this period than their Phase 1 counterparts.

In Phase 2 areas, just over three-quarters (77%) of customers aged 25+ recalled having taken up at least one of the services they were prompted with. The relatively high proportion of customers not taking up any support is likely to reflect the fact that, for the first half of the survey reference period, customers aged 25+ in Phase 2 areas were participating in regular Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) signing rather than a more structured, intensive programme like ND25+ or FND. By comparison, over nine in ten (92%) of customers aged 25+ in FND Phase 1 areas had taken up one of the listed services during this period.

²⁶ Voluntary work and training represented two of four possible New Deal Options which people participating in NDYP had to do following the Gateway stage. The other two New Deal Options were subsidised employment (though this was withdrawn in December 2009) and work with the Environmental Task Force.

²⁷ For detailed analysis of the support taken up by customers aged 50+, see Appendix A.

Table 3.3 Support types taken up by people aged 25+

| | Phase 1 25+ % | Phase 2 25+ % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Help with CV, job applications or interview skills | 61 | N/A |
| Drawing up an Action Plan | 64 | N/A |
| Initial skills assessment | 46 | N/A |
| Referral to a Gateway to Work course | N/A | 25 |
| Financial support to help cover costs of looking for or taking work | 37* | 19 |
| Work placement lasting around four weeks | 27 | N/A |
| Referral to a careers adviser | 17 | N/A |
| Motivation or confidence session | 24* | 13 |
| Advice about in-work benefits and credits | 24 | 22 |
| Training course (not basic skills) at a local college or other provider | 16* | 23 |
| Subsidised employment as part of ND option or recruitment subsidy voucher ¹ | N/A | 10 |
| A place on an Environment Task Force | N/A | 1 |
| Training or support in basic skills | 10 | 11 |
| Voluntary work | 7* | 10 |
| Support to cope with a health condition | 7 | 6 |
| Support for setting up own business | 7 | 7 |
| Shorter work trial arranged via Jobcentre Plus | 6* | 4 |
| Full-time work placement > four weeks | 6 | 6 |
| Referral to another agency for support or advice | 5* | 12 |
| 12-month Restart interview with Jobcentre Plus adviser | N/A | 33 |
| Any of the support types listed above | 92* | 77 |

Base = all customers aged 25+ (Phase 1: 2,002, Phase 2: 2,005).

N/A = not asked.

* = a statistically significant difference from Phase 2 at the 95% confidence level.

¹ The New Deal Employment Option was withdrawn in December 2009, and the Recruitment Subsidy was withdrawn at the end of June 2010. As such, these measures would not have been available to Phase 2 customers throughout the full survey reference period.

3.3 Views on services

3.3.1 Customer survey findings

Perceived usefulness of different support types

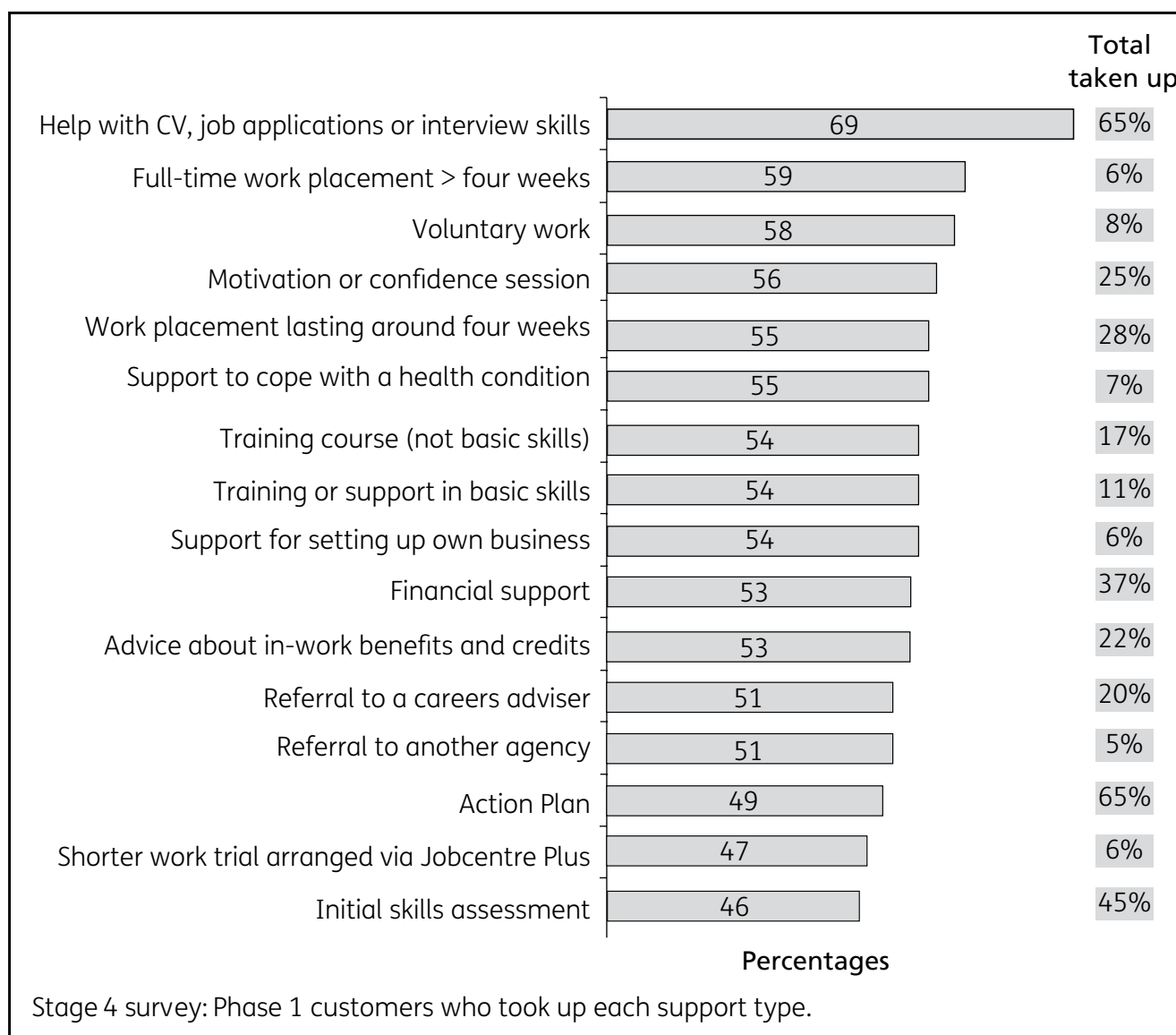
Customers were asked which of the support types they had taken up had been useful in moving them closer to finding work. They were able to mention more than one support type. Results are shown in Figure 3.3 for FND customers only. The proportion of customers finding each support type useful is based on only those customers taking up that support type (for example, 56% of customers who had a session on motivation or confidence found it useful). The proportions of customers taking up each support type in FND Phase 1 areas are shown in boxes to the right of the graph for reference.

As illustrated in Figure 3.3, there was little variation in the usefulness of different types of support from the customer perspective; most support types were reported as useful by just over half of all the customers experiencing the support.

That said, help with a CV, job applications or interview skills stood out as the most likely form of support perceived as useful by customers, and was also the most common support type taken up: two-thirds (65%) of all customers had received this type of support from their FND provider among which almost seven in ten (69%) said it was useful. This was clearly a core element of the FND offer and appears to have been well received by customers.

In contrast, drawing up an Action Plan and having an initial assessment of skills – both standard FND features and taken up by significant proportions of customers – were viewed as useful by less than half of FND customers (49% reporting the Action Plan useful and 46% the skills assessment). It should be noted, however, that the survey was only concerned with the customer perspective, and both the Action Plan and skills assessment were presumably designed to be used by the FND adviser as well as the customer, meaning that their full utility may be under-estimated here.

Figure 3.3 FND support found useful



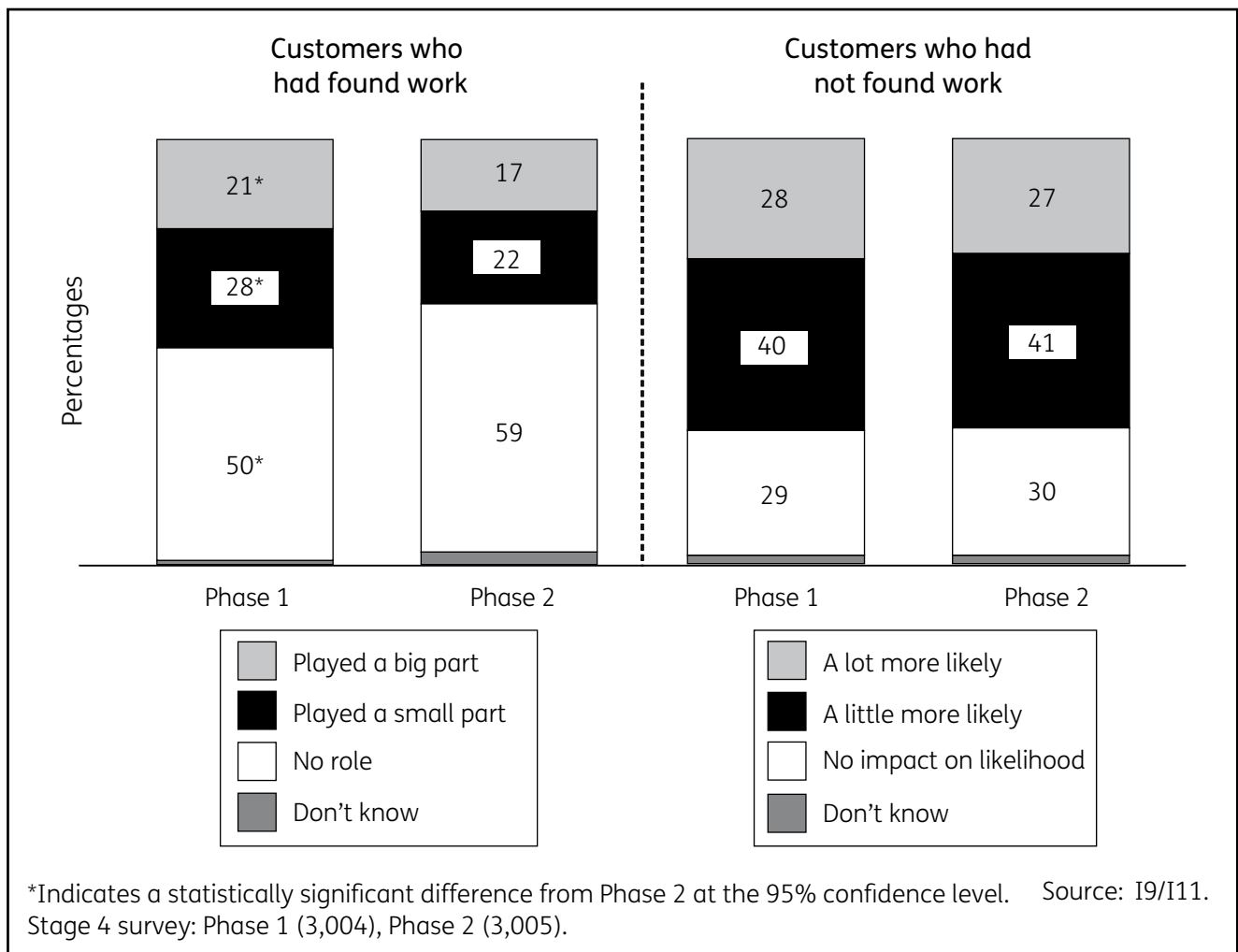
Younger customers tended to be more positive about the usefulness of each of the support types received than customers aged 25+. This was true across most of the services mentioned above but was most marked for the initial skills assessment (18-24: 51% found useful, 25-49: 44%, 50+: 42%), drawing up an Action Plan (18-24: 55% found useful, 25-49: 47%, 50+: 45%) and the work placement lasting around four weeks (18-24: 62% found useful, 25-49: 51%, 50+: 50%).

Where customers had received similar types of support in Phase 2 areas the proportions reporting each as useful were broadly similar to those seen in FND Phase 1 areas. An exception was the perceived usefulness of a training course (not in basic skills) where 61% of Phase 2 customers who had taken up this activity rated it useful, compared with just 54% of Phase 1 customers. This may be explained by the nature of the training option available under ND provision which typically involves full-time training or education lasting a number of months. This may be more intensive than the training offered under FND.

Perceived role of support in moving into work

Customers ending their JSA claim at some point during FND and who had found paid work were asked what role (if any) they thought the programme had played in their employment. Customers who had not entered paid work at all were asked whether they felt any more likely to find work as a result of the support received. The same questions were asked to customers in Phase 2 comparison areas about the support received over the same claim period (i.e. the 13th month of consecutive claiming onwards). Results are shown in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4 Role of support in moving customers into/closer to work



Among customers who had found work, those in FND Phase 1 areas were more likely to say that the support they had received had played some part compared with comparison customers in Phase 2 areas: half (50%) of Phase 1 customers said that the activities they had taken part in had played either a big or small part in them getting work, compared with 39% of Phase 2 customers.

This overall pattern was true for both younger customers and those aged 25 or over. The difference between Phase 1 and Phase 2 was ten percentage points in each case. This is perhaps surprising given that the difference in the amount of support provided to customers aged 25+ over this period was more marked by Phase (where in Phase 2 areas customers would typically only have experienced a maximum of six months ND25+ provision) than was the case for younger customers (where NDYP was available in Phase 2 areas throughout the survey reference period). Younger customers in both Phases were more likely to be positive about the role of the support received than customers aged 25 or over (61% of young people in Phase 1 thought support played either a big or small part in them getting their job compared with 51% of young customers in Phase 2; 42% of 25+ customers in Phase 1 reported this in Phase 1 compared to 32% Phase 2).

This difference between Phase 1 and Phase 2 was observed across most other demographic subgroups. One exception was FND customers with a Level 4 or above qualification who were no more likely to feel the support received had contributed to them finding work than their counterparts in Phase 2 (in both phases this group was more likely than others to report that the support had played no role – 68% Phase 1, 65% Phase 2).

Phase 1 customers who were working part time were more likely to report that the FND support had played a role in helping them get the job; 57% of these customers said that FND support had played either a big or small part. This was not the case in Phase 2 areas (where there were few differences in perceived impact of the support by type of work entered).

Of FND customers who had not found work by the time of the interview, over a quarter (28%) felt they were a lot more likely to find work as a result of the support they had received from their FND provider. A further two-fifths (40%) thought they were a little more likely to find work. The picture was very similar among Phase 2 comparison customers (with the exception of customers with a long-term illness or disability who were more positive about their chances of finding work in Phase 1 areas compared with their Phase 2 counterparts: 60% thought they were more likely to find work – either a lot or a little more likely – compared with 53% of Phase 2 customers with a long-term illness or disability).

3.3.2 Customer views – qualitative data

Customers who took part in qualitative interviews had, between them, experienced all of the four types of service described in Section 3.1.1: employability support and training, other skills training, specialised support and the MWRA.

Timing of services

Some customers said that their time with a provider (or providers) had begun with a flurry of activity which lessened as they progressed through FND. Employability training courses in particular tended to be concentrated in the first few weeks of FND. In contrast, the MWRA rarely took place during the first six months of the programme. Customers who had attended group job-search sessions usually reported that these ran throughout their time with the provider.

Employability training

Many customers had taken part in employability training run by the provider. This usually took place soon after a jobseeker joined FND. It involved one or two half-day workshops, or a series of workshops spread over a few days. Occasionally it was a course consisting of fortnightly workshops spread over several months. Workshops were delivered in group format. In general, customers only received one-to-one contact with their adviser.

Most training sessions focused on aspects of job-searching: CVs, application forms, covering letters, interview technique and so on. Some focused on related topics such as self-confidence and motivation. Some customers said that attendance was compulsory. Others were given a choice over whether to attend. There were instances where customers were required to attend an initial session and then allowed to decide whether to attend further sessions.

The employability sessions were generally described as too basic. Providers were criticised for delivering the same compulsory training to everyone, regardless of the individual's background and needs. This view did not appear to be related to a person's skill levels – similar comments came from unskilled and skilled workers, managers and professionals. A bricklayer who went on to find work soon after joining FND felt patronised by the initial three-day job-search course run by his provider:

'You've been out of work for over a year and they're trying to tell you the best ways to find a job. I mean, all of us had already been to the jobcentre, spoken to other people, looked on the internet job sites, but they were treating you as though you were stupid.'

(FND customer)

Some customers felt that the quality of the training was poor. One said that it consisted of being shown videos about jobseekers discovering new careers after strangers pointed out skills which they had taken for granted. Another described taking part in and observing mock interviews which ended with every customer being offered the job, however poor their performance.

Jobseekers who attended CV workshops run by different providers were sometimes frustrated that they received conflicting advice. For instance, one customer was told by one provider to write in the first person and by another to use the third person. Another person was first told that it was fine to use both sides of a page while a different provider said that CVs should be single-sided.

Nevertheless, some people were positive about their employability support. These customers enjoyed being part of a group and said that they had gained confidence or practical advice. The two who were most positive about their training were from different backgrounds – one was a cleaner with poor literacy skills, the other a recent graduate. Each had taken part in a compulsory course spread over several months. The cleaner was particularly enthusiastic about his provider's course:

'Well I found it very interesting...most definitely rewarding. You know, things that you'd never think of. It was just an amazing course really.'

(FND customer)

This customer singled out the interview training sessions as particularly useful, along with tips on job applications such as the importance of tailoring a covering letter instead of sending the same one to every employer. The recent graduate had been referred by his mainstream FND provider (whose training sessions he found poor) to a provider specialising in supporting graduates. This specialist provision involved a mixture of seminars and exercises in a course manual. According to the customer, the quality of the seminars varied but the course was well-structured and the coverage of interviews, CVs and speculative applications was good.

Group job-search

Group job-search sessions were among the most common activities reported by customers in the qualitative sample, especially in the areas where the FND process was divided into stages. Sometimes these sessions were the only activities experienced by customers apart from advisory meetings, and in a few cases they took the place of one-to-one meetings. Some referred to these sessions as a 'job club'.

The sessions usually followed the same format. A group of FND customers would sit in a computer room at the provider's office, where they would look individually for jobs on the internet, print off the most promising ones and then apply online or submit an application by post. A member of staff would supervise the session to ensure customers were applying for jobs and to lend assistance. Sometimes a session would include a talk by a member of staff on an aspect of job-searching, followed by a group discussion. Customers attending group job-search sessions instead of one-to-one meetings said that sometimes the supervisor would have a quick chat with each customer to check on their progress.

The frequency of the sessions varied from daily to once a month, and the duration from two hours to a full day. The sessions were nearly always compulsory. Attendance was monitored and enforced with the threat of sanctions. A few people who had internet access at home or who lived a long way from the provider said that they were granted the flexibility not to attend. Like other customers, they had to show that they were searching for work by producing their job search record at adviser meetings.

Customers' attitudes towards the sessions ranged from resignation to resentment. Many found them a waste of time because they were already conducting the same job searches at home, in a public library or at Jobcentre Plus. After a year or more of unemployment they had become adept at looking for jobs on the internet and felt they had no need of any help. Customers referred to welfare providers in the past found the set-up wearily familiar. Some customers objected to what they saw as the authoritarian style of the sessions. One person described not being allowed to leave the computer room except at specified break times, which he found demeaning and led to a confrontation with the session supervisor. Some customers disliked being part of a group discussion because they did not receive the individual attention they wanted from the supervisor, or because they did not want to disclose certain job barriers (such as a criminal record) in front of other customers.

Several jobseekers said that their provider allowed them to use the computer room and other facilities, such as newspapers, envelopes and postage, when needed. Customers who took up this service found it useful, especially if they did not have internet access at home.

Support from an employer engagement officer

A small number of customers reported seeing a member of staff whose job it was to build relationships with employers, particularly those recruiting in large numbers. They also encouraged these employers to consider their customers for recruitment. Some providers referred to this person as an 'employer engagement officer'. This service was valued by the customers who mentioned it. None of them had so far found a job through the employment engagement officer, but they believed that he or she held more influence over potential employers than they did as individual jobseekers, and they liked the idea that someone was actively searching for jobs on their behalf.

CV writing service

Several customers said that their provider offered a CV writing service in addition to, or instead of, CV workshops. Sometimes this service was provided by the adviser. In other cases it was done by another member of staff. Customers who had not had a CV before found this service useful, and some who already had one said that the provider's version was better. But several were critical of the results. An unskilled labourer with a wide range of work experience said that he had to wait months for a CV which concentrated too much on his skills and experience in gardening. Another customer, an experienced lorry driver, said that the CV produced by his provider was poorly laid out and 'gave the impression that I was a 21-year-old guy that had just got his licence, who had no experience'.

Other skills training

Customers with experience of construction work reported in a few cases that their provider offered training and testing in the CSCS. At least one customer, a multi-skilled but unqualified handyman, had received a CSCS card as a result.

Referrals to externally-delivered training were rare among the sample but welcomed by the customers concerned. One person was referred to a CSCS course and another to a course leading to an SIA licence. Two other customers were given funding to take externally-run tests which they organised themselves – one for a CSCS card and another to update his electrician's certification. An extreme example was an individual whose FND provider was based at a further education college. This person, who had been in and out of work since graduating as a mature student, was referred to several courses: Neuro-linguistic Programming, Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector, and a self-employment course at Business Link.

Otherwise, few customers in the qualitative sample were referred to, or offered funding for, external training. A small number were signposted to free courses (in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and basic IT skills). Customers in Scotland were encouraged to apply for an ILA Scotland account, which provided up to £200 towards the cost of a course, but at the time of the research, none had taken this up.

Specialised support

Two customers were referred to a specialist FND provider. One, a recent graduate, was referred soon after joining the programme to a provider specialising in graduates and professionals. The other, a labourer, was referred towards the end of FND to a specialist self-employment provider. Both were glad to have been referred. Their experiences of the services they received from the specialist providers are described elsewhere in this section and in Chapter 4.

Service gaps

Customers were asked whether there were any services which they would have liked but had not received from their FND provider – or at least not yet, in the case of those interviewed after six months on FND.

One of the most frequent criticisms of providers was that they added little value to the job search – they were not doing or teaching anything that jobseekers could not already do themselves. Customers had hoped that their FND provider could do more to try to find jobs for them. Some felt that providers should use their bargaining power to 'sell' their customers to employers (the role which employment engagement officers were perceived to be doing) and were disappointed that their provider did not appear to be doing this. Furthermore, several customers had criminal records.

None of these people had been given advice on careers or employers where their record might be less of a barrier to work. This would appear to be a significant gap in the services offered.

The general lack of skills training was another perceived gap. Variations in the offer of training opportunities across the providers also revealed differences in the services available. Some customers had been hoping that their FND provider might be willing to fund lengthy, advanced courses. For instance, a computer programmer said that he would have liked training in a new software package, while a diesel engine technician wanted to retrain as a plumber. Several skilled workers would have liked funding to refresh their knowledge and update their certificates. Some customers had been refused funding for CSCS or SIA training (the same courses which had been offered to customers with different providers). One complained about having to arrange and pay for his CSCS test and then reclaim the money from the provider (who he thought should have paid upfront). Some customers wanted training in basic skills. For instance, a Portuguese factory worker with poor English said that during his induction his provider had given him a list of services and asked him to tick the ones he wanted. He requested an ESOL course, only to be told when he followed it up, *'That is just the paperwork. We don't have all those things.'* Several other middle-aged customers described themselves as being uncomfortable with computers, but did not receive any help.

Some providers were criticised for refusing to pay travel expenses for the MWRA or job interviews. One customer, having prepared a detailed business plan to work as an artist, was frustrated that his specialist self-employment provider was unable to secure any funding towards the start-up costs needed for the business.

Customers who received no services

Customers in the qualitative sample who had received none of the services described above included people who were interviewed at the six-month point of FND as well as those who had completed the 12-month programme. There was little evidence of 'parking' here, as no particular pattern of who received or who did not receive services was detected. Non-service users included both skilled and unskilled workers of different ages, some of whom went on to find work. However, one 64-year-old customer did wonder whether he might have received more support if he had been younger. Another jobseeker, a former bookkeeper, said that she was *'more or less unemployable'* because of a fraud conviction and thought that as a result the provider *'let me have more freedom than a lot of other people'*.

Other customers were offered services which they turned down. For instance, the former bookkeeper mentioned above was clear that she did not want help with job searching:

'To be fair I wasn't very easily persuaded into doing anything. A lot of the stuff they did was for people who haven't worked or weren't very literate...never prepared CVs or gone for job interviews. Well I'd been working 35 years beforehand...most of the stuff just wasn't applicable so I wouldn't go.'

(FND customer)

It may be that some customers were not offered services because their advisers suspected that they were unlikely to take them up. For instance, one woman said that her adviser understood that he was unable to help with her many problems, one of which was a teenager who kept running away from home. She was heavily involved with social services and the police, and wanted as little as possible to do with her FND provider. It may be that the adviser realised this and decided to keep their interaction to a minimum.

3.4 Mandatory Work-Related Activity

Providers were required to ensure that all customers undertook a MWRA. This was defined in DWP's *Flexible New Deal Supplier Guidance*²⁸ as a four-week, full-time (at least 30 hours per week) activity which gave the customer first-hand experience of work or addressed a specific barrier to work. It could take the form of a work trial, work experience (including test trading in support of a move to self-employment), community work, voluntary work or certain types of work-focused training.

Format

As reported by FND provider staff, a typical MWRA was a work placement in a charity or the private sector (often in retail, catering and hospitality or administration). Specific placements mentioned included warehouse work, stacking shelves in a shop, café service, office administration, assisting at a garden centre, and charity shop work. Although work placements varied it was not usually considered feasible for them to be in positions of responsibility. Most were said to be equivalent to 'minimum wage positions' or were placements in 'lower-end companies'. One subcontracted broker emphasised that they endeavoured to arrange placements that could lead to a job with the employer, along the lines of a work trial.

Specialist end-to-end providers were able to arrange relevant work placements through their employer networks, within the construction and creative industries, for example. One specialist provider offered a self-employment route where customers would receive help to develop a business plan over the four weeks. During this process the customer would make an assessment about the feasibility of becoming self-employed.

Staff acknowledged that it was not always possible to arrange a work placement. One staff member within an FND provider network where the MWRA was subcontracted to a separate agency felt that the work placements were a 'hit or miss' business as the subcontractors were not prepared for the volume of customers requiring the service. Similarly, another supplier reported that it was a challenge to find placements for all 1,300 customers on their books. As a result, customers were experiencing delays for placements:

'...unfortunately, given the large numbers we've got...we're now getting to the point where the majority of people who are doing the MWRA are doing it kind of at week 40, so really towards the end of the programme which obviously isn't ideal at all.'

(FND provider staff)

One subcontracted provider aimed to find a work placement for 75% of their customers. As an alternative they offered training opportunities if this was in the customer's interests – if the customer would benefit from gaining a certification, for example. One end-to-end provider offered an in-house, four-week course if a work placement could not be arranged. The first week was devoted to further efforts to secure a work placement. If unsuccessful, the remaining three weeks were devoted to intensive support on employability skills.

Process

Responsibility for arranging placements was with subcontracted broker agencies or with dedicated placement officers in end-to-end providers. However, staff from all providers in the sample stated that they encouraged customers to identify work areas of interest and possible locations for placements. One provider required customers to identify ten organisations at which placements might be arranged. Customers were also encouraged to make initial contact with prospective

²⁸ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/fnd-section-6.pdf>

placement employers. This engagement was thought to nurture ownership of the process and make it more likely that the customer would benefit from the activity:

'...so I think it's very much about coaching the individual, asking them the right questions and yes there are times when we have to say, "Look you are going to have to do this. I know you don't want to but unfortunately it's a mandatory requirement." But we tend to find if we give them the choice and the support, they are much more positive about it and then they gain much more from it.'

(FND provider staff)

Although the aim may have been to match work placements to customer interests and skills, it was not always possible to arrange a 'bespoke' work experience. If a work placement could not be arranged with an organisation nominated by the customer or if the customer failed to make any suggestions, the provider would arrange the placement within their network of employer contacts. Alternatively, some providers offered in-house training activities (as noted above).

FND providers had a continuing role once a work placement had been identified. Some mentioned the need for a health and safety check if the placement was arranged with an unfamiliar employer. The provider was also required to monitor customer attendance over the four weeks and to serve as a mediator if there were any problems. Some staff mentioned that the provider supported customers financially during the MRWA by paying for travel and lunch costs. One specialist, end-to-end subcontractor reported that they routinely held a debrief after a placement was completed to discuss feedback that would be useful for the customer's continued job search.

Once a work placement had been arranged, providers were required to transfer customers from JSA to a Training Allowance. This process was reversed once the work placement was completed. Staff across the provider sample identified problems with the benefit transfer process. The paperwork was viewed as cumbersome and time consuming. More critically, staff reported that some customers had experienced disruptions in payments due to delays and problems in the process.

Timing

The four weeks of mandatory activity tended to be initiated around six months after customers joined FND. Within two of the delivery networks in the study, customers took part in the MWRA after they were referred to the agency responsible for brokering work placements. In these networks the MWRA typically occurred between weeks 21 and 34 of FND. There appeared to be greater flexibility around the timing of the MWRA by the end-to-end providers. These providers reported that it would typically start from three to six months into the programme.

Staff from all providers emphasised that the timing of the MWRA could be accelerated or delayed in response to customer needs. Customers who were job ready but lacked recent work experience were encouraged to join a work placement earlier in FND while others would receive help with problems such as drug or alcohol addiction before an activity could be arranged. As explained by one supplier:

'In an ideal world I would aim to do [a work placement] within three to six months depending on whether they're red, amber, green. I appreciate that some of the red customers might need a bit longer until they're quite ready.'

(FND provider staff)

One staff member from a subcontracted placement agency stated that occasionally they would extend a work placement if agreed by the customer and the employer. For example, one customer requested her placement at a doctor's surgery be extended to eight weeks in order to provide more work experience.

Provider views

Generally a work placement was viewed as the preferred form of MWRA, and a work placement with the possibility of a job at the end was the ideal. Providers enumerated the various advantages to the customer of four weeks of work experience: to get back into the rhythm and routine of work; to gain or refresh employability skills; to update and fill a void in a CV; to obtain an employer reference; to build confidence; and to give a taste of a new field if the customer wished to change direction.

Yet there were also disadvantages identified by staff. A common concern was that customers equated the work placement to 'unpaid' or 'slave' labour and some were resistant to the requirement. It was noted that customers placed in private industry resented working alongside someone who was receiving a wage for the same job. Staff needed to manage these attitudes. Furthermore, some staff felt that the work placement was not appropriate for all customers – for example, for people with drug or alcohol problems. One stated that work placements should occur only if they offered a benefit to the customer; they should not '*be a generic thing that someone gets chucked on just to fulfil a contractual obligation*'. There was also a general view among staff that the types of work experience which tended to be associated with lower-paid jobs were probably less beneficial for people from highly-skilled and professional backgrounds. As one staff member put it, '*where do you put a bank manager for a work placement?*' For these reasons it was felt that a work placement should not be a mandatory component of the FND. (Although policy guidelines allowed providers to deliver work-focused training as an alternative to a work placement, many did not offer this option.)

Finally, concern was expressed about potential abuse of the system among some employers. It was felt that a minority of employers were offering a string of work placements as a substitute for true employment.

3.4.1 Customer survey findings

It is difficult to get a measure of the proportions of customers who undertook an MWRA from the survey data alone.²⁹ As a range of activities (and perhaps more than one activity) may have constituted the MWRA, it is only possible to estimate likely 'minimum' and 'maximum' proportions of customers undertaking MWRA using the take-up of various forms of support as a proxy measure.³⁰

Looking just among customers who reached the 12-month point of FND (i.e. who were still on a continuous claim at the time of the research), just over two-fifths (44%) reported having completed a four-week work placement arranged by their FND provider. This group of customers could be considered as having completed the core or 'standard' MRWA activity.

It is likely that the customers who reported taking up 'a full-time work placement lasting longer than four weeks' were also referring to a MWRA. The combined proportion of customers reaching the end of FND who undertook a work placement (lasting either four weeks or longer) was 46%.

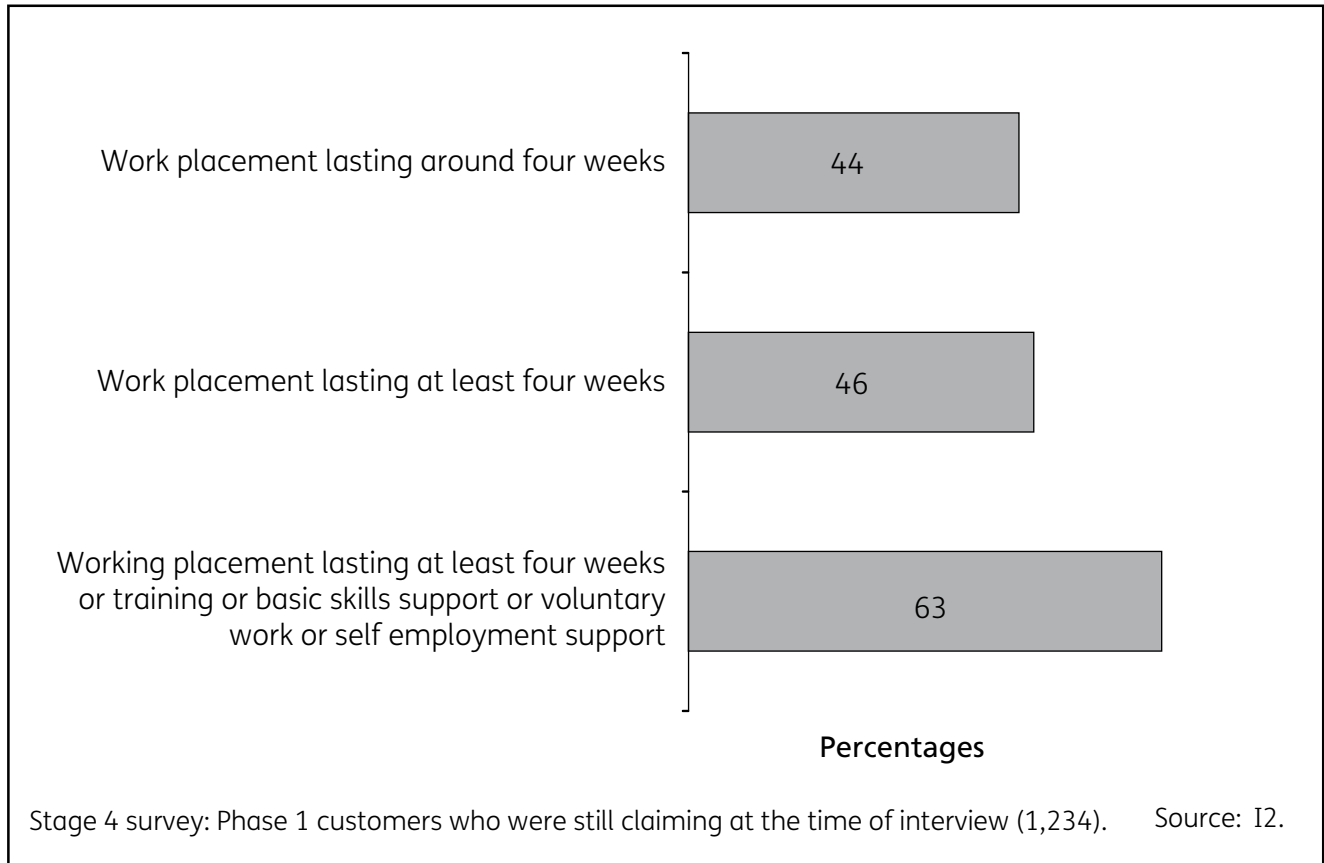
It is also possible that other activities could have qualified as an MWRA: a training course at a local college or provider, basic skills support or training, voluntary work and/or support for becoming self employed (however, these activities could also have been less intensive interventions that would not qualify as MWRA, so this measure is likely to be an overestimate). Overall, just under two-thirds (63%) of customers who reached the end of FND undertook any of these activities or a

²⁹ The forthcoming impact analyses will combine survey data with DWP administrative data to provide more complete information.

³⁰ The customer survey asked whether customers had been offered each type of activity and whether they had taken this up. Customers were not asked how long each activity lasted and whether they did it on a full-time or other basis.

work placement lasting four weeks or longer. This figure is lower than might be expected given that MWRA was mandatory for all FND participants. These three possible measures of the proportion of FND customers undertaking MWRA are summarised in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5 Estimated customer take up of MWRA activity



There were few variations by customer group in terms of the take-up of MRWA. The proportion of customers undertaking any activity which would potentially qualify (63% among all customers reaching the end of FND) was reasonably consistent across all groups of customers. Looking at work placements specifically, women were more likely than men to have undertaken one lasting at least four weeks (52% compared to 44%) and customers with a Level 2 or above qualification were more likely to have done so than customers with no qualifications (50% compared to 42%).

Around one in eight (13%) customers who were still claiming at the time of interview said that they had been offered a four-week work placement by their FND provider but that they had not taken this up. This left over two-fifths (42%) of FND customers who reached the end of FND who said that they had not been offered a four-week work placement (though as noted above a proportion of these may have undertaken a different type of MWRA). This proportion was slightly but significantly higher among customers with no qualifications (45%) and ethnic minority customers (49%).

3.4.2 Customer experiences – qualitative data

Customers who did not experience an MWRA

Most customers in the qualitative study had not experienced any form of MWRA. There may be several reasons for this. First, 24 of the 44 customers were interviewed just over six months after they had joined FND. Two of the prime providers' delivery models did not allow the MWRA to take place until around this point.

Among the remaining customers who were interviewed at the end of the FND programme, several said that their provider had never discussed the possibility of a work placement or any other kind of MWRA. Others found work or stopped attending the provider before the MWRA was arranged. Some refused to take up a placement, or were told by their adviser that there were no suitable work placements available.

Several customers who had not experienced an MWRA were hostile to the idea. Some were resistant to the prospect of working 'for free'. Others suspected that unscrupulous employers would take advantage of the scheme to get free temporary labour. Skilled workers were sometimes worried that they would be forced to do unskilled work which would be of no benefit to them. A lift engineer who found a job soon after joining FND objected to the MWRA for all of these reasons:

'The work placement could be in anything. It could be whatever jobs...came onto their system. They would go hook, line and sinker to get people on these courses or work trials...And I said, "No. Slavery got abolished 200 years ago. I am not working for free. I am not doing it."...They [the employer] will use you for the given four weeks and then they'll say, "Right, off with you. Let's get another one." They're getting free labour...That's all it is. And I said, "I'm not being part of it." I said, "I'm not doing it. I'm a skilled man".'

(FND customer)

Other customers were more receptive to the idea. Some of the customers interviewed six months after starting FND were looking forward to participating in an MWRA, while some of those who had completed FND without a work placement were disappointed not to have had one. These were often people looking for unskilled work who saw the MWRA as experience that could lead to a job. One person whose gardening work trial had fallen through because he did not have the skills required by the employer felt that his provider should have put more effort into finding work trials:

'I thought the whole point of it [FND] was that they were really dramatically going to try and find people jobs...or maybe like more work trials, things like that as well. Because I thought that was quite a good thing, I thought that was very good for an employer, you know, that they can see you working and think of something about you – whether you're good, bad or whatever... I thought it was a great thing.'

(FND customer)

Varied experiences of MWRA

Views of the MWRA varied widely. Several customers singled out the MWRA as the best thing that had happened to them during FND. Others had disliked it intensely. In the sample, there was at least one example of each of the five types of MWRA set out in *Flexible New Deal Supplier Guidance*: work trials, work experience, community work, voluntary work and work-focused training.

Customers tended to experience the MWRA during their second six months on FND. One person did two placements – one around five months into FND and another after 11 months. In most cases the MWRA lasted the expected four weeks. Some customers had shorter placements (two or

three weeks), for no apparent reason. Customers doing voluntary work at charities and community organisations sometimes extended the placement beyond four weeks, or were hoping to do so.

In all but one of the cases the work placement was arranged by the provider. Some of these customers said that they had tried to find a placement, at the provider's suggestion, but without success. The one person who had secured his own work placement had signed up for a 12-week introductory care skills course run by the local council. The course included a work placement at a day care centre for disabled people and the FND provider agreed to treat this as his MWRA.

Work placements matched to customer skills and experience

Customers who were most positive about the MWRA had completed work placements which used their existing skills or gave them experience in a new field of interest. For instance, a graphic designer with a history of mental-health issues who had spent the past decade in temporary, low-level administrative jobs was delighted with his placement in the fundraising department of a local charity, where he was able to use his skills:

'That was a perfect fit for me, because it's only a mile down the road – I don't drive – so I worked there for four weeks in the fundraising department...because I had the design background I was doing the graphic design for the brochures...I got lucky with my [placement]. It was...really good.'

(FND customer)

In another case, a person who had obsolete technical skills in manufacturing and was hoping to move into IT work was pleased with a placement in which he provided computer support at a community organisation.

Work trials

The customers described above had enjoyed their placements and felt that they gained useful experience which would increase their chances of finding a job. All of them, however, would have preferred a placement with the possibility of a paid job at the end.

One person in the sample appeared to have had a genuine work trial. Another had a work placement at a shop which was not, strictly speaking, a work trial but led to him being offered a temporary job over the Christmas season. In the case of the first person, a recent graduate, the FND provider arranged four weeks with a local food company doing administration and deliveries. This person enjoyed the placement and at the end he was offered a part-time job, which he felt forced to turn down partly because he was under the impression that if he accepted it he would lose all his benefits and be unable to pay his rent. (He later found out that this was not the case.) This FND provider specialised in supporting graduates and, according to the customer, made great efforts to find work trials matched to people's skills. The provider went on to offer the customer a second work placement at a charity (this time not a work trial because the charity made it clear that it did not have a job vacancy).

In contrast, another customer, a cleaner, had taken up a placement as a caretaker on the understanding that it might lead to a job. He enjoyed the placement but instead of being offered a job at the end he was asked if he would like to extend the placement for another four weeks. This customer felt betrayed and suspected that the employer was abusing FND to gain free labour.

In-house training

One customer, a recent graduate whose provider had been unable to find him a work placement, was put on a four-week, full-time training course run by the provider. The course covered standard job-search topics such as interview techniques and how to write covering letters, as well as elements of what the person described as 'self-help'. The customer said that some of the ideas were interesting but considered the course to be unnecessarily long.

Inappropriate work placements

Two customers were extremely negative about their work placements. Both were skilled workers (one a hairdresser, the other an IT installation and repair specialist) who had been sent by the same provider to stack shelves at a shop. They said that the conditions were poor and felt that they were gaining nothing from the experience. They reported that the shop was staffed largely by FND customers, whom they thought the employer was using to fill genuine vacancies. One of the customers was still bitter about the experience when interviewed six months later:

'It was just a complete and utter rip-off...I'm a qualified hairdresser, stacking shelves in [a shop]. How is that going to enhance my CV in any way at all?...The whole thing just felt like a scam and I felt just totally used and abused by having to do it.'

(FND customer)

Benefit problems

At least one customer had his benefits stopped by mistake when the MWRA ended. It took several weeks for this to be corrected. In the meantime, the customer had to borrow money to pay his rent and other living expenses.

3.5 Summary

FND providers across the four networks offered their customers a similar range of services beyond regular meetings with an adviser. These services fell into four categories: employability training and support, other skills training, specialised support and the MWRA. Employability training and support tended to be delivered in-house. Other skills training was usually delivered by external organisations, although some providers offered in-house training for CSCS cards and SIA licences. Customers needing specialised support were referred to external organisations or specialist FND providers.

Two services were offered to and taken up by a majority of customers: help with CV writing; job applications or interviews skills; and drawing up an Action Plan. Around two-thirds of all FND customers said they had taken up these services. All other types of services or support were taken up by fewer than half of all customers.

Provision and take-up of sessions relating to confidence or motivation, and financial support to help cover the costs of looking for or taking work, were more prevalent in Phase 1 areas than in Phase 2 areas. Phase 2 customers were more likely to have undertaken training or voluntary work than their Phase 1 counterparts.

According to the customer survey, most FND support types were found useful by just over half of all customers who took them up. Help with CV writing, job applications and interview skills stood out as being perceived as particularly useful. Customers who had ended their claim and entered paid work were more likely to feel that the support received from their FND provider had played a role than was the case among the Phase 2 comparison group. This view was particularly likely to be held by customers in Phase 1 areas who had entered part-time employment.

The evidence from the survey is not conclusive with respect to potential ‘parking’ of harder-to-help customers. Customers with no qualifications were over-represented among the small proportion of customers who had not taken up any support by the end of FND, and disabled customers or those with long-term illnesses were less likely to take up some forms of support. However, disabled customers experiencing FND were also more likely to say that the support they had received increased their chances of finding work than their Phase 2 counterparts.

The services which customers in the qualitative sample valued most were referrals to training, support from an employment engagement officer and, in many cases, the MWRA. There were mixed views about the quality of in-house employability training and CV writing services. Compulsory group job-search sessions were widely disliked, but some customers welcomed the opportunity to use providers’ job-search facilities on a voluntary basis. (It should be noted that the customer survey did not ask about support from an employer engagement officer or about group job-search.)

According to providers, the MWRA usually took the form of a work placement in the private sector or a charity. These placements tended to be low-level positions. Some providers could not secure placements for all their customers, and in some cases they delivered a four-week training course instead. Customers were encouraged to find their own placements, with providers stepping in if they were unsuccessful. The MWRA usually took place around six months after a customer joined FND, although end-to-end providers sometimes arranged it earlier. Providers were mostly enthusiastic about the benefits to customers of undertaking a work placement, but they found some customers resistant to the concept and believed that it was not always appropriate – for instance, for customers with alcohol or drug problems, or for highly-skilled customers. For these reasons it was felt that a work placement should not be mandatory for all customers.

The customer survey suggests that the proportion of FND customers who undertook MWRA by the end of a year of FND is somewhere between 46% (work placements only) and 63% (any potentially qualifying activity). Take-up of MWRA-qualifying activity was reasonably consistent across all customer subgroups.

Customers in the qualitative sample had strong feelings about the MWRA. Some of the customers who had not experienced one objected strongly to the idea of unpaid, compulsory work placements, while others were disappointed not to have had a placement or – if they were still on FND – were looking forward to having one. Customers who had experienced an MWRA were positive about it when it was a work placement which used their skills and/or gave them experience in a new field. Ideally, they wanted a work trial – a placement with the prospect of a job at the end. Customers assigned to what they considered to be inappropriate placements gained little or nothing from the experience.

4 Support and conditionality over time

This chapter begins with a description of advisory arrangements within the case study Flexible New Deal (FND) providers. It goes on to report findings on advisory and other forms of support for customers in Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas and for FND customers in the qualitative sample. The chapter then turns to the topic of conditionality and relates how providers managed to maintain momentum and how customers perceived and experienced the pressures of the regime.

4.1 Adviser continuity and discontinuity

As set out in the *Flexible New Deal Supplier Guidance*, providers were contractually required to deliver ‘meaningful fortnightly contact with each customer’ as a minimum level of ongoing service³¹. This section describes the processes underlying this advisory support, as portrayed in the provider staff interviews.

All FND providers in the sample assigned customers to a key case worker or ‘adviser’. Customers would normally see their adviser at regular one-to-one meetings for the duration of their time with the provider organisation. Within the end-to-end FND delivery model, a customer was typically assigned one adviser over the 52 weeks of the programme. Within the staged models, a customer was assigned to a new adviser at each stage (and change of organisation) in the process. Specialist providers followed this same model of advisory support.

The length and frequency of advisory meetings varied across providers and over time, or by FND stages (where relevant). Within these parameters adjustments to the timetabling of meetings could also vary according to customer needs. The reported frequency of meetings ranged from twice weekly to fortnightly, while the duration of meetings ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours. Staff appeared to be aware of a minimum standard of fortnightly contact with their customers.

It was felt that, in contrast to Jobcentre Plus advisory services, the biggest benefit to FND customers was sustained one-to-one contact with an adviser.

Adviser continuity was viewed by staff as essential for developing a relationship of trust and client rapport, as one adviser stated, only over time can the ‘relationship with them get more personable’. Familiarity was needed to break down barriers and move the customer closer to work. Continuity in the adviser relationship was also considered important for engaging customers in activities, as explained by one member of staff who saw customers over a 20-week period of the programme:

‘Obviously as you get to know the client more, they become more open with you...especially if they build up trust with you as well, they’re more likely to come on workshops. I think if you build a good relationship with someone, then if you advise them to do something they’re more likely to trust you and want to do it.’

(FND provider staff)

Provider staff working within a staged delivery model often found it frustrating to build a relationship with a customer over several months and then hand them over to another provider. Some complained that if a customer started a job soon after moving to a new provider, that provider received the credit even if they had done most of the work to get the customer to that point. These

³¹ Minimum fortnightly contact was an additional requirement, implemented in response to the recession in exchange for increasing the provider service fee from 20% to 40% of the contract value.

staff thought one provider should be responsible for the entire programme (or that the stage which their organisation delivered should be longer). In a similar vein, some specialist providers wanted more time to work with customers. They wanted to receive customers soon after they joined FND or even directly from Jobcentre Plus, rather than after the customers had been with another provider for several weeks or months.

It was also acknowledged by provider staff that customers benefited from experiencing a range of staff views and approaches. Customers regularly interacted with other staff who facilitated workshops and coaching sessions so that *'they're getting the widest variety and knowledge from everybody within the centre'*. Advisory staff commonly mentioned a 'team approach' where they regularly collected views through case conferencing and the sharing of tactics. Staff also saw the value of transferring customers to another adviser in certain circumstances: if there was a personality clash, if the adviser felt the relationship was getting stale, or if there was another adviser with experience more relevant to the customer's situation. One end-to-end prime provider scheduled regular 'client swaps' when each adviser could transfer a proportion of their customers to another adviser:

'I have to admit after being and seeing someone every two weeks for seven, eight months, it gets the same routine, the same thing, same again. And if there isn't any progress, you feel sometimes that you've hit a wall. So it depends on the person as well, depends on their background and what type of thing they're looking for but we often do change them advisers. I think change is quite good because someone else might have a different input or different ideas.'

(FND provider staff)

One end-to-end subcontracted provider did not assign customers to a dedicated adviser. Instead, customers saw any available adviser each time they attended a one-to-one meeting. The input of expertise from different advisory staff was considered to outweigh the benefits of adviser continuity. This system was thought to work provided agreed actions and progress to goals were regularly updated in the action plan so that this information was accessible across the FND team. Keeping customer records current was considered important by all FND providers for maintaining continuity if the assigned adviser was unavailable on the designated meeting day or left their post.

4.2 Customer experiences of support

4.2.1 Frequency and nature of contact

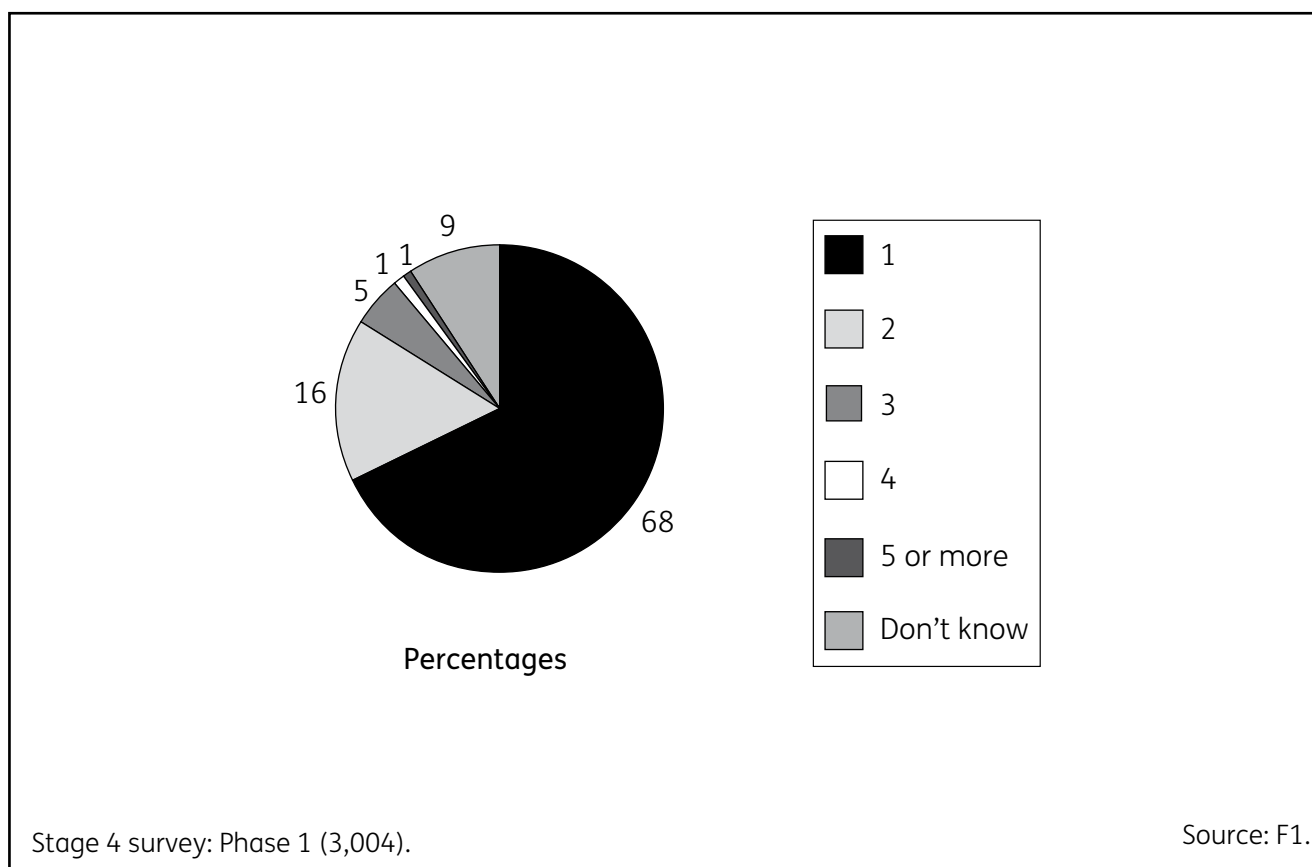
This section presents the customer survey findings on the frequency and nature of advisory contact within FND areas and compared to Phase 2 comparison areas.³²

Not including Jobcentre Plus, the majority (84%) of FND customers reported they were referred to just one or two organisations after claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for 12 months continuously (see Figure 4.1). Just one in twenty had been referred to three organisations and very small proportions to four organisations or five or more organisations. However, just under one in ten were unable to say how many organisations they had been referred to over this period.

³² Note that New Deal (ND) provision in Phase 2 areas during this period was undergoing transition with the Gateway period reduced from ten weeks and adviser contact sometimes reduced to fortnightly. Also, as detailed in Section 1.4.1, customers aged 25+ in the survey cohort would only have received a maximum of six months of New Deal 25 Plus (ND25+) support during the survey reference period. This report compares experiences and outcomes of the 13th to 24th consecutive month of claiming in Phases 1 and 2.

Even looking just at individuals who had completed the full 12 months of FND (i.e. they were still claiming JSA at the time of interview), these proportions were broadly the same (65% had contact with only one organisation while on FND and 18% with two organisations). This suggests that a staged model of delivery, where customers are referred to a new provider after a set number of months, is relatively uncommon.

Figure 4.1 Number of organisations referred to



There were some small variations by subgroups, however these were relatively small:

- Lone parents were more likely to receive support from just one organisation (79% compared to 65% overall).
- Customers with a mental health condition were more likely to have been referred to more than one organisation (26% compared to 22% overall).

This evidence suggests there was limited use of specialist subcontractors to deliver services to particular subgroups (although specialist support may have been offered in-house). If this had been widespread then the proportion of customers having experienced the services of more than one provider while on FND would vary by customer group to a much greater extent.

FND customers experienced a greater level of contact with their providers than their counterparts experienced in Phase 2 areas over the equivalent part of their claim. FND providers were contracted to conduct face-to-face meetings or other meaningful face-to-face contact at least fortnightly³³. Hence, customers completing a full 12 months on FND should have received a minimum of 26

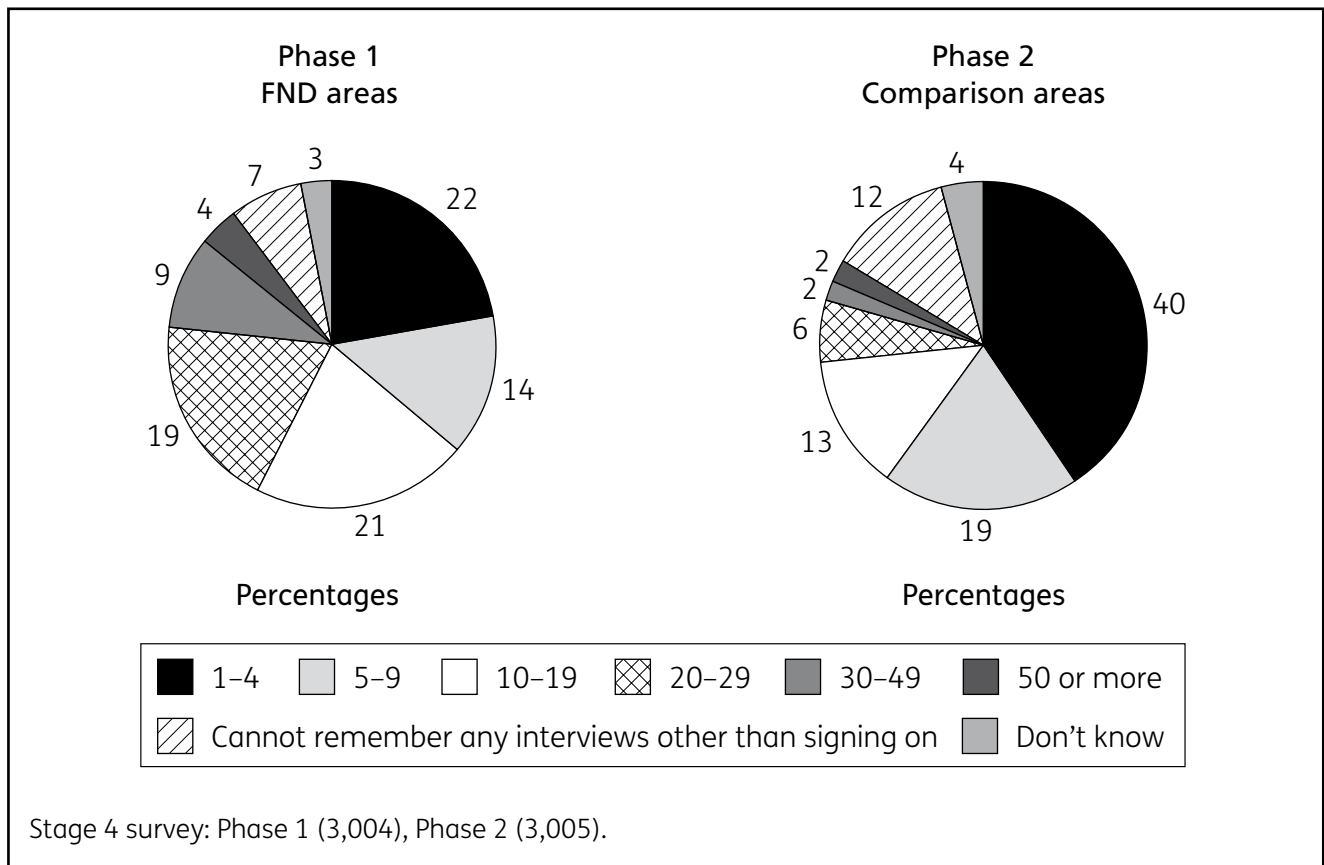
³³ However, note that face-to-face fortnightly meaningful contact did not necessarily have to involve a meeting with an adviser but could also include short job-focused training, events/activities to improve job search skills or a period of work experience.

fortnightly face-to-face contacts in total. Note that this section just reports on face-to-face meetings with an adviser.

Across all customers, just over half (54%) of Phase 1 customers recalled at least ten face-to-face meetings with their provider since starting FND over this period while fewer than one in ten (seven %) did not remember any interviews other than signing on. This compares with just under a quarter of customers in Phase 2 areas recalling ten or more face-to-face meetings with Jobcentre Plus/New Deal advisers over the equivalent point of their claim. Customers in Phase 1 areas were three times more likely to have received at least 20 face-to-face meetings compared to customers in Phase 2 areas.

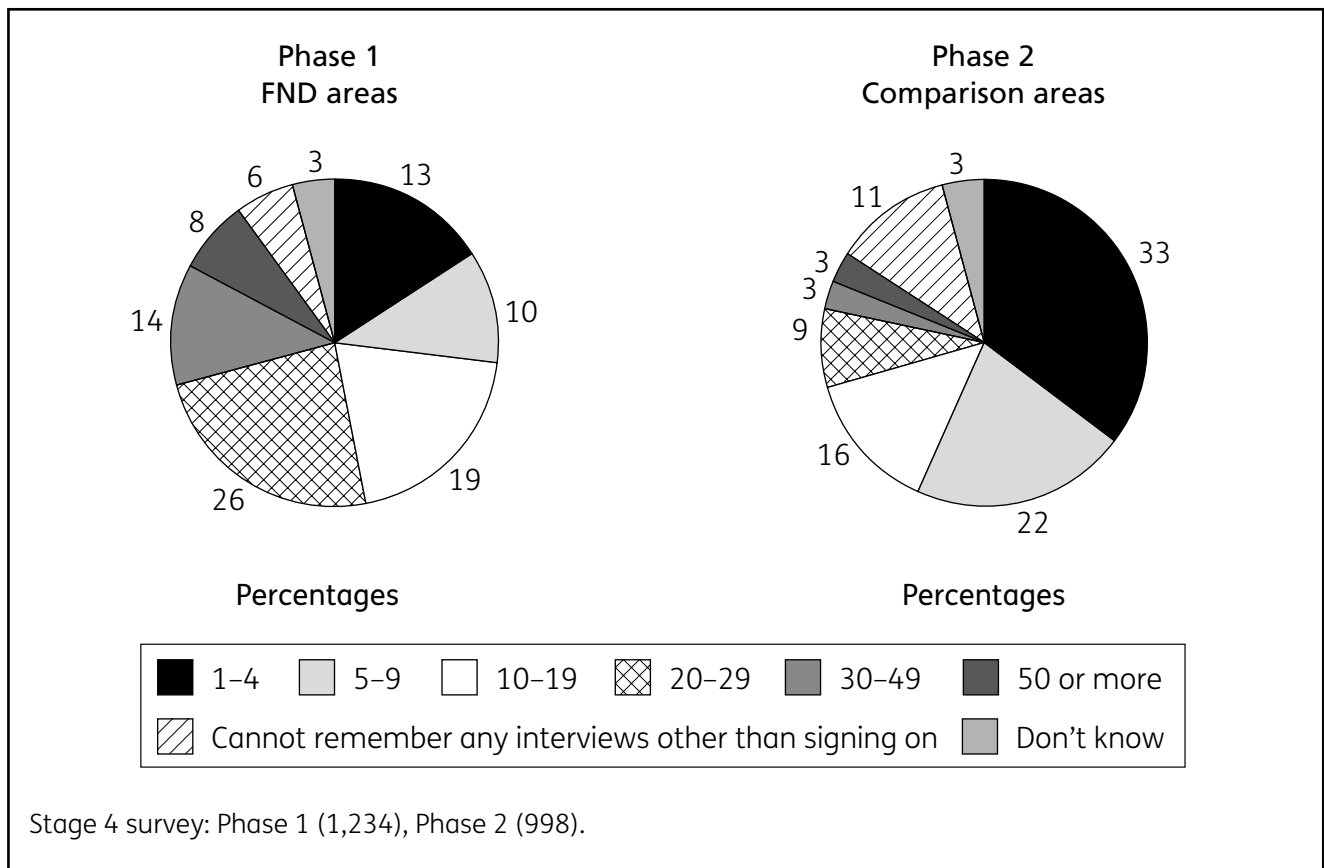
Figure 4.2 provides a more detailed breakdown of the number of face-to-face meetings with an adviser since entering FND/equivalent point by Phase.

Figure 4.2 Face-to-face meetings with advisers (all customers)



While the analysis shown above is useful for understanding the numbers of face-to-face meetings that a provider might deliver for a typical cohort, it is more useful to focus only on those customers who experienced a full 12 months of FND in order to understand the extent to which this element of the service was delivered as intended (albeit from the perspective of customers). Figure 4.3 shows the numbers of face-to-face meetings experienced by customers who claimed throughout the FND period (and equivalent in Phase 2 areas).

Figure 4.3 Face-to-face meetings with advisers (customers completing FND/ equivalent)

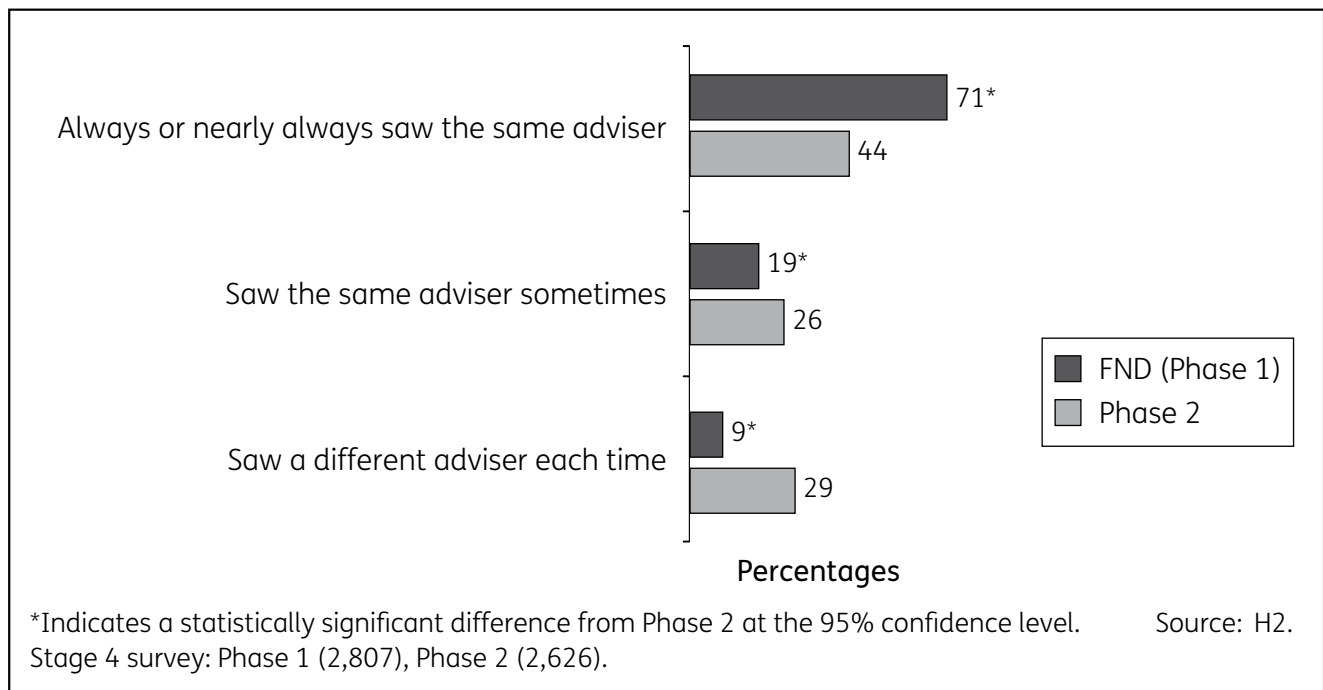


The differences in levels of face-to-face contact are still apparent when focusing just on customers completing a full 12 months of claiming. Among these individuals, just over two-fifths of FND customers reported at least 20 face-to-face meetings while 13% experienced only between one and four meetings. The latter figure is considerably lower than the third (33%) of customers in Phase 2 areas stating they received between one and four meetings between months 13 and 24 of their claim.

Among customers who reached the end of FND, those who were more likely to have had fewer than ten face-to-face meetings included:

- ethnic minority customers (35% compared to 23% overall);
- customers with no qualifications (32%).

As well as a greater number of face-to-face meetings, FND customers experienced greater continuity in adviser contact compared to their counterparts in Phase 2 areas. The majority (71%) of FND customers who could recall some contact always or almost always saw the same adviser for these interviews with just one in ten (nine %) seeing a different adviser each time. Figure 4.4 shows the comparable figures for Phase 2 areas.

Figure 4.4 Adviser continuity

The greater continuity of advisory support in Phase 1 areas, compared to Phase 2 areas, was evident across all customer groups.

In Phase 2 areas, 18–24 year olds were more likely to experience consistency in advisers (51% saw the same adviser each time compared to 43% of 25–49 year olds and 38% of those aged 50+). This is likely to be explained by NDYP being in place in Phase 2 areas. In FND areas, there was less variation by age (74% of 18–24 year olds saw the same adviser, 69% of 25–49 year olds and 70% of those aged 50+).

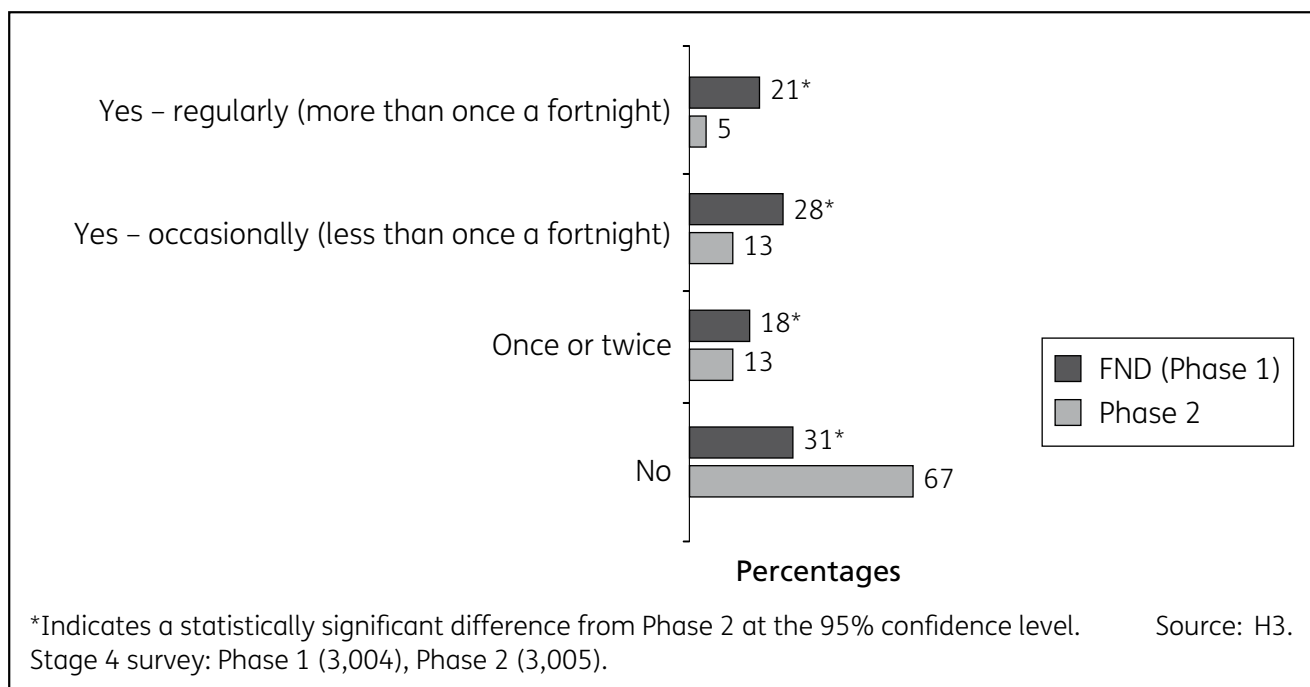
There was not a great deal of variation in adviser continuity by other subgroups in the FND areas. Customers who had recently left prison or were on probation (77%) and former members of the UK armed services (79%) were slightly more likely to report seeing the same adviser on each occasion. In Phase 2 areas the former group were actually less likely to see the same adviser each time (34%).

There were also some FND customer groups who were less likely to see the same adviser at each meeting, including:

- customers with a mental health condition (59% compared to 71% overall);
- lone parents (63%);
- customers qualified to degree level or above (67%).

These groups were similarly less likely to experience consistency of advisers in Phase 2 areas.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, customers were asked if they had any telephone, text or email contact with their adviser during their time on FND/the equivalent period of a claim in Phase 2 areas (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5 Other forms of contact (telephone, text or email)

Nearly seven in ten (67%) FND customers had advisory contact by telephone, text or email during this period, with a fifth (21%) of all FND customers having regular contact in this way (i.e. more than once a fortnight). By comparison, customers in Phase 2 areas were much less likely to have had this additional contact (31%) and only a very small minority experienced frequent informal contact (five %).

This level of difference in informal contact between Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas was evident across all customer groups. In both areas, perhaps unsurprisingly given the high-tech nature of some of the contact, older customers were less likely to have this type of contact (in FND areas 15% of 50+ customers had frequent contact in this way, compared to 22% of 18-24 year olds and 23% of 25-49 year olds).

4.2.2 Adequacy of support

Nearly three quarters (72%) of all FND customers felt that the amount of support they had received since entering FND was about right – significantly more than was the case for Phase 2 customers (64%).

Fewer than one in ten (seven %) Phase 1 customers felt they had received too much support – a similar proportion to Phase 2 customers (six %). Within FND areas, customers qualified to degree level or above were twice as likely to say this was the case (14% compared to seven % overall). This variation was not evident in Phase 2 areas.

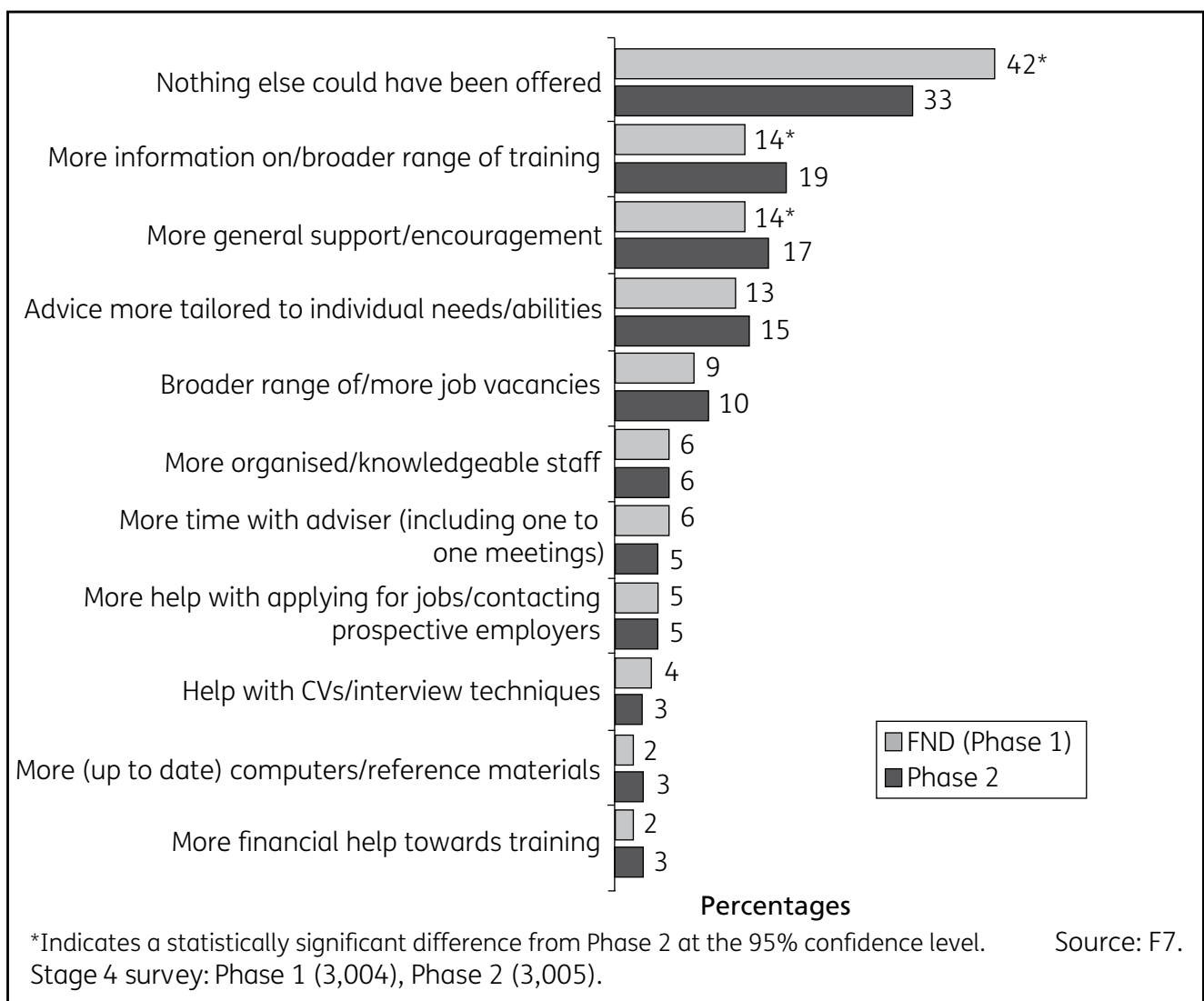
On the other hand, a fifth of FND customers (19%) and 28% of Phase 2 customers felt that they did not receive enough support. Although customers of all ages were more likely to feel that they did not receive enough support in Phase 2 areas, the gap was smaller for customers aged 18-24. Of customers aged 18-24, 21% believed that they did not receive enough support under FND compared with 26% in Phase 2 areas. This compares with 19% of customers aged 25+ in Phase 1 areas and 29% aged 25+ in Phase 2 areas.

All customers were asked what other support they felt would have helped them to find work more quickly. The responses given are shown in Figure 4.6.

Customers in FND areas were much more likely to report that nothing more could have been offered (42%), compared to Phase 2 areas (33%).

Among FND customers, there was not a great deal of variation by customer group regarding the proportion who stated that nothing more could have been offered. However, ethnic minority customers were considerably less likely to give this response (24%), indicating this group would have liked different kinds of support.

Figure 4.6 Other support that could have been offered to help customers back into work (more quickly)



This finding was consistent across customer groups; Phase 2 customers were more likely than Phase 1 customers to identify additional services they would have liked. Additionally, this difference was larger for some subgroups:

- customers who had recently left prison or had been on probation (43% of Phase 1 customers stated that nothing more could have been offered, compared to 26% of Phase 2 customers);
- customers who had been former members of the UK armed forces (43% of Phase 1 customers compared to 29% of Phase 2 customers).

In contrast, there were some Phase 1 customer groups who were no more likely to say that there was nothing further that could have been offered than their equivalents in Phase 2. These included customers suffering from a long-term illness or disability where in both areas over a third felt that more services could have been offered (37% in Phase 1 and 34% in Phase 2).

As Figure 4.6 shows, ‘more information on/broader range of training’; ‘more general support/encouragement’; and ‘advice more tailored to individual needs/abilities’ were the most commonly mentioned service requests. While the first two suggestions were mentioned slightly more often by Phase 2 customers than FND customers, this was not the case for the request for more tailored advice where there was no overall difference by area.

Some FND customer groups were more likely to feel that they would have benefited from more general support and encouragement from their FND provider than was the case at the overall level. This requested service was particularly marked for customers with a mental illness (23% compared to 14% overall), ethnic minority customers (19%) and customers qualified to Level 4 or 5 (18%). The following FND customer groups were more likely to state that they would have benefited from advice better tailored to their individual needs and abilities:

- customers qualified to Level 4 or 5 (30% compared to 13% overall);
- ethnic minority customers (22% compared to 13% overall);
- customers experiencing a long-term illness or disability (18% compared to 13% overall);
- 25–49-year-olds (17% compared to 13% overall).

Finally, some small variations were detected according to whether FND customers had entered any form of paid work by the time of the research. Customers who had **not** entered paid work were more likely to say that they would have liked more information on and a broader range of training options (15% compared to 12% for those who entered work) and more help with applying for jobs and approaching employers (six % compared to four %). However, these individuals were no more or less likely to say that nothing else could have been done to help them into work.

4.2.3 Customer views – qualitative data

FND customers in the qualitative sample reported they had regular advisory contact throughout the programme. This took the form of one-to-one meetings with a personal adviser and ranged in frequency from fortnightly to twice weekly. The length of these meetings ranged from 5 to 60 minutes. Customers also mentioned telephone, email and text messaging contact with their advisers where communication was initiated by both parties. These other means were appreciated, as stated by one male customer:

‘If I didn’t have any other ways of contacting apart from fortnightly meetings, I would actually be concerned...office telephone number, his email address, that gives me more peace of mind...’

(FND customer)

One-to-one meetings with an adviser mainly focused on the job search; customers commonly reported that their adviser carried out an electronic job search during their meetings. They were also expected to show evidence of their job search activities completed since the last meeting, such as records of job applications, direct contacts with employers and actions following up work leads. Advisers provided practical help with CVs, covering letters and job applications, or they contacted employers directly to follow up a job prospect. Advisers also kept customers informed of services and activities that were offered in-house (and sometimes elsewhere) and encouraged them to participate. In general, customers liked the regular schedule of one-to-one support they received

from a dedicated adviser. They appreciated the fact that one member of staff was familiar with their circumstances and felt that this quality of support could not be achieved in a group setting.

Customers in the sample were also generally pleased with the calibre of advisers and other staff they encountered on FND. Many praised the attitudes and willingness of staff, describing them as ‘friendly’, ‘supportive’, ‘understanding’, and ‘professional’. Some customers also relayed how their adviser was empathetic and flexible to their personal circumstances. For instance, one person who experienced episodes of depression said his adviser gave him useful information about a peer support group and was proactive in sending him job vacancies. Another customer who lived a considerable distance from the provider was grateful that his adviser was flexible about appointment start times.

Customers contrasted their advisory meetings with the support they had received (and were receiving) at Jobcentre Plus. Most said their FND meetings were more helpful because there was more time for the adviser to perform a detailed job search.³⁴ One customer who had been on FND for six months commented that, although the focus on the job search was the same, the amount of personal attention was better with the FND provider:

‘It is one-to-one and you can pick up the phone whenever you like and speak to your adviser... I mean you have your appointment but if anything crops up, you just pick up the phone and they’re willing to talk to you straightaway. Whereas you go to the jobcentre, you’ve got to make appointments which means you’d probably have to wait a week before you can see somebody. it’s much quicker this way.’

(FND customer)

Issues that detracted from the advisory relationship

Although adviser continuity was highly valued, customers in the sample described instances where their adviser disappeared or they were assigned to a new adviser without notice. A lack of information about the change contributed to feelings of unease.

A change in adviser was a regular occurrence within the staged FND delivery models where customers were assigned to a new adviser with each new stage. As noted in Chapter 3, customers found these moves disruptive and disliked the repetitive form filling associated with a change of organisation. Furthermore, customers resented having to repeat their story every time they met a new adviser. On a more positive note, customers associated with one of these delivery networks sometimes noted that the support improved once they moved to the next stage, for instance if they encountered staff at the new provider who were more knowledgeable about their field of work. For instance, one job seeker received help to become self-employed after starting with another FND organisation nine months into the programme. His new adviser identified relevant courses and helped him build a business plan.

Staffing issues were also a concern which detracted from the quality of advisory support. Customers from across the sample identified problems relating to staff turnover and high volumes of customers. Some commented on the hectic atmosphere in the offices. One jobseeker, for example,

³⁴ It should be noted that customers in the 12-month group would have experienced Stage 3 of the Jobseekers Regime very soon after implementation in 2009 when adviser resource was under extreme pressure and Jobcentre Plus was adjusting to very high customer volumes due to the recession (see Knight et al, 2010). However, most customers in the 6-month group, who experienced Stage 3 under much better conditions, still viewed the intensity and quality of support received on FND more favourably than the Stage 3 support.

reported that because of the high customer numbers his provider had been forced to replace one-to-one advisory meetings with group sessions attended by up to ten people. Other customers were more cynical, observing that FND providers were profit-making businesses that were *'in there for the money'*, so it was in their best interests to maximise customer numbers.

Finally, people from professional and highly-skilled backgrounds commonly reported that their experiences of support from FND advisers were of limited use. It was generally felt that the help on offer was a *'waste of time'* because it was too general and too basic. As stated by one professional who had been on FND for 12 months, the help received added little value to his existing job search activities:

'The people are really nice, the ones that I am meeting, but in terms of information, they just tell me what I already know.'

(FND customer)

4.3 Maintaining customer momentum

It was common for FND staff in the qualitative interviews to describe a person-centred approach in which the intensity of services was responsive to the needs of the customer. It was acknowledged that some customers required more interventions, depending on their barriers. For example, one staff member stated that customers with *'immediate support needs'* could be referred to the provider's in-house psychologist for meetings alongside their usual advisory appointments, and that an employable customer who had skills and was searching for work independently would be given less time than a person who lacked confidence and was further from the labour market. Likewise, as discussed in Chapter 3, the timing of the Mandatory Work-Related Activity (MWRA) could vary according to the needs of the customer – earlier if the person lacked recent work experience, later if they appeared to be job ready. The MWRA might also be delayed until after more immediate issues like drug or alcohol dependency were addressed.

As noted above, a change in adviser was used as a strategy to refresh the customer journey and inject different tactics to help move people into work. Within the staged FND models, the design entailed changes at set points in the JSA claim when the customer would either change advisers or move to another organisation. Staff reported that the intention of the different stages was to help maintain customer momentum and motivation. Within one provider network, for example, with the move to another provider, customer contact with an adviser increased from fortnightly to weekly visits. The duration of these one-to-one meetings was also typically extended.

The nature and type of support generally changed over time as customers moved through the different stages. One staff member within a staged delivery network described how, over the 12-month cycle, the intensity of activity was highest at the beginning and towards the end of the programme. Over time, customers were expected to broaden their job goals and increase their efforts to find work. At that point the customer would be offered more one-to-one support, such as mock interviews and information about unfamiliar job sectors. The last stage of the programme was considered to be a time for reflection: *'we've done all this and you've not got somewhere, why?'* Advisory meetings might then be extended to two-hour, weekly sessions. As customers reached the final weeks, their efforts were expected to increase significantly – more job searches, job applications and interview practice.

Within the end-to-end model of provision the onus was placed on advisory staff to maintain momentum as change was not incorporated into the structure of the programme. Together, staff from both the end-to-end and the staged delivery models listed a range of strategies for

maintaining customer motivation and direction:

- keeping a routine of regular contact;
- increasing the frequency and/or duration of advisory meetings;
- expanding the job search: frequency of applications, job goals or job sectors;
- changing advisers;
- adjusting job search strategies, e.g. cold calling employers, attending a job club;
- referring the customer to confidence and motivation workshops;
- encouraging more engagement or mandating attendance at in-house training/workshops;
- ensuring the customer is continuously assigned a new action to address before the next meeting.

A prime goal represented by all provider models was for the customer to establish an 'independent, self-sustained job search'. One staff member from an end-to-end provider described the customers' intended progress up to six months on FND:

'I guess that the nature of the support will change in terms of you know we really try to empower our customers where possible. So we sort of try and cut off the apron strings if you like. For example we do want to progress everyone up a level...so everyone that we get that starts red, we will want to kind of move into amber. So within six months we want to be looking at starting to access some more group sessions and workshops and maybe introduce a work trial or work placement and start to move away from sort of intense one-to-one adviser time into a more sort of facilitative role rather than just a pure pastoral role.'

(FND provider staff)

One adviser stated that as the time on FND increased, they tended to 'ramp up activity' to engage customers as much as possible. Provider staff reported that issues with confidence and motivation could be addressed by increasing the frequency and duration of advisory contact. It was noted that customers could become depressed as time on the programme lengthened. Support for building confidence and motivation was viewed as a strategy to progress customers:

'People just get to the point where they've had so many knock backs, they feel they're not getting anywhere and you say to them, "What about we try this or what about you come on this confidence and motivation thing and we'll do you a plan?" And that really seems to work for quite a few people.'

(FND provider staff)

From the interviews with FND staff, there was limited evidence of customer selection for targeting resources. Staff did express their frustration with the weakened labour market which made their role more difficult. One adviser who worked for an end-to-end provider stated that after spending months with a customer she had to decide if that person would be better off with another adviser. Then, reflecting on her own performance, she had to decide to whom she should channel her time:

'I need to work out in my mind if I'm going to help that person back into work and if I benefit more from giving more time to someone else that's more likely to go back into work.'

(FND provider staff)

Challenging customer groups

Staff believed the biggest work barrier by far was a negative attitude to work. Advisers particularly mentioned the long-term unemployed and customers who had participated in New Deal programmes previously. Many indicated that if customers lacked the right attitude and the will to work there was nothing they could do. They would use the threat of sanctions, but this usually had little impact with this group. Referring to difficult-to-help customers, one adviser stated:

‘The main group would be ones who are very, very reluctant to go back to work. If it’s practical barriers, we can always get round them and if they have worries and concerns or they think they can’t afford to go back to work and they don’t think they can get the job that they want, we can usually get over that...we’ll try and get them Work Trials, we’ll try and get them interviews and if they don’t attend then we’ll use the DMA action, which is always a last resort.’

(FND provider staff)

Many staff felt poorly equipped to help customers with major barriers to work such as drug and alcohol addiction, mental health problems, learning difficulties and serious disabilities, homelessness and serious criminal convictions. Some reported a lack of partner organisations to which they could refer these customers for support alongside FND. Others believed that jobseekers with these sorts of barriers should be referred directly to specialist FND providers at the start of the programme.

Customers whom advisers suspected had an addiction problem but who denied it were seen as especially hard to help. Advisers found it difficult to find employers who would accommodate someone with an addiction problem or a serious criminal record. However, there were some positive reports where part-time work could be found so that a customer could work around the constraints of an addiction. Another frequently mentioned group whom advisers found difficult to help were customers with severe mental health issues. Some advisers questioned whether these individuals were on the correct benefit and reported cases where they had arranged for the customer to be moved onto ESA.

People with English language needs and customers with outdated skills were a third group advisers had difficulty helping. This, advisers said, was mainly due to a lack of time and funding to put people through the necessary courses and to engage with them more intensively.

4.4 Mandation and conditionality

This section reports survey findings on Phase 1 and Phase 2 customers’ understandings and experiences of the requirements of the respective JSA regimes and of mandatory activities. Then, drawing from the qualitative findings, views on increased pressure and experiences of conditionality are described in more detail.

4.4.1 Customer survey findings

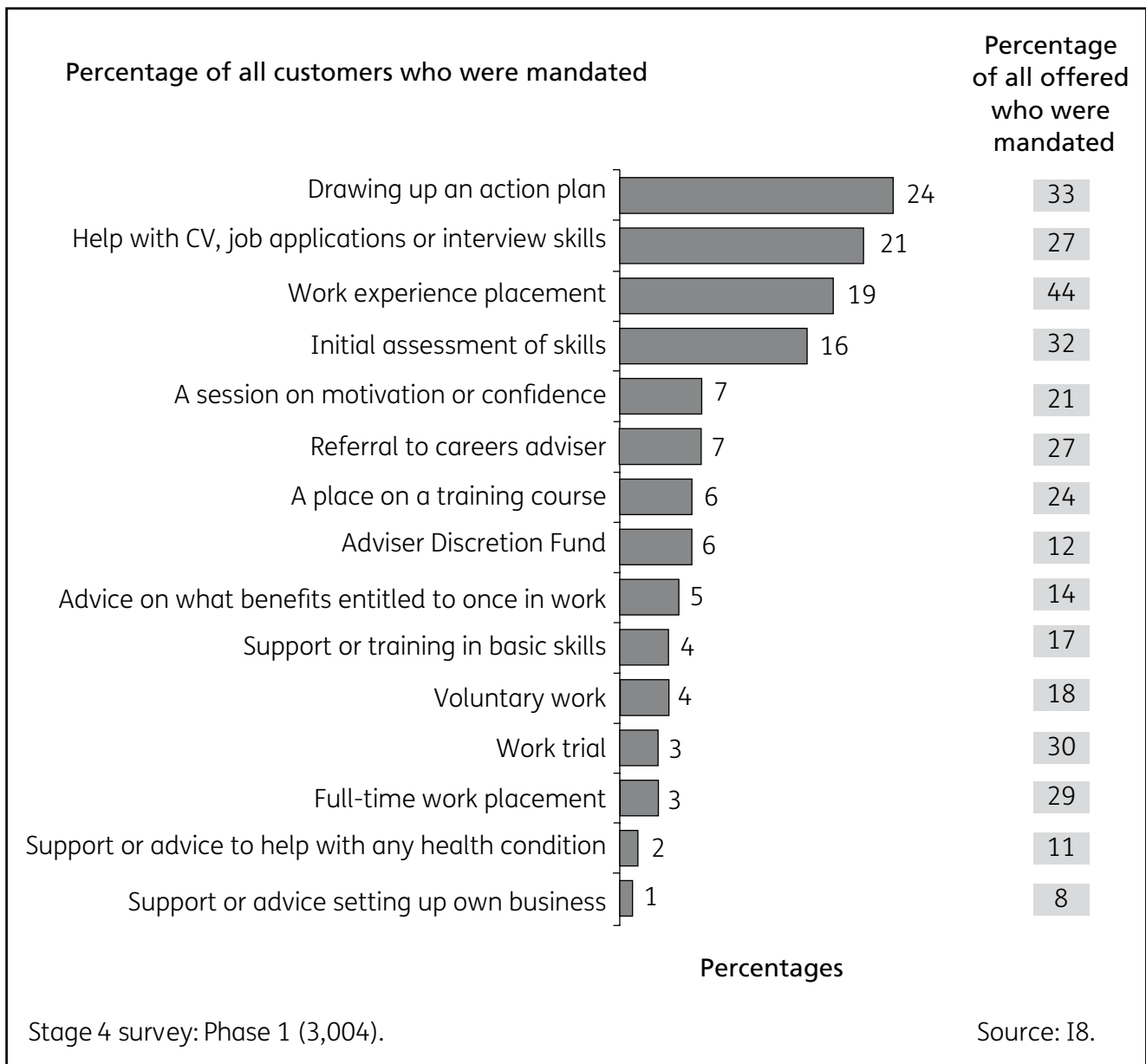
To find out if customers were aware of the conditionality of claiming under JRFND, they were asked whether they were made aware that failure to participate in any activity could result in a loss of benefit. Six in ten FND customers (60%) who had been offered some type of support stated that they had been mandated to take part in at least one activity. At an overall level, Phase 2 customers reported a similar level of mandation (61%). These proportions remained the same even when only customers who completed the full 12 months of FND or the equivalent period in Phase 2 areas were considered.

There was some variation by age group in the experience of mandation. Customers aged 18-24 in FND areas were significantly less likely to experience mandation than their counterparts in Phase 2 areas (60% compared to 70% in Phase 2) but customers aged 50+ in FND areas were more likely than those aged 50+ in Phase 2 to have experienced mandation (60% in Phase 1 and 53% in Phase 2). There was no difference between Phases for the age 25-49 group.

Within FND areas, there were only very slight variations in the likelihood to recall a mandatory activity across key customer subgroups (other than age).

Figure 4.7 lists various support types in FND areas next to the proportion of customers who stated their participation was mandatory. The bars show the proportion of all FND customers stating that they were mandated to each type of provision. The grey boxes next to each bar show the proportion of all customers offered each type of provision who recalled being told that it was mandatory.

Figure 4.7 Levels of mandation among FND customers



The most common mandatory activities FND customers recalled were: drawing up an Action Plan (24%); taking part in a CV/job application/interview skills activity (21%); a work placement (19%); and undertaking a skills assessment (16%).

A comparison between the levels of mandation and the overall proportions who were offered each type of support indicates that the four-week work placement (part of the MWRA) was most closely associated with mandation. In 44% of cases where FND customers had been offered a work placement, they had been told that this was mandatory.

4.4.2 Customer experiences – qualitative interviews

In the qualitative research, the main change in expectations customers perceived was the requirement to expand their job search beyond preferred job goals. Some also mentioned they were expected to increase the number of job applications they submitted each week; compulsory attendance at the provider premises to perform job searches; the requirement to sign up with an employment agency. However, there was a general feeling among customers that the amount of activity required of them did not escalate as their time with the provider increased.

Customers said that after a while they had to change their job goals beyond (or below) their areas of expertise in order to increase their chances of finding employment. For example, one person who had been unemployed since the 1990s explained that if a job goal was not attainable, the adviser could force you onto an alternative path. He had previously been employed as a hair dresser and was looking for similar work:

'At the end of the day if I haven't got a Plan B they'll present a Plan B...There's gonna be something that you're gonna have to do. Not in so many cold words as that but you just kind of got the impression that this is what they're talking about. It's like if you can't find something we're gonna find something.'

(FND customer)

Targets were also set for the quantity of job applications customers were required to submit on a weekly basis. Some people mentioned they would be sanctioned if they failed to meet the targets, as explained by one customer who had been on FND for 12 months:

'So yeah it got to the point, it was like "Right, we need five [job applications] a week off you minimum". And if they felt we weren't doing five a week they could sanction us then. So this is why it was heavier and heavier is because of what they were making us do and if we didn't do it you're up for being sanctioned.'

(FND customer)

Although people understood the reasons for expanding their job search, in some cases, this pressure was described as being 'bullied'. There were examples of customers who resented being pushed to take a job outside their level of skills or qualifications. Others reported they were expected to apply for jobs in a certain sector, such as retail or call centres, because their provider had links with these employers. Similarly, some customers felt that it was unrealistic to widen their job goals because employers were only interested in people with relevant work experience. Customers from professional backgrounds also recounted that employers pointed out the mismatch between their experience and the skills needed for the job. For example, one individual who was previously employed as a structural engineer before being made redundant said he was turned down for lower level jobs because employers suspected he would resign once a job related to his field became available.

In areas where FND was delivered through a staged model, customers observed changes that accompanied a move to a subsequent stage, as one customer who had been on FND for 12 months described it:

'Yeah then I went to the next level and you could tell the difference. They were a bit more serious and a bit more intense and a bit more pressure.'

(FND customer)

At the same time, customers who were part of the staged FND delivery generally noticed an increase in the level of support, particularly when moving from the first to the second stage of the programme. This included more frequent one-to-one contact with an adviser, improved access to computers, extra help with CVs and job applications and access to self-employment support.

A number of customers in the qualitative sample claimed they noticed no changes in the pressure to increase their job search activity or in the support provided throughout FND. This was noted among some people who had recent work experience and who were confident in their job search. For example, one customer with a career in the film industry was content to continue only fortnightly contact with the FND provider because he realised the service was not geared to his specialist area. In another instance, a customer stated that expectations for her job search remained quite stable because she was a carer which limited her availability for work. Similarly, there were instances where customers experienced a disruption in services because their FND provider had gone out of business.

4.5 Summary

All FND providers in the sample assigned customers to a key case worker or 'adviser'. Customers would normally see their adviser at regular one-to-one meetings for the duration of their time with the provider organisation. The customer survey results indicated that not all FND customers received the fortnightly face-to-face meetings that providers were contracted to offer. Among customers who completed a full 12 months of FND, just under half reported at least 20 face-to-face meetings. Insights from the customer qualitative interviews suggest that high customer volumes and staff turnover may have contributed to this.

Adviser continuity was viewed by staff as essential for developing a relationship of trust and client rapport. Familiarity was needed to break down barriers and move the customer closer to work. At the same time, it was acknowledged by FND staff that in certain circumstances a change of adviser could add momentum and 'refresh' the process. A change in adviser was a regular occurrence within the staged FND delivery models where customers were assigned to a new adviser with each new stage.

Based on the survey results, customers experiencing FND provision had a greater level of contact with an adviser than customers at the same point of their claim in Phase 2 areas. FND customers attended more face-to-face meetings with an adviser, were more likely to see the same adviser for these meetings and to have had some additional contact with their adviser via telephone, text and email communication. This increased level of support and frequency of contact led to the FND customers being more likely than Phase 2 customers to say that they received about the right amount of support and to say that their adviser could not have done anything further to help them back into work.

Staff used various strategies to maintain customer momentum through the programme. These included increased conditionality around job goals and the number of job applications submitted as well as greater access to employability and soft skills support. Survey results revealed that the four-week work placement was most closely associated with mandation. Customers also commonly recalled that the Action Plan, employment skills activities and a skills assessment were mandatory. At an overall level however, FND customers were no more or less likely to have experienced mandation than their counterparts in Phase 2 areas.

Staff considered negative attitudes towards work as the biggest barrier they had to overcome for meeting job outcomes. Addictions, homelessness and criminal records were seen as other barriers that challenged staff efforts to produce job outcomes. Another frequently mentioned group whom advisers found difficult to help were customers with severe mental health issues. Some questioned whether these individuals were on the correct benefit.

5 Sanctioning

Drawing from the qualitative data, this chapter describes sanctioning practices and the experiences of Flexible New Deal (FND) staff and customers within the provider case study areas.

5.1 Practices

According to staff, customers were usually informed at the induction stage about the FND requirements and possible benefit loss due to non-compliance. Staff explained that attendance at provider appointments, the MWRA and job interviews were mandatory. Customers also recalled that this was stated in appointment letters they received in the post. The majority of customers had not experienced a sanction but said that they had been informed by FND provider staff of the process and the consequences of non-compliance.

Advisory staff were responsible for activating the sanctioning process by ‘raising a doubt’. Doubts were most commonly raised if a customer failed to attend an appointment without good reason, particularly an advisory meeting but also a job interview, training course or MRWA placement. Staff also said they had initiated the procedure for other reasons, including: refusal of a job offer; failure to provide evidence of job-seeking activity; failure to complete Action Plan tasks; abusive or aggressive behaviour; misbehaviour or rudeness at a work placement; unwillingness to travel; drunkenness when participating in activities; as well as for poor timekeeping.

Before ‘raising a doubt’ advisers attempted to contact customers by telephone. If contact was not made, a warning letter requesting re-contact within five to seven days was sent out. If customers did not respond to this warning, a doubt was usually raised. This was done by sending a doubt referral form along with evidence of non-compliance to Jobcentre Plus. FND subcontractors’ procedures varied, with some sending their forms directly to the Jobcentre Plus decision maker, others to the FND prime provider, or simultaneously to both. Evidence of non-compliance could include copies of letters confirming missed appointments, or proof of incomplete or outstanding Action Plan activities. At the same time, the customer was sent relevant forms and notified of the sanctioning and appeals process.

5.1.1 The use of discretion

FND provider staff reported considering customer circumstances and using their discretion in relation to sanctioning, *‘these are real people with real lives and to an extent you’ve got to use your own judgement’*. Staff provided examples of special circumstances. In one instance, a customer who failed to comply due to ill health was moved onto Incapacity Benefit following discussions with Jobcentre Plus. Leniency was also considered necessary when a recovering alcoholic started drinking because it was felt that losing benefits could exacerbate problems and *‘mess people up’*.

This consideration was welcomed by customers with complex personal issues. One male customer reported that a sanction was not applied after he failed to attend a series of advisory meetings due to a serious illness. Similarly, one lone parent, who had a difficult teenage child (and who had been sanctioned by Jobcentre Plus before joining FND) appreciated her provider’s flexible approach. She had not been sanctioned despite repeated missed appointments:

‘No, they have been brilliant because I’ve said I’ve got a lot of problems with [my child] so they have been good about it...Yeah, I explain to them and they re-book the appointment.’

(FND customer)

Staff also considered a customer's history of compliance and were more likely to raise a doubt if there were previous incidences of non-compliance. One staff member mentioned that, instead of raising a doubt immediately, they would increase contact time with the customer to better monitor the situation.

5.1.2 Communications and processing time

Some staff thought that the process worked well while others expressed frustration over the time taken – estimated between two weeks and three months – to receive a sanctioning decision. The process was viewed as 'longwinded' and 'inefficient' with cumbersome administration:

'...so much paperwork and it must cost [Jobcentre Plus] an absolute fortune to carry out, it's horrendous.'

(FND provider staff)

Jobcentre Plus notified providers of sanctioning decisions in different ways. In some instances the documents were sent electronically and the process was straightforward. In other cases decisions were communicated to the subcontractor through the prime provider, slowing the process. In one district Jobcentre Plus had changed the usual process. Instead of sending a letter to customers requesting reasons for non-compliance before making a decision, benefits were affected immediately. This was not viewed as a positive change as one staff member commented that customers reacted angrily to having their benefits cut without being given a chance to defend their case.

Concern was expressed that the long processing time could damage the customer-adviser relationship, halting progress if the customer had re-engaged during this time. This had resulted in some staff hesitating to raise a doubt. It was also felt that the delay between the sanctionable behaviour and punishment allowed some customers to get away with non-compliance.

The frequency with which doubts were raised depended to some extent on staff opinions about sanctioning. Expressing concern about the perceived negative impact to the customer-adviser relationship, some staff viewed it as a last resort while others mentioned they instigated the process more routinely when customers failed to attend appointments.

The frequency of sanctioning was highly variable across the providers. There was evidence in the customer sample where jobseekers had been threatened with a sanction on several occasions but this was not carried through. For example, one customer was not sanctioned despite missing almost every appointment during a three-month period. He ignored repeated warnings and said his excuses were always accepted:

'She didn't really care; she didn't seem to mind what I told her.'

(FND customer)

Some providers believed that the system was too lenient, particularly towards customers who were not actively seeking work or were refusing to broaden their job search. There was also a perception that Jobcentre Plus was not always making it clear to jobseekers that, *'they have to comply with us like they do at the jobcentre because in effect we're taking over that activity from the jobcentre'*. As a result, some customers were said to be under the impression that it was only mandatory to attend meetings with the provider every fortnight, and that other appointments or activities were voluntary.

5.2 Customer attitudes and reactions to sanctioning

Staff often reported initial negative customer reactions to sanctions: anger, resentment, and in some instances, verbal and physical aggression. Sometimes the sanction itself became a barrier to re-engagement. On the other hand, if an application for a sanction was turned down, staff reported that customers tended not to take the process seriously and disregarded subsequent threats. Either way, staff were often placed in a difficult position.

In some cases, a sanction was said to be a *'reality check'* as a result of which customers were *'shocked'* into action and started re-engaging with the programme. Some staff thought that sanctions worked best for customers new to the system. One adviser believed that sanctions could be used to motivate customers to get back into work quicker:

'Look, you've lost your benefits, so what we need to do now, is we need to get you into work.'

(FND provider staff)

Despite initial negative reactions, it was felt by some advisers that sanctions often improved customers' motivation, attendance and behaviour, especially if staff were being *'firm and fair and consistent'*. These advisers felt there was little lasting impact on relations with their customers:

'...there may sometimes be a slight frostiness for the next appointment afterwards, but it's normally dealt with quite quickly. I've not really had any incidences where there's been grudges held.'

(FND provider staff)

There was evidence that the financial impact of a sanction meant that customers would try to avoid being sanctioned in the future. One FND customer in his 50s with a steady work history in the film industry received a two-week sanction when he failed to attend an FJR appointment because he was on holiday. Because this had an impact on the household finances he said he did not miss an appointment after that.

However, staff felt that for the longer-term unemployed and customers who were more familiar with the JSA regime, sanctions were *'toothless tigers'*, resulting in little change. Threats could lead to customers becoming de-motivated and alienated and so produced the opposite of the intended effect.

One customer, a former Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimant with a disability, eventually found temporary work as a delivery driver. He had hoped his FND provider would support him to set up a business. When this expectation was not met (he realised they would only help him find a low-paid job), he signed up with an agency and stopped attending the provider. He received multiple letters threatening a sanction but his benefit was unaffected. Here, he relates an exchange which occurred during the induction session he attended:

'...I put my hand up and said, "Excuse me, I'm not doing it". They said, "You've got to". I said, "I don't have to do anything". "Well we'll stop your money". I said, "I don't care". I'd rather have no money than be forced into doing this.'

(FND customer)

5.2.1 Successful appeals

There were a few instances where customers in the sample felt that they had been unfairly sanctioned and successfully appealed the decision. Despite succeeding in overturning their sanction, customers struggled financially for the period from when the sanction was put in place to the date it was revoked.

This made customers resentful of both the provider and Jobcentre Plus. One customer who had a criminal record was sanctioned after missing one appointment due to ill health. After an appeal, the sanction was revoked but due to a misunderstanding he was sanctioned a second time:

'...I was chucking my guts up with flu and [my partner] rang up and said you know he can't make it and they said we'll make another appointment and I never heard nothing but they stopped my benefit for two weeks for that...'

(FND customer)

In another situation, a customer who had to drive to his appointment because he lived in a rural location missed some appointments and refused a work placement because he could not afford the up-front cost of petrol. He successfully appealed against his sanction and was grateful to Jobcentre Plus for understanding his situation. But he expressed dissatisfaction with his provider for not taking his situation into account.

5.3 Summary

Missed adviser meetings were reported as the most common sanctionable behaviour. FND staff commonly used their discretion before raising a doubt, taking into account customers' personal circumstances and previous behaviour. The paperwork and the delay between raising a doubt and the sanctioning of benefit were issues identified by staff. If the customer had changed their behavior in the meantime then a delayed sanction seemed misplaced. Some staff used sanctions only as a last resort and others on a more regular basis.

Staff reported that many customers' initial reactions were negative but acknowledged that in some cases, sanctions prompted them to comply with the regime and increase their job-search activity. Among the customers in the study, there was evidence that the financial impact of the sanction had prompted some to change their behaviour to comply with the regime. However, benefit sanctions could also have a negative effect on the adviser-customer relationship and result in disengagement from the job-seeking process. Customers with a longer experience of the JSA regime were considered less likely to change their behaviour following a sanction.

6 Destinations

This chapter explores customers' destinations at the time of interview (around a year after they started their 13th consecutive month of claiming) specifically looking at whether customers were still claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or were in paid work. It also identifies those customers who ended their claim to enter work but were claiming JSA again by the time of the interview. The picture in Flexible New Deal (FND) Phase 1 areas is compared with that in Phase 2 comparison areas.³⁵ Differences are also examined for certain FND customer subgroups.

6.1 Destinations of younger customers aged 18-24

Figure 6.1 summarises the destinations of customers aged 18-24 in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas. This analysis is repeated for customers aged 25 or over in the next section.³⁶

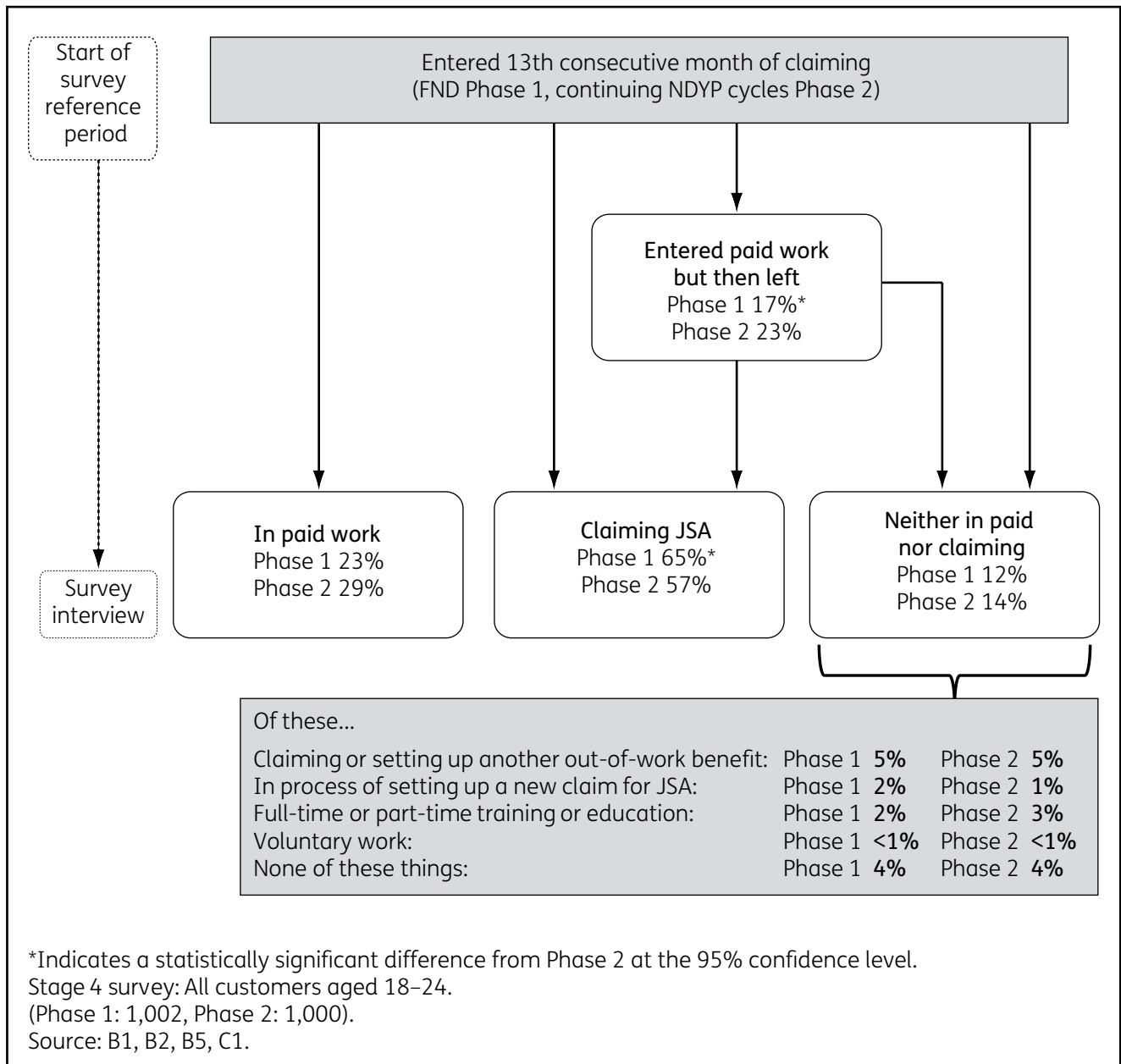
Younger customers in FND Phase 1 areas were more likely to be claiming JSA³⁷ at the time of the survey interview than their counterparts in Phase 2 comparison areas (65% compared to 57%). This difference is driven by those customers who claimed continuously from the point at which they entered FND; in FND Phase 1 areas two-fifths (41%) of customers had not left this claim at any point up until the time of the interview, compared with just under three in ten (29%) customers in Phase 2. Contrastingly, younger customers in Phase 2 who were claiming JSA at the time of interview were slightly – but significantly – more likely to have had a break in claiming during the study period (28% of all younger Phase 2 customers had a break in their claim but were claiming at the time of interview, compared with 24% of younger Phase 1 customers).

³⁵ This analysis is based on a comparison of customer outcomes in Phase 1 areas compared with customer outcomes in Phase 2 drawn from the survey data. This analysis is not intended to be an estimate of the net impact of the support provided in either Phase; the forthcoming impact analyses will control for any differences between the areas which are not accounted for here.

³⁶ The outcomes for the two age groups are reported separately here as the regime that was in place in the comparison Phase 2 areas at the time of the research differentiated by age (with 18–24-year-olds being referred to New Deal for Young People (NDYP) after six months while those aged 25+ were referred to New Deal 25 Plus (ND25+) after 18 months).

³⁷ Customers receiving a training allowance instead of JSA were also counted as 'claiming JSA' for the purposes of this question.

Figure 6.1 Summary of destinations – customers aged 18-24



Younger customers in Phase 1 areas were also less likely than those in Phase 2 to be in paid work at the time of the interview (just under a quarter (23%) compared with 29% of Phase 2 18-24 year olds). The nature of the paid work is explored in detail in Chapter 7.

Broadly similar proportions of customers in each Phase were doing ‘something else’ – i.e., neither claiming JSA nor in paid work – at the time of the interview (12% Phase 1, 14% Phase 2). There were no notable differences between Phases in terms of the type of activities that customers in this group were doing, for example similar proportions overall were in full-time or part-time training or education (two % Phase 1, three % Phase 2) or were claiming another out-of-work benefit (five % in both Phases).

Around a fifth of customers aged 18-24 in both Phases (17% Phase 1, 23% Phase 2) had entered paid work at some point during the survey reference period but were no longer in this job by the time of the interview. The majority of these young people were claiming JSA again

(equating to 14% Phase 1 and 19% Phase 2 customers overall) with small proportions (two % Phase 1, four % Phase 2) neither claiming nor in paid work at the time of interview. The characteristics of this group, including reasons for leaving the job and length of time employed, are discussed in Section 6.3.

6.1.1 Variation by 18–24-year-old customer groups

At an overall level, younger customers were more likely to be in paid work at the time of the interview in Phase 2 areas (29% compared to 23% in Phase 1). This difference was particularly marked for:

- women (31% of younger women were in work in Phase 2 areas compared with 22% in Phase 1);
- younger customers with a Level 2 or higher qualification (35% in paid work in Phase 2 areas compared with 25% in Phase 1 areas). The proportion of customers with lower-level (below Level 2) or no qualifications in paid employment was roughly comparable across Phases (21% Phase 1, 23% Phase 2).

Contrary to the overall trend of young people being more likely to be in paid work in Phase 2 areas, the likelihood to be in paid work for younger customers with a long-term illness or disability was more even across Phases, though much lower than among customers without an illness/disability (14% Phase 1, 16% Phase 2).

There were also some notable variations according to customer views on the support received from their FND provider (Phase 1)/Jobcentre Plus (Phase 2). These tended to be differences which were present in Phase 2 areas but where no marked differences existed in Phase 1.

In Phase 2 areas where the previous regime (NDYP) was in place, younger customers who agreed that they felt under pressure to take part in unsuitable activities were more likely to be in paid work (31%) than those who disagreed they felt under pressure (24%). This difference was not observed in FND Phase 1 areas.

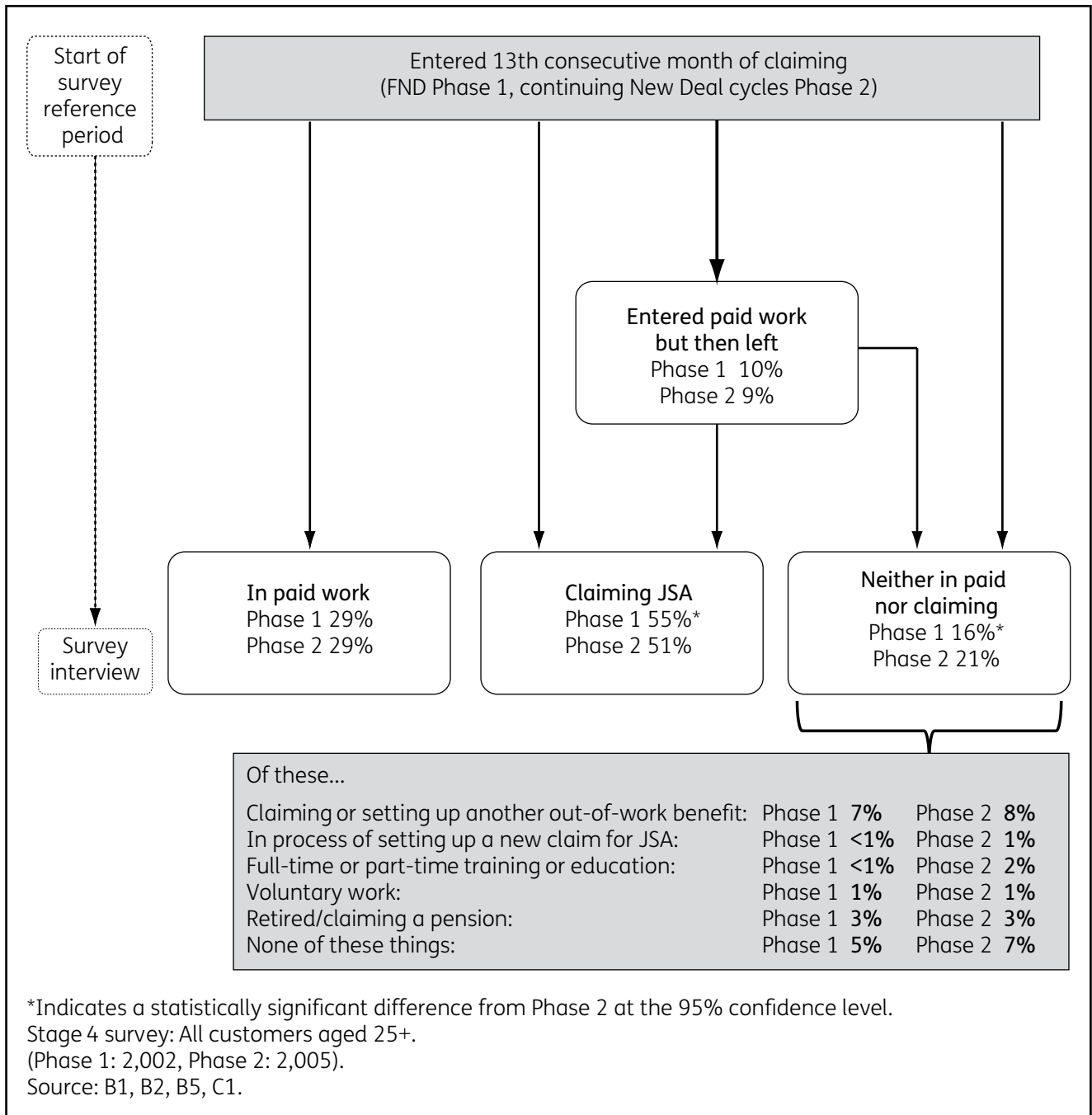
In Phase 2 areas customers who disagreed that support received matched their skills and experience, and who said the support was not useful, were more likely to be in paid work than customers who agreed that support received was well matched or useful (37% of those who disagreed that support was well matched were in work and 42% of those who said support received was not useful). This is likely to be, at least in part, related to these customers wishing to distance themselves from Jobcentre Plus and unemployment support once in work. This trend was not evident in FND Phase 1 areas.

Again, in Phase 2 areas younger customers who saw the same adviser all or almost all of the time from the 13th month of their claim onwards were more likely to be in paid work than customers who saw a different adviser every time (32% compared to 14%). Whether or not the customer saw the same adviser all, some or none of the time appeared to have no link to outcomes in Phase 1 areas. It should be stressed that causality cannot be inferred from the survey findings; it is not possible to tell whether or not likelihood to see the same adviser was more likely to lead to employment outcomes or whether, for example, certain customer characteristics or barriers linked to being less likely to enter work also made it less likely for customers to see the same adviser. However, the survey findings suggest a correlation between adviser continuity and paid work outcomes for younger customers in Phase 2 areas.

6.2 Destinations of customers aged 25 or over

Figure 6.2 shows the destinations of customers aged 25+ in Phases 1 and 2.

Figure 6.2 Summary of destinations – customers aged 25+



Although customers aged 25+ were equally likely to be in paid work in Phase 1 and Phase 2 (29% in both areas), a slightly – but significantly – higher proportion of FND customers were claiming JSA at the time of interview than was the case in Phase 2 comparison areas (55% Phase 1, 51% Phase 2).

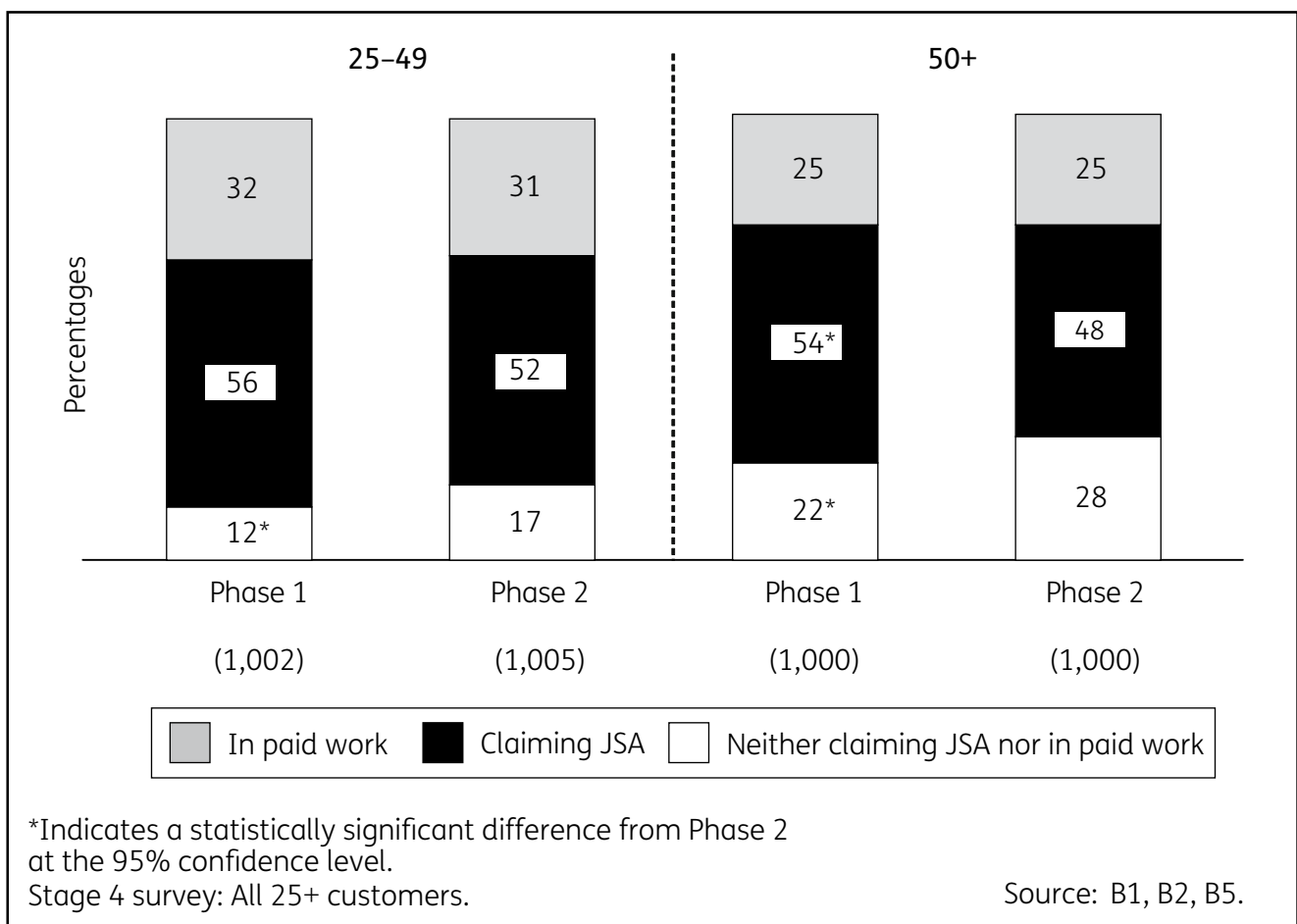
However, this was linked to the fact that more customers in Phase 2 areas were neither claiming nor in paid work at the time of the interview – just over a fifth (21%) compared to one in six (16%) customers in Phase 1 areas.

Looking in more detail at the group of customers aged 25+ who were neither claiming nor in paid work, fewer than one in ten were claiming another out-of-work benefit than customers in Phase 1 (eight % Phase 2, seven % Phase 1). In three out of five cases in both Phases this was Employment and Support Allowance. Phase 2 customers were more likely to be in the process of setting up a new JSA claim at the time of interview. When both these groups were factored in to the calculations, similar proportions of Phase 1 and 2 customers aged 25+ were receiving a benefit, among those not working.

Around one in ten customers aged 25+ had temporarily left JSA and entered work temporarily, but were not working at the time of interview (ten % Phase 1, nine % Phase 2). As with younger customers, the vast majority of these people were claiming JSA again although a small proportion (two % in both Phases) were neither working nor claiming.

Customers aged 25-49 were more likely to be in paid work than those aged 50 or over, and this was true across both Phases (in Phase 1 around a third (32%) of 25-49-year-olds were in paid work compared with a quarter (25%) of older customers; the comparable figures for Phase 2 were 31% compared to 25%). The pattern described above where more people were still claiming JSA in FND Phase 1 areas than in Phase 2, but more customers were neither working nor claiming JSA in Phase 2 than Phase 1, was observed across both the 25-49 and 50+ groups (and is illustrated in Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Summary of main destinations by detailed age group



6.2.1 Variation by age 25 or over customer groups

As described above, customers aged 25 or over were equally likely to be in paid work at the time of the interview a year after starting FND as they were under the previous regimes (29% in both Phases). However, customers in Phase 2 areas were more likely to be neither claiming JSA nor in paid work than those in Phase 1 (21% Phase 2, 16% Phase 1). These differences were replicated across demographic subgroups.

Contrary to the picture among younger people described above, in FND Phase 1 areas those customers aged 25+ who agreed that they felt under pressure to take part in unsuitable activities were more likely to be in paid work (32%) than those who disagreed they felt under pressure (27%). In this case the difference was not observed in Phase 2 areas.

Among this age group, in both Phases customers who stated that the support received was not useful were more likely to be in paid work than those who found the support useful. In neither Phase did frequency of seeing the same adviser throughout this period seem to be linked with outcomes (whereas earlier in this chapter it was seen that younger customers who saw the same adviser always or almost always in Phase 2 areas where NDYP was in place were more likely to be in paid work than those who generally saw different advisers).

6.3 The 'JSA recyclers'

As described above, just under one in five (17%) younger customers had left FND to enter work but were no longer working by the time of the interview. This also applied to one in ten (ten %) customers aged 25 or over. While these proportions are broadly in line with those seen in Phase 2 comparison areas, it is useful to look at the characteristics of this group to see whether there were any particular customer groups that were more likely to leave FND to enter short-term work.

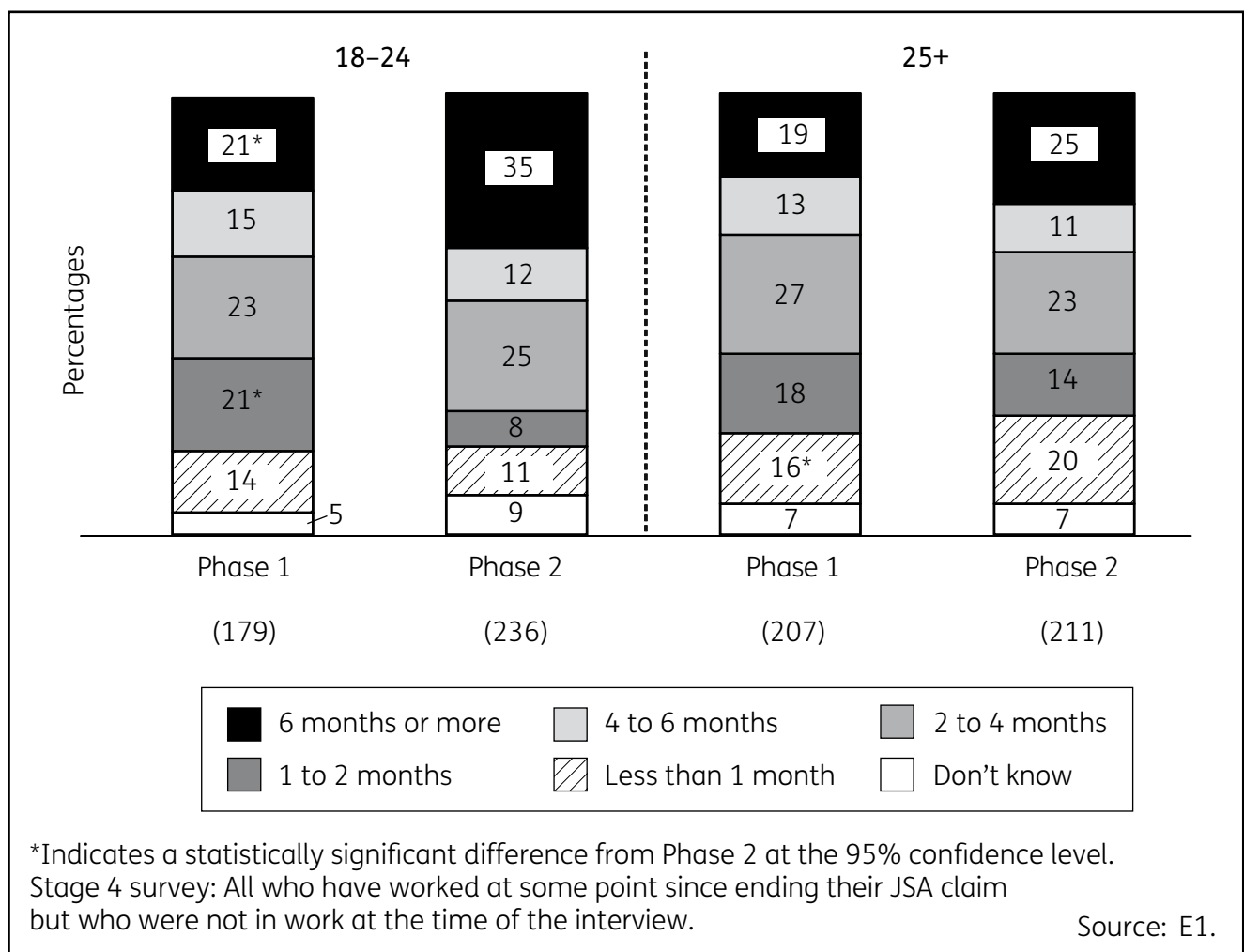
It was clearly much more common for younger people to leave FND for short-term work than for customers aged 25 or over. In fact, of all the customers who had worked at some point but who were not working at the time of interview, roughly half (49%) were aged 18-24 compared with just 31% of all those in work at the time of the interview. Among young people there were no other particular differences by demographics.

Among customers aged 25 or over it was more common for these 'JSA recyclers' to have a long-term illness or disability: around one in five (21%) of those who entered work temporarily before returning to JSA were disabled or had a long-term illness compared with one in ten (ten %) of those that remained in work.

Of customers who had left FND to enter work but who had returned to benefits, just over half (52%) reported some contact from the FND provider after starting work. This is broadly in line with the proportion of customers who had remained in work that had received this support (55% – the difference of three percentage points is not statistically significant). Customers who remained in work were more likely to have had a greater number of contacts from the provider since starting work (30% contacted three or more times) compared with those who had left the job and were claiming again (22% contacted three or more times), although this is likely to be – at least in part – a feature of them being in work longer and, therefore, having more opportunity to be contacted.

Customers who had worked at some point but who were not working at the time of the interview were asked how long their spell in work lasted and why they had left the job. Among customers aged 25+ the length of time employed was broadly similar across both Phases. However, younger customers (aged 18-24) differed. In Phase 1 areas they were much more likely to have only been employed for two months or less (35% compared with 19% in Phase 2 areas) while in Phase 2 younger customers were more likely to have worked for six months or more, among the group that had had a break in their claim (35% compared with 21% in Phase 1). Results are shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4 Duration of employment where entered paid work but no longer in paid work by time of interview



By far the most common reason for leaving employment was the contract ending (56% in both Phases). Younger customers were more likely to give this reason than older customers and this pattern was consistent across Phases. Around one in ten (11% Phase 1, nine % Phase 2) customers had been made redundant and a slightly smaller proportion (nine % Phase 1, seven % Phase 2) had been dismissed. Around one in twenty customers (five % Phase 1, six % Phase 2) left the employment as the felt they were not earning enough. Other reasons were mentioned by small minorities of customers and there were no notable differences across Phase or by age.

6.4 Summary

Younger customers (aged 18-24) were more likely to still be claiming a year on from the start of FND compared to their counterparts in the previous regime (NDYP) over the same claim period. Overall, younger people were more likely to be in paid work under the NDYP. However, there were variations found by subgroups. Customers with low or no qualifications, and those with a long-term illness or disability, were just as likely to be in paid work in Phase 1 areas as in Phase 2 areas.

Customers aged 25 or over were equally likely to be in paid work at the time of the interview in FND Phase 1 areas as in Phase 2 comparison areas where the previous regime was still in place. While Phase 1 customers were slightly more likely to be claiming JSA at the time of interview, higher proportions were claiming other out-of-work benefits (or in the process of setting up a new JSA claim) in Phase 2 areas. Claim rates for out-of-work benefits were, therefore, broadly even for customer aged 25 or over across the two Phases.

It was much more common for younger people to leave FND for short-term work before returning to JSA ('JSA recyclers') than for customers aged 25 or over. Half of all customers that had worked at some point but who were not working at the time of interview were aged 18-24, compared to just under a third of those who had remained in work. Young people who were re-claiming tended to have a shorter spell in work in FND Phase 1 areas compared with Phase 2 areas.

7 Customers who entered employment

The previous chapter has shown that customers in Phase 1 areas are slightly less likely to have entered paid work than those experiencing the former regime in Phase 2 areas. This chapter begins with the survey data to describe the nature of employment secured in terms of job characteristics, salary, sector and occupation. It also looks at customer views on the suitability of the work and the potential it offers for progression. The chapter then describes the in-work support that was provided to customers who left Flexible New Deal (FND) for work, presenting provider practices and customer experiences from the survey and qualitative interviews.

7.1 Nature of employment

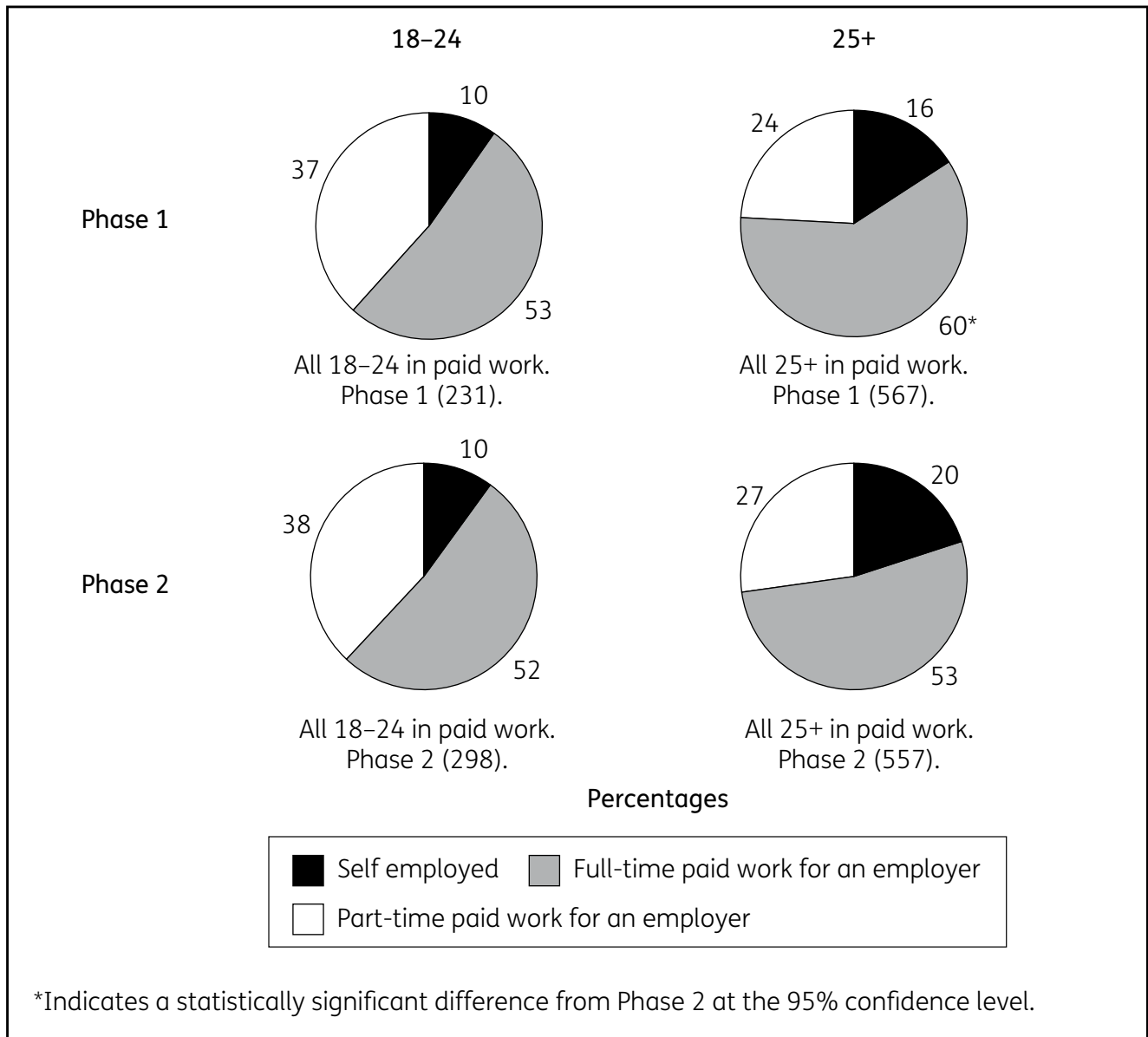
7.1.1 Job characteristics

Figure 7.1 shows how paid employment at the time of interview (i.e. at a point around 12 months after entering FND in Phase 1 areas) is distributed between self-employment, full-time paid work for an employer and part-time paid work for an employer. Results are shown separately for customers aged 18-24 and those aged 25+.

Although the overall proportion of 18–24-year-olds entering paid work in Phase 2 areas was higher than in Phase 1 areas, the split between types of work found are broadly the same. In contrast, among customers aged 25+, the proportion of customers entering paid work who were in full-time work for an employer was slightly higher in FND areas (60% compared with 53%) and the proportions in either part-time work or self-employment were correspondingly lower.

As well as an overall difference between the 18-24 and 25+ age groups, there were some differences within the 25+ age group between sub-age groups. Within the 25-49 age group, the key difference was that in Phase 1 areas customers are more likely to be in full-time work (64% Phase 1 compared with 55% Phase 2) and less likely to be in part-time work (20% Phase 1 compared with 27% Phase 2). There was little difference in the proportion of paid workers who were self-employed.

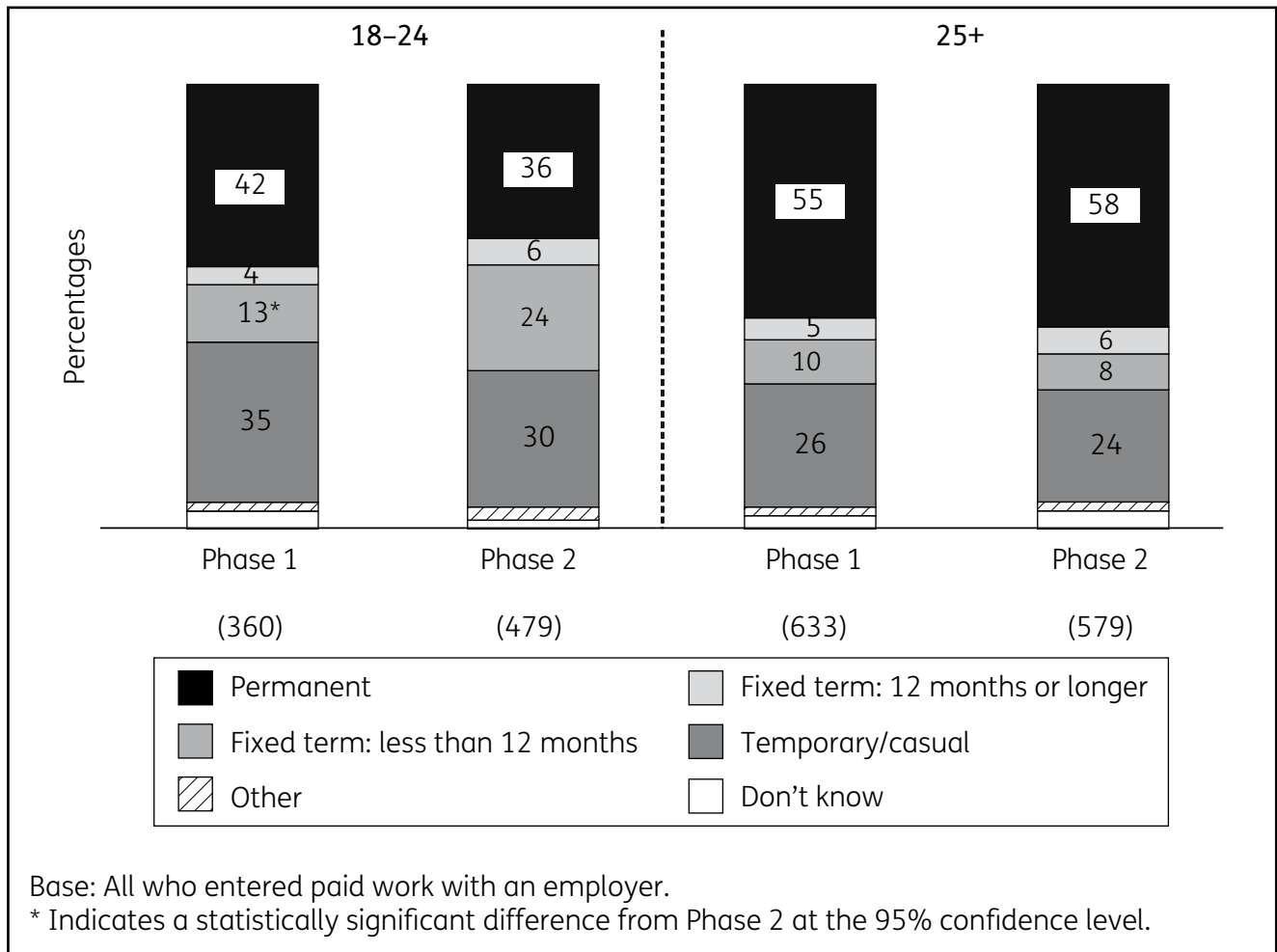
Figure 7.1 Type of employment



However, the pattern is different for customers aged 50 and over. Within Phase 1 areas, these customers were less likely to have entered self-employment (17% compared with 25% in Phase 2 areas) and more likely to have entered part-time work for an employer (33% compared with 27% in Phase 2 areas). Among customers aged 50 and over, the proportion of paid workers entering full-time work for an employer was similar in both Phases.

Figure 7.2 shows the contractual status for the current or most recent job with an employer. Again results are shown separately for customers aged 18-24 and those aged 25+.

Figure 7.2 Contract status

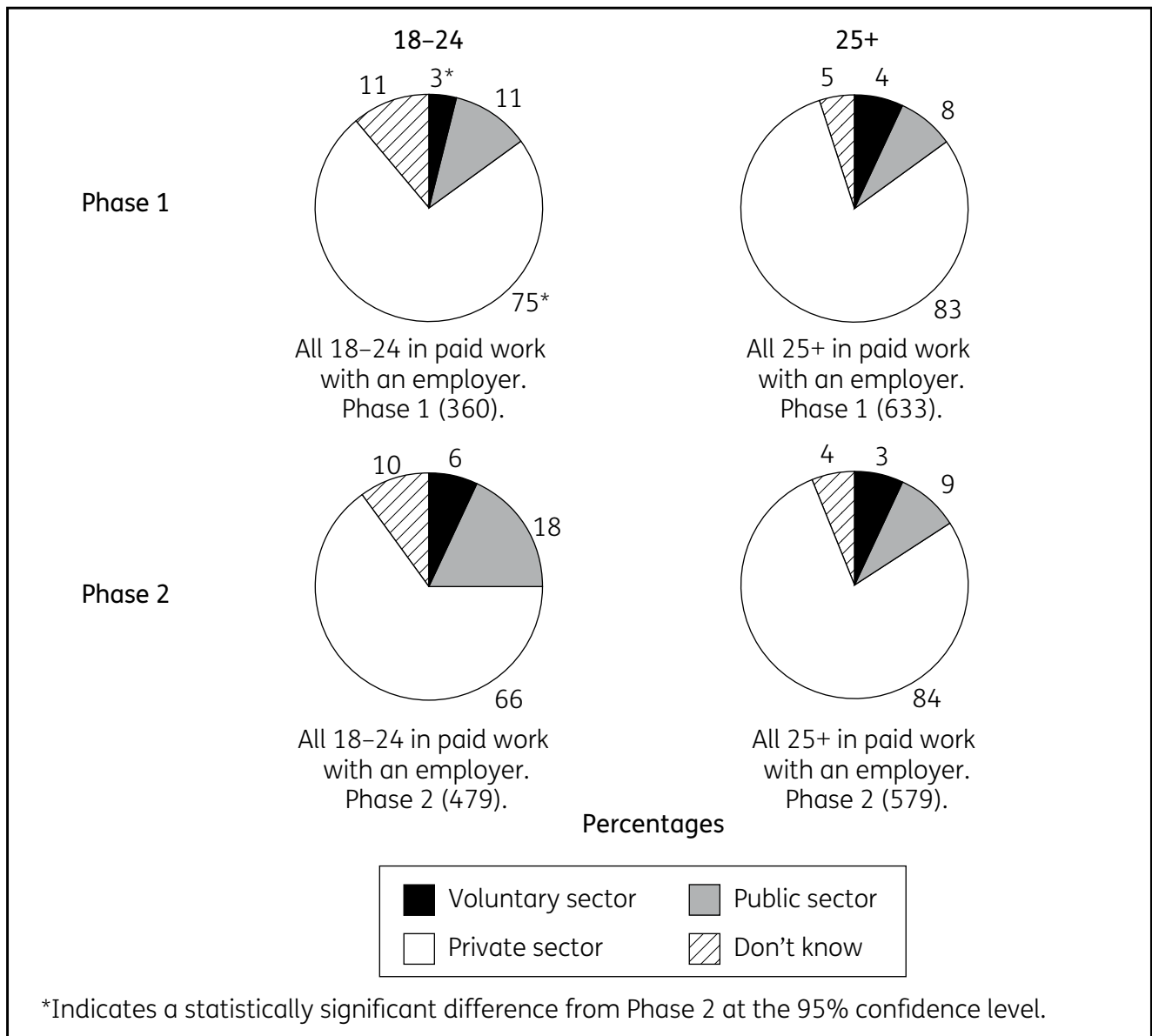


This analysis shows very little variation in the nature of employment contracts held by customers aged 25+. However, among customers aged 18-24, FND customers were slightly less likely to say that they were on a fixed-term contract (which may reflect the fact that they were less likely to be employed in the public sector as demonstrated later in this chapter). This difference in levels of fixed-term contracts is reflected in the higher incidence of both permanent and temporary/casual contracts among workers in Phase 1 areas.

7.1.2 Employment sector

Figure 7.3 shows the breakdown of current or most recent jobs by public, private and voluntary sectors. The profile of employers was very similar in Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas for customers aged 25+. However, younger workers were more likely to be employed in the public or voluntary sector in Phase 2 areas than in FND areas. One explanation for this might be the role of New Deal for Young People in securing public/voluntary sector jobs for young people due to established links between Jobcentre Plus and organisations in this sector.

Figure 7.3 Employer sector



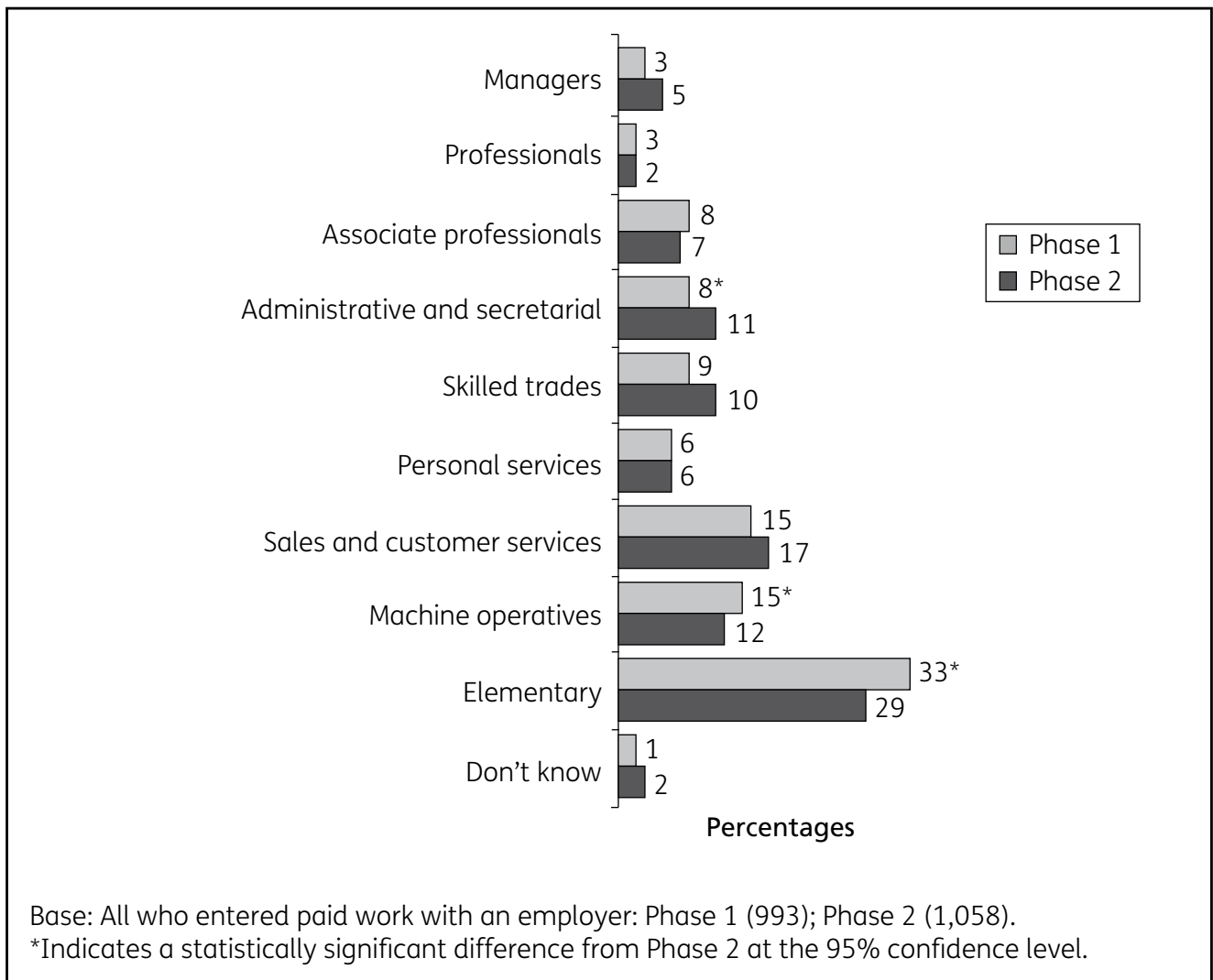
The higher rate of employment in the public or voluntary sector accounts for much of the discrepancy in overall employment rates among 18–24-year-olds (i.e. as a proportion of all customers, the likelihood of 18-24s to have entered paid work with a private sector employer were broadly the same in Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas).

Looking at the profile of employment by broad Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) categories shows no significant variation in the destinations of Phase 1 and Phase 2 customers. In both areas, the sectors that customers were most likely to work in were wholesale and retail (23% Phase 1; 20% Phase 2) and financial and business services (17% Phase 1; 21% Phase 2).

7.1.3 Occupations

The profile of occupations was also broadly similar for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 customers as shown in Figure 7.4. In both Phases a large proportion of work destinations were in elementary-level jobs but this proportion was slightly higher in Phase 1 than in Phase 2 areas (33% Phase 1 and 29% Phase 2).

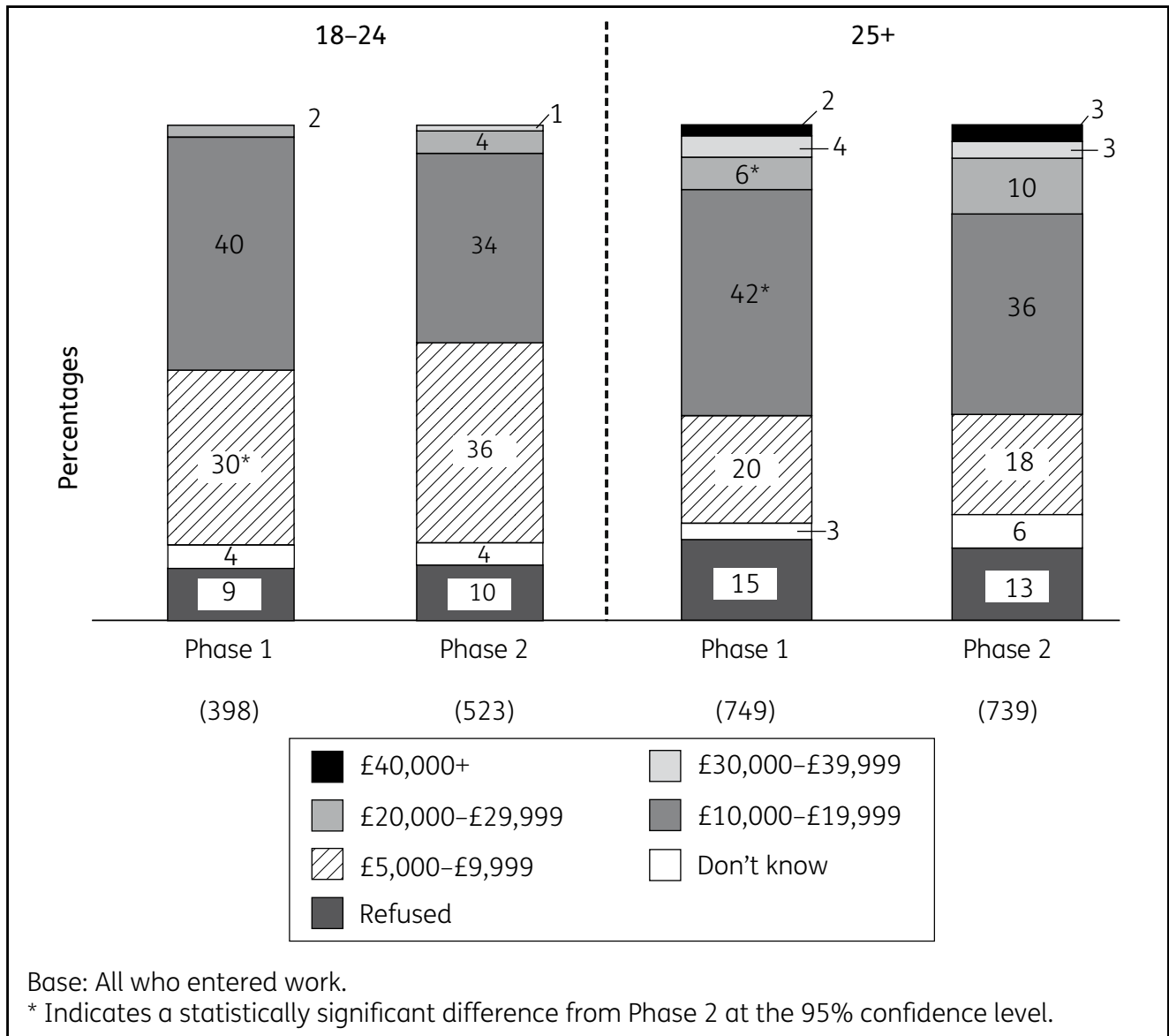
Figure 7.4 Occupations entered



7.1.4 Earnings

Figure 7.5 shows the annualised earnings of customers who entered paid employment by the two age groups. Among 18–24-year-olds, earnings were slightly lower in Phase 2 areas with a lower proportion of earnings in the £10,000-£19,999 bracket. But broadly the distribution of salaries was similar. Conversely, for those aged 25+, a slightly higher proportion of workers in Phase 2 areas earned over £20,000 (16% in Phase 2 compared to 12% in Phase 1). This can largely be attributed to differences in the earnings of customers aged 50+. In Phase 1 areas, 12% of customers aged 50+ had earnings in excess of £20,000 per year compared with 21% in Phase 2 areas.

Figure 7.5 Earnings



7.1.5 Pre-employment discussions with employer

Customers who had entered work were asked whether, as far as they were aware, their employment service provider had been in contact with their employer prior to them being offered a job (Table 7.1). Only a minority of customers knew this to be the case but it was more common in FND areas than Phase 2 areas (16% of Phase 1 customers compared with ten % in Phase 2 areas). Within FND areas, there was some evidence of providers targeting this particular type of activity at some customers (20% of customers with no qualifications who entered work knew that these discussions had taken place, compared with 12% of customers qualified to degree level and above; 18% of disabled customers were aware of contact of this sort). Within Phase 2 areas, the proportion of customers reporting discussions between Jobcentre Plus staff and their employer was at a similar level across all customer subgroups.

In most cases where these discussions had taken place, customers felt they had at least some role in securing their employment (79% Phase 1 and 67% Phase 2). At an overall level, 13% of Phase 1 customers and seven % of Phase 2 customers who entered paid work attributed their employment at least in part to discussions held between their adviser and their employer before they were offered the job.

Table 7.1 Pre-employment discussions

| | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| All who entered paid work with an employee | | |
| No discussions held | 78* | 82 |
| Discussions held but had no impact | 3 | 2 |
| Discussions held and had small impact | 5* | 3 |
| Discussions held and had big impact | 8* | 4 |
| Don't know | 7 | 9 |
| <i>Unweighted</i> | (993) | (1,058) |
| <i>Weighted</i> | (1,024) | (1,061) |

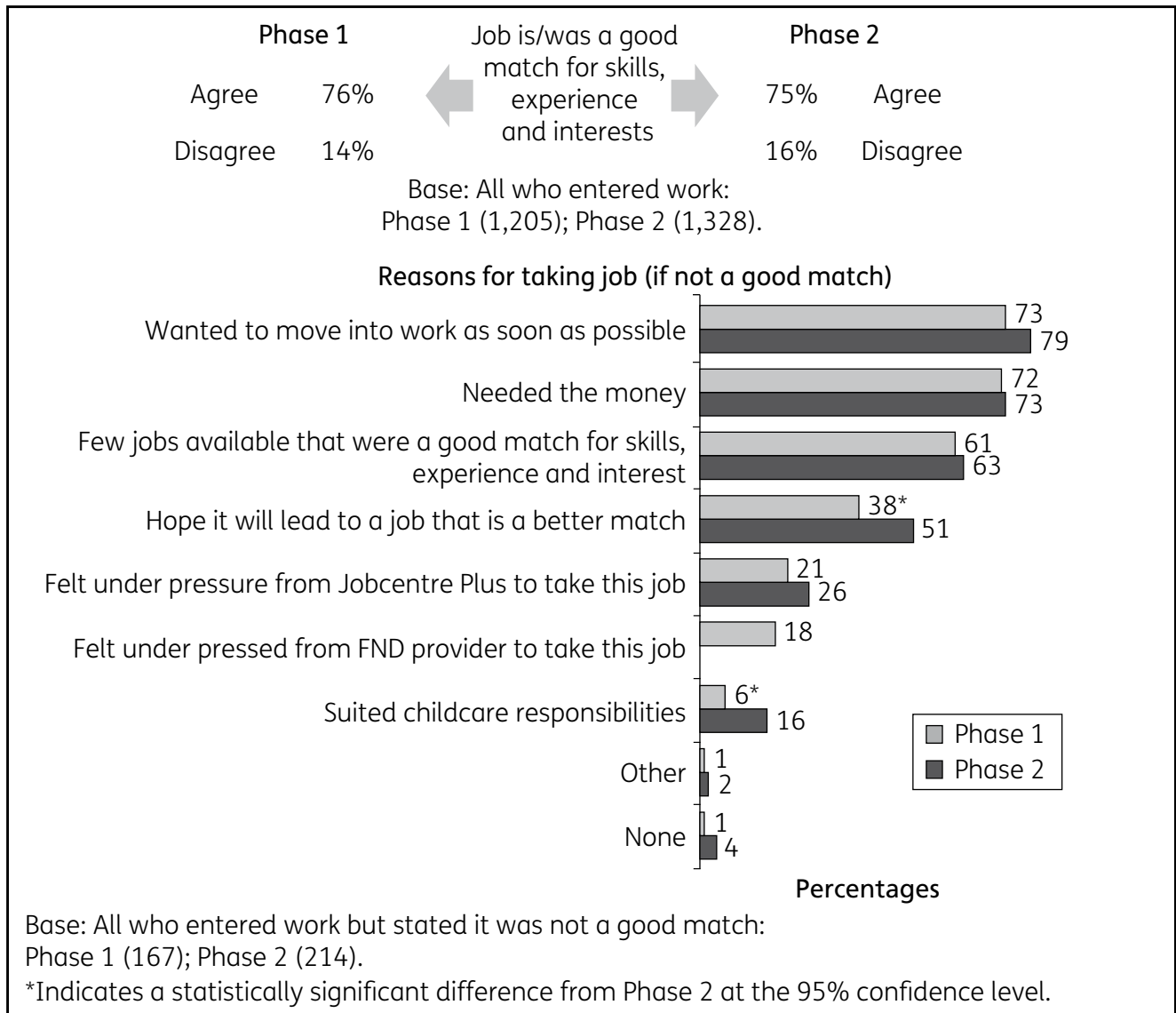
* Indicates a statistically significant difference from Phase 2 at the 95% confidence level.

7.1.6 Perceived suitability of work

Workers were asked whether they felt their job was a good match for their experience, skills and interests. On the whole customers felt that this was the case. In both Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas, three quarters of customers entering work agreed that the job was a good match (Figure 7.6). This proportion was largely consistent across customer subgroups within both Phases. The only exceptions to this were:

- Customers qualified to degree level were less likely to agree that their employment was a good match in FND areas (66% compared to 76% in Phase 2 areas) and a large part of this difference related to a higher proportion disagreeing strongly that their employment was a good match (17% in Phase 1 compared to ten % in Phase 2 areas).
- Customers entering part-time work were more likely to agree that their employment was a good match in FND areas (75% compared to 68% in Phase 2 areas).

Figure 7.6 Whether job was a good match/reasons for taking



Those who stated that their job was not a good match were asked why they had taken the job. The responses are shown in the bar chart in Figure 7.6. In both Phases, most of this group stated that at least part of the reason for taking the job was that they wanted to move off benefit and into employment as quickly as possible and that they needed the money. Slight differences between Phase 1 and Phase 2 showed in the extent to which the job was viewed as a ‘stepping stone’ to employment that better matched skills, experience and interests (38% of Phase 1 customers stated that this was the case compared with 51% of Phase 2 customers). Customers in Phase 2 areas were also more likely to state that the job suited their childcare responsibilities (16% of Phase 2 customers compared with six % of Phase 1 customers).

Perceptions of pressure to take up a less suitable job were similar in both Phases. Customers in Phase 1 areas could feel under pressure either from Jobcentre Plus or from their FND provider, but the proportion stating that either of these was the case was similar to the proportion feeling under pressure from Jobcentre Plus in Phase 2 areas (29% Phase 1 compared with 26% Phase 2).

7.1.7 In-work training provided

As Table 7.2 shows, just over two fifths of customers who had entered work had received training from their employer in both areas (41% of Phase 1 customers compared with 44% of Phase 2 customers). Within both phases women were slightly more likely to have entered jobs that provided training than men (47% of women in Phase 1 areas and 51% of women in Phase 2 areas) and customers who had left work and were claiming again at the time of interview were less likely to have received in-work training (31% Phase 1 and 35% Phase 2). Within Phase 1 areas, customers with no qualifications were less likely to have received training (35%) but this difference was not evident in Phase 2 areas where those with no qualifications were no more or less likely to have received training.

Table 7.2 In-work training

| All who entered paid work with an employer | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Attended a training course off-site | 14 | 17 |
| Attended a training course in-house | 29 | 32 |
| Attended seminars or conferences | 10 | 8 |
| Any other learning | 9 | 7 |
| Any training | 41 | 44 |
| No training | 59 | 55 |
| <i>Unweighted</i> | (993) | (1,058) |
| <i>Weighted</i> | (1,024) | (1,061) |

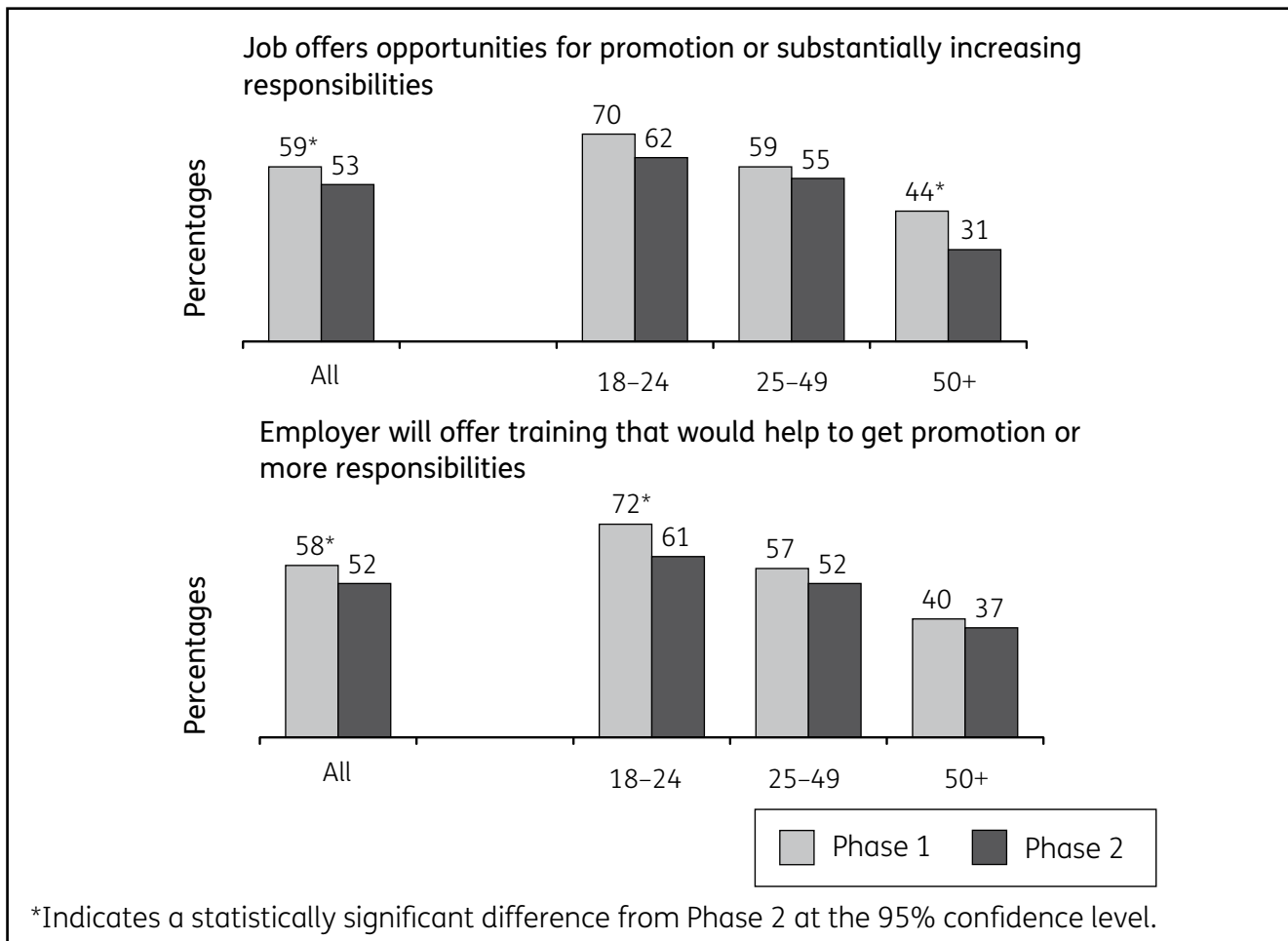
In the majority of cases where customers had received in-work training this had been delivered by their employers as opposed to a specialist training provider (72% of those receiving training in Phase 1 areas and 69% in Phase 2 areas). It was relatively uncommon for in-work training to have led to a formal qualification. This was only the case for around a fifth of customers who had received training from their employer (23% Phase 1, 19% Phase 2).

Customers who received in-work training generally found it useful (87% in Phase 1 areas and 86% in Phase 2 areas).

7.1.8 Progression opportunities

Customers who were still in paid work for an employer at the time of interview were asked whether they felt that their job offered opportunities for promotion or increased responsibilities. They were also asked whether they felt that their employer offered training to secure promotion or greater responsibilities. Their responses are shown in Figure 7.7. In Phase 1 areas workers were very slightly (although significantly) more likely to agree both that their job offered opportunities for progression and that their employer offered training to enable them to achieve this progression. This was true across all age groups. Across both Phases, younger workers were more likely than older workers to agree that their job offered scope for progression.

Figure 7.7 Opportunities for progression



7.2 In-work support

All providers in the qualitative sample delivered in-work support. This was intended to help people deal with transitional issues that may make work difficult for them during the initial months. FND providers were incentivised to provide work retention services through the outcome-based payment system.

In-work support was considered as a means to pre-empt any work-related issues that might threaten retention. The process was described variously as, a means of identifying any problems or issues early on; giving moral support and reassurance; encouraging customers to stick with their jobs, and giving practical advice to see *'if we can firefight any issues that have maybe come up'*. Staff provided examples where their interventions had helped customers, for example, providing bus fares into work that a person could not afford. A different perspective was offered by one support worker, who viewed the contact as having a dual role, both to offer support but also to generate a *'slight fear factor'* as customers in employment should be aware they are being monitored. Customers knew their progress would be reported to Jobcentre Plus, including any absences.

Subcontracted end-to-end providers tended to follow similar procedures as the prime contractor. Providers who were part of the staged delivery model would offer in-work support for a shorter duration or this support was delivered by the prime contractor in the FND network.

Contact was usually made remotely by telephone or email. It was less common for providers to hold a face-to-face meeting or to communicate by letter or text. Providers tended to have a dedicated member of staff tasked with providing in-work support, for example, in-work support advisers/officers/co-ordinators, post-support workers, mentors, employee engagement consultant, or an 'in-work tracking' team. Some staff would step in only when customers had started work while other advisers continued contact with customers as they made their transition into the workplace. In-work support was usually offered for a period of 26 weeks. Staff also emphasised their continued availability and said they encouraged customers to make contact at any time during their first six months in work regardless of any pre-agreed plan. Some staff continued to support customers after six months. To encourage in-work communication, one adviser described how staff handed out 'Don't walk, talk' cards with their contact details on the back.

Decisions about the frequency of contact were either led by the customer or staff would get in touch at set times. With the former, customers stated their preference over frequency and type of contact – if they wished to be supported at all. For example, one provider used a 'notification of employment' form in which customers specified weekly, fortnightly or monthly contact, and a preference for phone calls, emails, texts or face-to-face appointments.

Where provider staff followed a more fixed pattern of contact, in-work support was said to be concentrated in the first months of work when customers would be more likely to need extra support. This then decreased in frequency to weekly, fortnightly or monthly over time. These contacts were often recorded on provider systems. Some providers had established an action plan for monitoring the individual's progress in work. One provider used an electronic calendar to prompt staff to call customers routinely over the six months. Another provider used a risk assessment to determine the likelihood that a customer would leave work and based the frequency of contact on this.

Staff also reported systems to supplement or improve the efficiency of in-work services. One provider was organising an in-work support workshop to be delivered to customers who were preparing to start a job. This would explain the in-work support services available to them as well as guidance about dealing with line managers and handling issues with colleagues. A prime provider had established a call centre to centralise and streamline the contact process. Similarly, another provider had set-up a helpline offering advice on in-work benefits.

In addition to the in-work contacts, providers offered a broader range of help and support for customers who entered work. This included funding to purchase work equipment, work clothes, travel expenses, childcare, professional membership, or signposting to in-work training, debt or housing services. Referrals were also possible to partner organisations specialising in helping people with disabilities or health conditions. One of the specialist providers in the sample was able to offer specific training in construction to help customers in their new jobs.

7.2.1 Staff views

It was generally accepted among staff that not all customers who entered work wanted to remain in contact with their FND provider. Some refused any form of in-work support.³⁸ This was understandable as some customers wanted to distance themselves from a difficult time of long-term unemployment. As explained by one FND adviser, they *'have been pretty self sufficient and to be honest, they just want rid of this whole experience'*. Still, staff considered the service as a valuable means of helping people with avoidable work issues. Staff felt that customers who were open to the support were generally *'pleased and thankful'* for it.

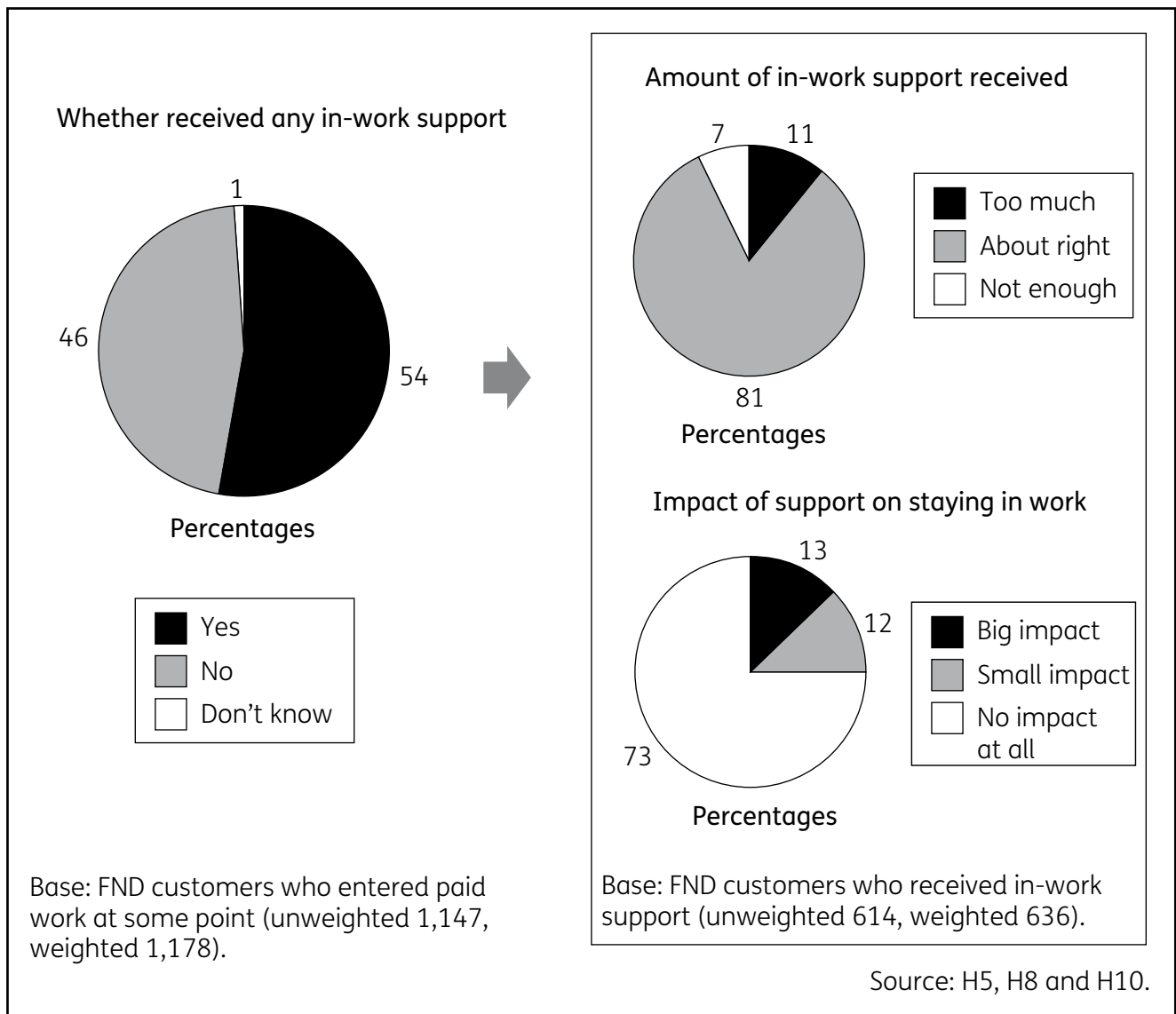
One adviser suggested that customers may not fully benefit from the service because the process was principally reactive, telling customers from the outset that they could get in contact at any time. They noted that it was rare for people who had entered work to get in contact with the provider. Furthermore, the light touch 'after care' calls to check on progress may not serve as an effective intervention for addressing real issues people encountered while they settled back into work as people were not prone to *'open up'* on the telephone.

7.2.2 Frequency of in-work contact

To help understand the extent and value of in-work support from FND providers, Phase 1 customers who had entered paid work at any point during the reference period (13 to 24 months after their claim start date) were asked in the survey whether or not they had any contact with their FND provider after they started work. As Figure 7.8 shows, just over half (54%) of FND customers who entered work reported some contact with their provider.

³⁸ This finding aligns with evidence from the Employment Retention Advancement (ERA) demonstration where it was found that former Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants were the group least likely to maintain in-work advisory contact. Compared to lone parents in the study, it was suggested that, once in work, former JSA claimants were more self sufficient and preferred not to be associated with employment services. The final report on the ERA evaluation is being prepared by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, Policy Studies Institute and National Institute of Economic and Social Research and will be published by Department for Work and Pensions in 2011.

Figure 7.8 In-work support



Customers with no qualifications were slightly less likely to have received any in-work support from their FND provider (47%) while the more highly qualified were more likely to have had contact (60% of those qualified to degree level had had contact). It is possible that this reflects the ease of getting in contact with these individuals once they started work (for example, because of variations in the likelihood to have a phone at work) rather than any deliberate targeting of in-work support by providers.

Where customers had in-work contact with their FND providers it was frequently on a sustained basis. Of all customers who had contact, a fifth were contacted only once but the remainder spoke to their provider more often (25% twice, 30% 3-4 times and 21% five or more times). Generally younger workers were contacted on fewer occasions than older workers (28% of 18-24 customers were contacted just once compared to 18% of those aged 25+).

Four in five (81%) customers who had some in-work support after ending their JSA claim considered the amount of contact to be about right. Younger customers (who tended to be contacted less often once in work) were slightly more likely to think that the frequency of this contact was about right (86% compared to 78% of those aged 25+). Workers from an ethnic minority background were the only key subgroup more likely to state that they did not receive sufficient in-work contact from their provider (17% compared to five % of White British customers).

Although the majority of customers receiving in-work support stated that it had no impact on them staying in work, a quarter (25%) of FND customers stated this ongoing communication had some impact on their work retention – roughly equal proportions stated that it had a big impact (13%) or a small impact (12%).

Although people from an ethnic minority background were more likely to say they had not had enough in-work contact, customers who had contact were significantly more likely to say it had a big impact on them staying in work (23% compared to 13% overall). In addition, customers who had entered part-time work for an employer were more likely to feel the in-work support had a big impact on retention (20% compared to 11% of those working full time and five % of those self-employed).

Customers with higher qualifications were generally less likely to feel that the in-work support had any impact on their decision to remain in work. Only 12% with degree-level qualifications stated that in-work support had any impact (big or small) compared with 31% of customers with no/below Level 2 qualifications.

7.3 Customers in employment – customer qualitative data

In the qualitative sample, 13 customers had left FND for work. Their employment represented a range of skilled and unskilled occupations, for example: caring, factory production, hairdressing, office administration, dog walking, project management, and construction trades. The work tended to be full-time in either permanent or temporary contracts. A few were self-employed. One individual had secured work through the Future Jobs Fund and another had been recently made redundant and was reclaiming benefits. On the whole, customers who had found work were employed in roles in which they had previous experience and that related to their specified job goals.

7.3.1 Role of the FND provider in securing work

Almost all the workers in the sample said that they had found their jobs through their own efforts, or *'off my own back'*, utilising existing contacts and networks. However, the FND providers were credited with influencing these job outcomes in more subtle ways. One person who had set up a florist business reflected that her provider had introduced her to the idea of becoming self-employed as an alternative to working full time for an employer. Another person who was working as an electrician in the building trade acknowledged that his provider had paid for him to renew his college qualification certificates, provided stationery and paid postage, and helped with formatting covering letters. In addition, a job broker had been very useful because they *'had knowledge of different industries'* and *'knew how to get people jobs'*. Another person who had entered part-time work in a care home secured her job after being prompted to check on the status of a job application submitted a few months previously. She said she would not have done so otherwise.

7.3.2 In-work support

Five of the workers indicated they had continued contact with their FND provider once they started their job. This contact typically took the form of telephone or mobile calls during working hours. This contact was initiated by another member of staff, not the previous adviser. Some recalled discussing in-work support with their adviser but there was no evidence to suggest they had been consulted on the nature or frequency of the contact. This lack of communication about in-work contact and the person's continued relationship with the provider once they were in work was the source of frustration for some people in the sample. One person was mystified about the continuing contact and what further the provider could do for him, given that he had found a job:

'[Provider] ring me up every two weeks or so to see if I need anything. I don't know because I finished with them but they keep ringing up to ask if I need anything...it's not even anybody you know, I wasn't even seeing them, it was some other guy.'

(Former FND participant)

Two people were generally neutral about their continued contact with the FND provider. For example, a woman who worked in a care home had received short weekly calls on her mobile while she was at work. The frequency of these brief updates was not agreed in advance but she felt this was 'okay'. But she stated she would prefer to receive support from her previous adviser as opposed to the FND staff member who was contacting her:

'If I had an issue and wanted their advice then, yes, I would ask. I think I would just say to [in-work support staff]...I've got a problem but I think I would prefer to talk to [adviser] about it so I would say 'could you get [adviser] to ring me' and I'd speak to her.'

(Former FND participant)

The remaining three people who had received in-work support had negative experiences relating to their privacy at the workplace or unmet needs. For example, one man who worked as a roofer did not appreciate the unpredictable nature of the phone calls he received while on the job, suggesting that his position may be jeopardised if the phone calls continued:

'I've told them before - you don't need to ring me no more. If I get caught, well it's dangerous when I'm on scaffolding, using my phone...and if my boss catches me, he probably won't say nothing but I don't want any bad thoughts. It's so hard to get a job at the moment.'

(Former FND participant)

Another person who was working for a waste management company expressed frustration in receiving repeated text messages inviting him to contact the FND provider if he wished:

'I kept getting a text saying, "Now that you are in work, still feel free to pop up, have a chat." ...I'd get that text very near every day. It ended up I just said to the missus turn the [blank] thing off.'

(Former FND participant)

One person who had found her job on her own and did not wish her employer to know details about her spell of unemployment recounted a negative experience. After she had been employed for three months her FND provider requested her wage slips and proof of employment from her boss. She refused to co-operate and contacted Jobcentre Plus who intervened. This incident left her feeling stressed and bullied rather than supported.

Other people had been told to expect to hear from their provider from time to time but this contact failed to materialise which led to disappointment. A man who had found a job on a construction site had been working for six weeks at the time of his interview. Although he did not have any issues with his work, he expressed his disappointment over the lack of proactive contact from his provider:

'...at the time the job's going alright, I don't need to contact them but I've had nothing from them, "How's the job going?" or "Are you still working there?" It's sort of like - you've got your job, we can wash our hands of you now, one more out the door - sort of thing.'

(Former FND participant)

Similarly, a hairdresser recounted how he had expected to be contacted after starting work, yet heard nothing. Returning to work after many years of unemployment, his adviser had promised to visit him to get a haircut in addition to ringing regularly:

'...he was saying, "Oh I'm gonna come into your place and get my haircut." That was in August. I've not even heard from him since then. He's supposed to be phoning me up after x amount of weeks to make sure everything's going alright, not a word.'

(Former FND participant)

Adding to the disappointment, he was interested in self employment and would have liked more information about taxes and financial assistance for setting up a business.

7.4 Summary

This chapter has shown that there were variations between Phase 1 and 2 areas according to age group in terms of self-employment, full- and part-time work, employment sectors and types of contract, for customers entering the labour market. There were no significant variations between areas in terms of type of occupation or salary. The majority of customers felt that their job was a good match for their experience, skills and interests with the exception of those qualified to degree level who were less likely to be satisfied. Customers were equally likely to have received in-work training in Phase 1 and 2 areas. However, customers in Phase 1 areas were marginally more likely to agree that their job offered opportunities for progression and that their employer would offer training to enable this.

In FND areas, customers aged 25+ were slightly more likely to be in full-time paid work with an employer (as opposed to self-employment or part-time work). The type of employment was broadly the same for workers aged 18-24 in the two areas. However, employment in Phase 2 areas was more likely to be on a fixed-term contract (and less likely to be permanent/open-ended or casual) than in FND areas. Jobs for young people were also slightly more likely to be in the public sector in Phase 2 areas compared to Phase 1 areas, suggesting stronger links between Jobcentre Plus and public sector organisations. Only a minority of customers were aware of their adviser communicating with their employer before they were offered a job but this was more common in FND areas than in Phase 2 areas. Where this contact had taken place, people generally felt it had at least some role in securing their employment.

In-work support was described by providers as ongoing help to target issues that may threaten retention. Contact was usually made via phone or email, however, providers also offered a broader range of help and support for customers. Staff acknowledged that not all customers wanted to remain in contact with their FND provider, although they felt that customers who received the support welcomed it. The survey showed that just over half of customers who left FND for employment had some form of in-work contact with their provider. The majority of these considered the amount of contact to be about right. An exception to this was workers from an ethnic minority background who reported receiving insufficient in-work support. Only a quarter of workers in FND Phase 1 areas reported that the in-work support had some impact on work retention. Customers with higher-level qualifications were the least likely to feel that such support had any influence on their decision to remain in work.

From the experiences of customers who entered work in the qualitative research there was some evidence to suggest a subtle role FND had in securing their employment, either through practical or emotional forms of support. Accounts of workers who had received in-work support provide examples where the contact was unwelcome and also instances where in-work contact had been expected but did not occur. This suggests that more direct communication with customers may be necessary to identify the preferred level and intensity of in-work support.

8 Overall views

The views of Flexible New Deal (FND) providers and customers on the delivery of services and the overall level of support are presented here. Through this, strengths and weaknesses of FND are identified relative to Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)/New Deals in Phase 2 areas.

8.1 Provider views

As one might expect, providers strongly endorsed the policy of using private- and voluntary-sector providers to support the long-term unemployed, and were enthusiastic about the FND overall. Many said that they had learned fast and were constantly striving to improve their service.

Staff identified numerous strengths about their FND provision. Some pointed to their results (moving large numbers of customers into work, hitting targets, receiving few complaints and so forth), while some referred to a 'creative', 'proactive', 'innovative', 'flexible', 'client-centred' or 'holistic' approach. Common themes were the high level of one-to-one contact between customers and advisers, and the strength of advisory teams.

Providers believed that they offered customers much more one-to-one contact than Jobcentre Plus, and many claimed to exceed the minimum requirement of 'meaningful fortnightly contact' set out in the *Flexible New Deal Supplier Guidance*, as noted by one adviser:

'We've got the luxury of time, as opposed to the Jobcentre [where] it's very in-and-out. Whereas here we get at least half an hour together every other week, and we quite often see people more than that.'

(FND provider staff)

Many stressed the importance of adviser continuity. They believed that this fostered trust between the customer and adviser, and allowed them 'to treat everyone as an individual' rather than a 'number'. Staff said that customers reacted well to this level of individual attention:

'We work very, very effectively and we do treat everybody as an individual here...We don't just treat them as a generic National Insurance number, which I think people are surprised at when they come here, and I think they also respond very well.'

(FND provider staff)

FND staff praised their organisations for having high-calibre advisory teams.³⁹ They described advisers as being well trained, skilled and experienced in providing guidance to jobseekers and having a wide knowledge of industry sectors and qualifications. Advisers were seen to be 'passionate', 'motivated' and 'hard-working', as well as good at building relationships with customers and working in a team. Specialist provider staff highlighted their expertise in a particular field which they believed distinguished them from Jobcentre Plus and mainstream FND providers.

³⁹ It should be noted that staff who were interviewed were themselves members of these teams.

In addition to a personal service and advisory skills, staff identified other strengths, innovations or good practices:

- strong links with local employers. Some providers had dedicated members of staff (often called ‘employer engagement officers’) who could access bulk vacancies at supermarkets and other large employers;
- funding for employment-related needs like travel or work supplies;
- access to IT and telephone facilities;
- a broad range of advice and training services under one roof;
- a recent move towards arranging ‘warm handovers’ from Jobcentre Plus.

8.1.1 Suggested improvements

Staff identified weaknesses in their operations relating to heavy caseloads, administrative burden, customers who needed specialist support (refer to Chapter 4), problems with the sanctioning process (refer to Chapter 5) and limitations of customer care within the staged approach to FND delivery.

Heavy caseloads were a recurrent issue among advisers. Despite perceptions of the high level of one-to-one contact they offered customers compared with Jobcentre Plus, many advisers felt that they were not offering all customers the level of support they needed. Some advisers wanted to see customers every week rather than every fortnight or to hold longer meetings with them, but could not do so because their caseloads were already heavy and their diaries full, *‘time constraints are set for minimal contact.’* Some explained this in terms of the level of fees they were receiving from Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or the prime provider. As one adviser stated, *‘we don’t have quite enough money to be able to change people’s lives’.*

Another common criticism of FND concerned the number and complexity of administrative procedures which providers had to follow. The paperwork relating to the Mandatory Work-Related Activity in particular was described as *‘time consuming’*, *‘outrageous’* and a *‘nightmare’*.

Staff operating within a staged delivery network identified this model as a potential problem. Adviser continuity throughout the programme was considered important. Yet they found it frustrating to build a relationship with a customer over several months and then hand them over to another provider. Some complained that, according to the terms of FND delivery agreed with the prime provider, if a customer started a job soon after moving to a new provider, that organisation received the credit even if the previous provider had done most of the work to get the customer to that point. These staff thought one provider should be responsible for the entire programme (or, in some cases, that the stage their organisation delivered should be longer).

In a similar vein, some specialist providers wanted more time to work with customers. They wanted to receive customers soon after they joined FND or even directly from Jobcentre Plus, rather than after the customers had been with another provider for several weeks or months. Some advisers who worked for subcontracted providers were frustrated that they could not communicate directly with Jobcentre Plus or DWP but instead had to do so via the prime provider.

Many providers would have liked to see more generous funding for a range of purposes: for benefits paid to certain customers, such as those trying to become self-employed; for incentives to employers and; in particular for training, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and retraining for older workers with obsolete skills. One adviser, however, questioned whether it would be wise to put more money into training, citing a number of customers who had

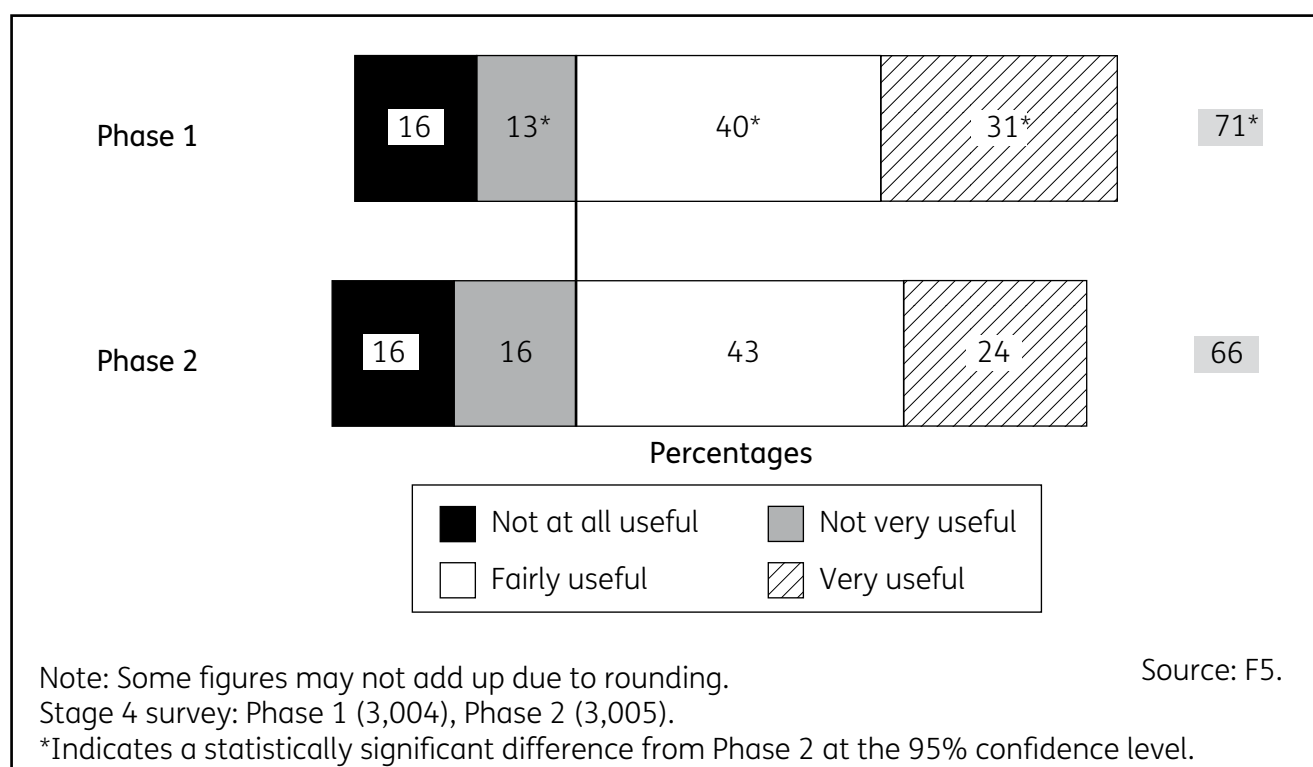
been adamant that they would be in work if they could afford a forklift licence. The adviser had obtained funding for them and they had obtained licences but still could not find work.

Other suggestions for improving FND included: referring jobseekers to providers after six rather than 12 months on JSA; reducing the length of the programme (on the basis that this would encourage customers and advisers to focus their efforts more); changing job outcome targets to take local circumstances into account; and avoiding duplication between Jobcentre Plus and providers by not requiring customers to sign on while they were on the FND programme or by basing a member of Jobcentre Plus staff at the provider's premises to allow customers to sign on there.

8.2 Customer views on employment support

Seven in ten (71%) customers in Phase 1 areas considered the support they received on FND to be very or fairly useful – significantly more than Phase 2 customers (66%). As Figure 8.1 shows, around three in ten (31%) FND customers considered the support to be very useful and a further two in five (40%) fairly useful.

Figure 8.1 Overall usefulness of support



Differences between Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas in the perceived levels of usefulness of support were most notable among:

- 25–49-years-olds (69% in Phase 1 stating support was useful compared to 63% Phase 2);
- customers suffering from a long-term health illness or disability (67% Phase 1 and 61% Phase 2);
- customers qualified to Level 2 or above – but not including those qualified at Level 4 or 5 (66% Phase 1 and 61% Phase 2);

- customers who had worked at any point since starting their 13th month of claiming – including those who had remained in paid work (68% in Phase 1 and 60% in Phase 2).

Exceptions to this pattern were younger customers (aged 18-24), ethnic minority customers and those who were still claiming at the end of FND/equivalent point in former regime areas who were equally as likely to find the support they received useful in Phase 1 and in Phase 2 areas. These customers were more likely than average to rate the support received as useful in both Phases, although the proportions finding Phase 2 support useful were particularly high (higher than the Phase 2 average by 11, seven and ten percentage points respectively); this indicates that the divergence from the overall pattern here is likely to be explained by these customer types finding Phase 2 support particularly useful rather than them being more likely to have negative views of FND support.

In general, across both Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas, the likelihood of considering the support useful decreased with age. Customers aged 18-24 are most likely to state the support was useful – 78% in Phase 1 areas and 77% in Phase 2 areas; those aged 50+ were least likely to state the support was useful – 62% in Phase 1 areas and 59% in Phase 2 areas. Similarly, the likelihood to find support useful decreased with qualification level, as those with no qualifications were most likely to find support useful (75% in Phase 1 areas; 72% in Phase 2 areas) and those educated to degree level were least likely to find it useful (51% in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas). Customers still claiming at the end of FND/the comparison period were also less likely to state that the support was useful than those who had ended their claim.

In addition to the overall usefulness of support, customers were also asked whether they felt they had received enough support. As well as being more likely to consider any support they did receive useful, FND customers were also more likely to think that they had received **enough** support since entering FND (68% in Phase 1 and 61% in Phase 2).

This difference was evident across most subgroups (including disabled customers, lone parents, those who had recently left prison/probation and former members of the armed forces). However, as was the case with the perceived usefulness of support, there were no differences by Phase in the likelihood of ethnic minority customers (62% Phase 1 and 60% Phase 2) or customers who were still claiming at the end of FND/comparison period (69% Phase 1 and 70% Phase 2) to feel that they had received enough support. This finding may indicate that FND providers were no better at catering for the needs of these customer groups.

The variation in views of quantity of support by age was slightly different to the variation found for usefulness. Whereas a difference between Phase 1 and Phase 2 customers in perceived usefulness of support was only evident for those aged 25-49, Phase 1 customers in all age groups were more likely to think they had enough support than Phase 2 customers.

Variations by subgroups were largely replicated. Across both Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas, younger customers and those with lower levels of qualifications were more likely to feel that they received enough support.

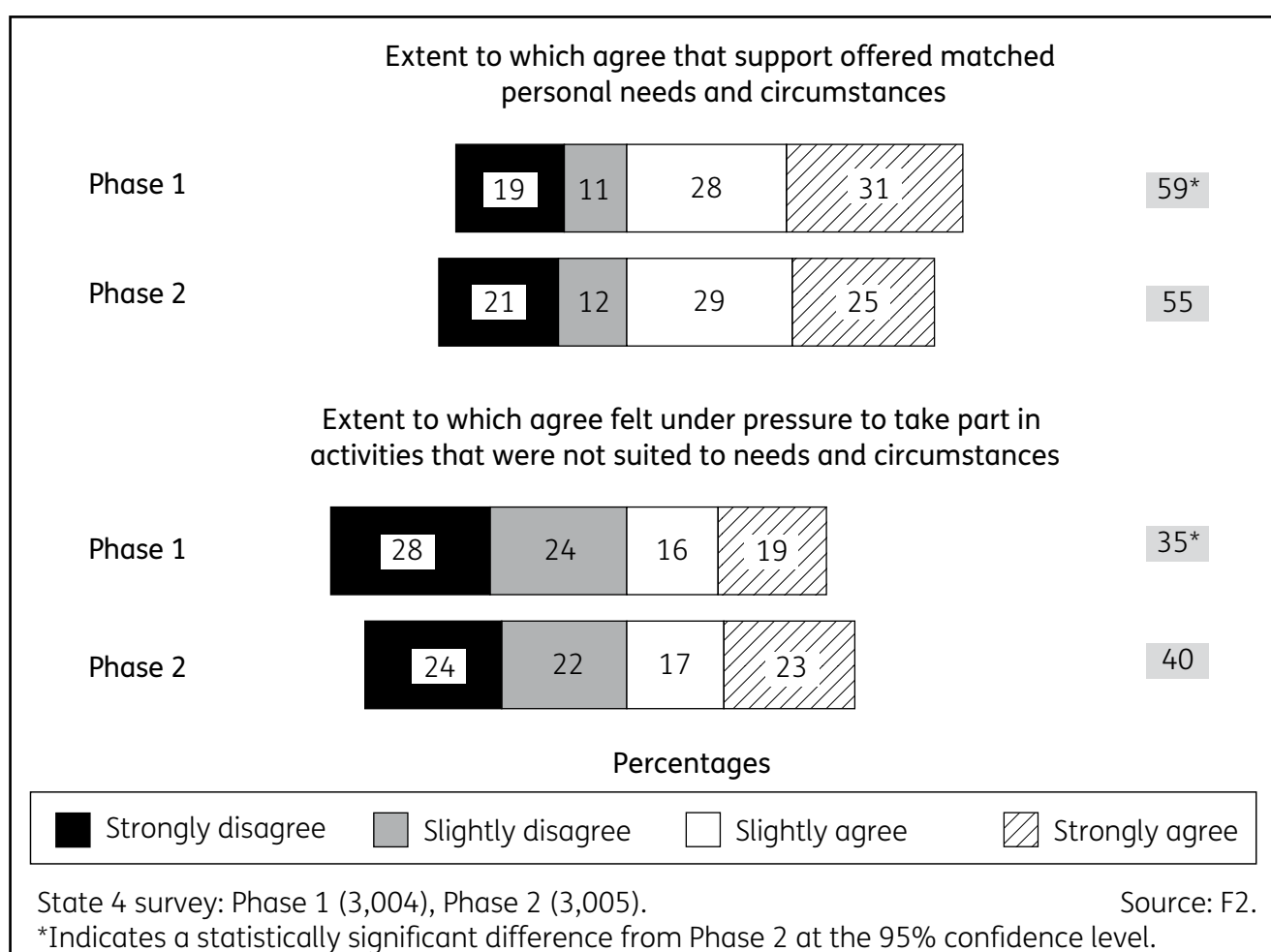
8.2.1 Suitability of support

Six in ten (59%) Phase 1 customers agreed that the support offered to them on FND matched their personal needs and circumstances – slightly (but significantly) more than customers at a similar point in Phase 2 areas (55%). As Figure 8.2 shows, the difference is accounted for by customers strongly agreeing that this was the case (as opposed to agreeing slightly).

The difference between Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas was consistent across most customer groups but was particularly notable for:

- customers aged 25-49 (58% compared to 52%);
- customers with no qualifications (64% compared to 59%);
- customers qualified to Level 2 and above (55% and 50% – although no difference was noted among those qualified to Level 4 or 5);
- customers who had been in full-time work for an employer since entering FND/the comparable point of their claim (53% and 44%).

Figure 8.2 Overall appropriateness of support



The same variation in views by age and qualification was also evident for this measure. Younger customers and those with lower qualifications were more likely to agree that support was matched to their personal needs and circumstances under both regimes.

Customers who were claiming JSA at the time of research – both those who had been claiming continuously and reached the end of FND, as well as those who had ended their original claim after entering FND and had returned to JSA claiming by the time of research – were also more likely to agree that their support was well matched (63% in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas). Conversely, customers who had entered paid work were less likely to agree that support was well-matched. This was the case among customers who had entered full-time paid work with an employer (53%

in Phase 1 areas and 44% in Phase 2 areas) and more so the case for customers who had entered a period of selfemployment (49% in Phase 1 areas and 51% in Phase 2 areas).

Customers were also asked the extent to which they agreed that they felt under pressure to take part in activities that were not suited to their needs and circumstances (shown in Figure 8.2). In line with the finding that FND customers felt that support was well matched, they were also slightly less likely to feel that they were forced to take part in unsuitable activities than their counterparts in Phase 2 areas (35% agreed they felt under pressure to take part in unsuitable activities compared to 40% in Phase 2 areas). A larger difference between Phase 1 and Phase 2 customers was evident for:

- former members of the UK armed services (28% agreeing in Phase 1 areas and 48% in Phase 2);
- women (33% in Phase 1 and 42% in Phase 2);
- 18–24-year-olds (32% in Phase 1 and 41% in Phase 2).

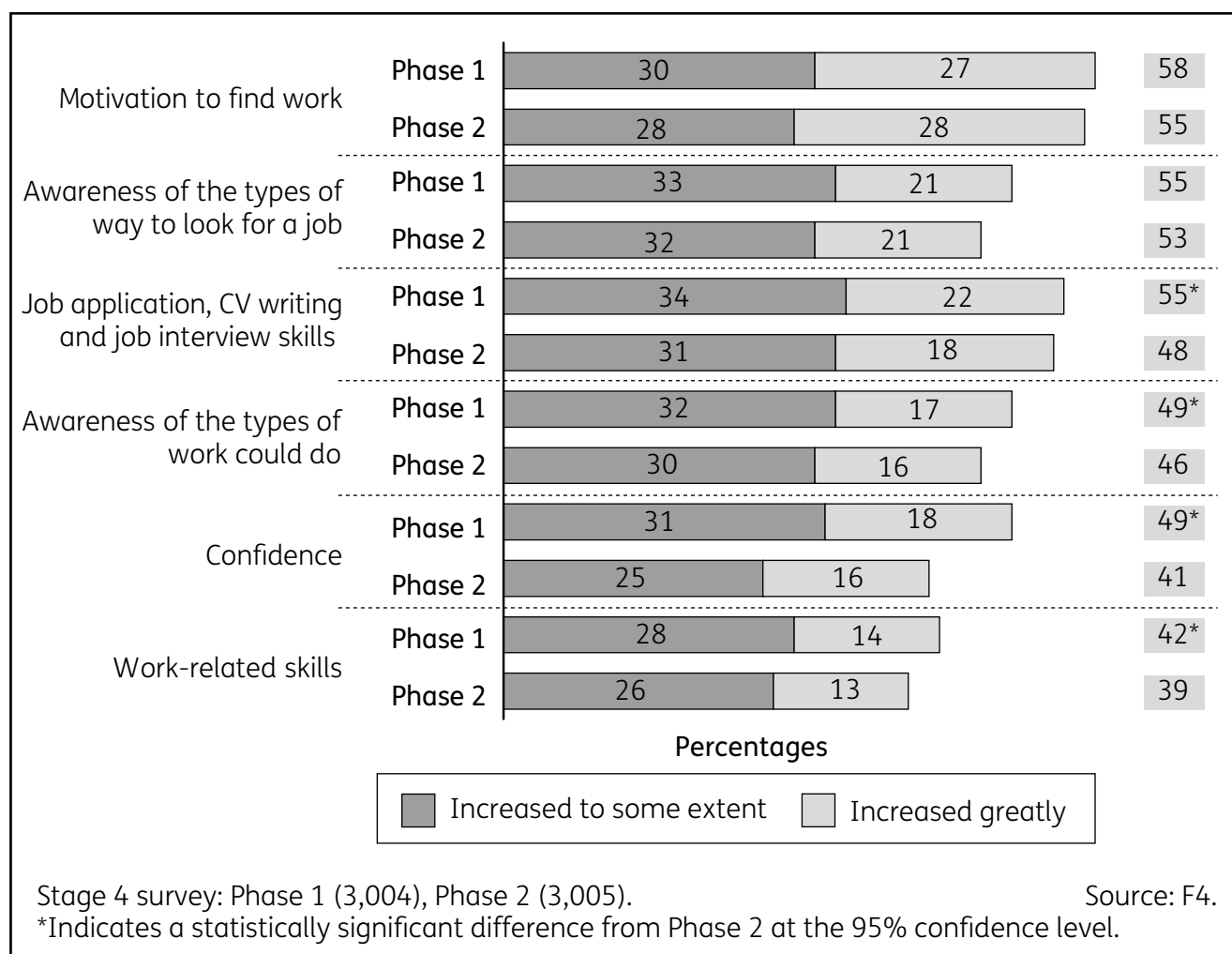
The notable customer groups that were no more or less likely to have felt under pressure to take part in unsuitable activities were older customers, those with no qualifications or qualified to below Level 2, and customers who were still claiming at the end of FND/the comparable period in Phase 2 areas.

Customers more likely to have felt under pressure to take part in activities that were not appropriate to their needs and circumstances were ethnic minority customers (41% in Phase 1 and 46% in Phase 2).

8.2.2 Influence of support: Soft outcomes

In addition to the customer destinations upon leaving JSA (i.e. hard outcomes), the survey asked about the effects on softer outcomes associated with the perceived influence on self confidence, motivation to find work and awareness of possible employment options. Figure 8.3 shows the proportion of customers stating that each skill or attribute had increased greatly or increased to some extent as a result of the support received.

In both Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas, customers most commonly reported an increase in their motivation to find work and awareness of the ways in which they could look for jobs. In both cases there was no significant difference in the likelihood to report an increase by Phase. This was consistent across all key customer groups with the exception that women in FND areas were significantly more likely to be more motivated to find work as a result of the support they received over this period (62% in Phase 1 and 57% in Phase 2).

Figure 8.3 FND/Jobcentre Plus and/or New Deal support association with various skills and attributes

FND customers were slightly but significantly more likely than those in Phase 2 areas to report an increase in the following areas:

- job application, CV writing and job interview skills (55% in Phase 1 compared to 48% in Phase 2). Although several customer groups in FND areas were more likely to say this than their counterparts in former regime areas, the difference was most marked for women (57% in Phase 1 and 46% in Phase 2 areas);
- awareness of the types of work that could be done (49% in Phase 1 compared to 46% in Phase 2 areas);
- confidence (49% in Phase 1 and 41% in Phase 2). This level of difference was evident across all customer groups with the exception of ethnic minority customers (52% Phase 1 and 54% Phase 2);
- work-related skills (42% in Phase 1 compared to 39% in Phase 2).

The influence of the support offered by FND providers also varied according to customer types within FND areas. Table 8.1 summarises results on 'soft' outcomes by key demographic groups.

Within FND areas, the following groups were more likely to have reported an increase in their awareness or improved their skills across all areas:

- 18–24-year-olds;
- customers claiming at the time of research – including both those who were claiming at the time of research, but had at some point after 12 months ended their original claim as well as those who had claimed continuously;
- customers qualified to below Level 2;
- women were also more likely to report an increase in skills or awareness in half these areas;

Customers who had ended their claim to enter paid employment and had remained in employment were significantly less likely to report an improvement in any of the soft skill areas. This perhaps reflects that these customers will, by definition, have experienced a shorter period of support and also perhaps an unwillingness to attribute their FND provider with credit for them moving into work. Customers qualified to a higher level (Level 2 and above) were also less likely to report increases in soft skills.

These patterns were generally evident among Phase 2 customers as well.

Table 8.1 Perceived contribution of support by key customer groups

| | Overall | | Gender | | Age | | | Current status | | | Qualification Level | | | Level 4 or Level 5 % |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|--------|----------|---------|---------|-------|----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|
| | % | | Male % | Female % | 18-24 % | 25-49 % | 50+ % | Claiming % | Paid work % | Reached end of FND % | No qualifications % | Below Level 2 % | Level 2+ % | |
| Motivation to find work | 58 | 57 | 62* | 70* | 53* | 47* | 64* | 64* | 49 | 64* | 60* | 65* | 53 | 37 |
| Awareness of the types of way to look for a job | 55 | 54 | 55 | 64* | 51 | 46 | 60* | 60* | 47 | 60* | 57 | 60* | 51 | 37 |
| Job application, CV writing and job interview skills | 55 | 55 | 57 | 66* | 52 | 46 | 62* | 62* | 48 | 62* | 56 | 63* | 52 | 38 |
| Awareness of the types of work that could be done | 49 | 50 | 48 | 61* | 46* | 38* | 55* | 55* | 43 | 54* | 50 | 57* | 46 | 34 |
| Confidence | 49 | 48 | 53* | 61* | 44* | 39* | 55* | 55* | 44* | 56* | 51 | 54* | 46 | 35 |
| Work-related skills | 42 | 41 | 47* | 56* | 38 | 29 | 49* | 49* | 35 | 49* | 44 | 50* | 38 | 28 |
| Base: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unweighted | | 2,320 | 684 | 1,002 | 1,002 | 1,000 | 1,747 | 1,747 | 798 | 1,234 | 1,063 | 534 | 1,390 | 387 |
| weighted | | 2,320 | 684 | 1,069 | 1,223 | 712 | 1,763 | 1,763 | 810 | 1,229 | 1,024 | 538 | 1,428 | 388 |

*Indicates customer groups statistically significantly more likely to have reported an increase at the 95% confidence level.

8.3 Customer views – qualitative data

Customers in the qualitative research were invited to sum up their experiences of FND, to identify the most and least helpful aspects of the programme and to suggest improvements. They were also asked to compare the support received during FND with the support they had received from Jobcentre Plus during Stage 3 (the six months leading up to their referral to FND).

8.3.1 Usefulness of FND support and services

There was a wide range of views of FND overall. Some customers were extremely positive about the support they had received while others were highly critical. Some were grateful for the support their advisers had tried to give them but felt that there was little to be done given the poor state of the job market. The analysis found no discernable patterns in customer views at the overall level by location, gender, ethnicity, the length of time they had spent on FND when they were interviewed, or whether they had found work during FND.

Similar to the survey, the clearest pattern in the qualitative study was that customers who had specialist skills and were determined not to take a low-paid job – including skilled manual workers as well as professionals – were more likely than others to say that they had not received appropriate support. These customers believed that FND providers were geared towards people looking for unskilled work:

‘It’s not a criticism of the people but I think the fact that I’m qualified in engineering – they don’t know anything about it. That’s not a criticism. They’ve got their fields, I’ve got mine...They don’t understand what I can do.’

(FND customer)

Experienced jobseekers – customers with a history of securing work – also tended to be less satisfied than others because they saw less benefit to them in the key service offered by providers, employability training and support:

‘I think they’re okay as a company for people who maybe haven’t...if you want more guidance in job hunting, CV preparation, interview techniques – younger girls and guys who are starting to look for jobs at the beginning of their careers, unlike [people such as] myself who are at the end of their career, who have got the contacts out there and know what to do.’

(FND customer)

These views correspond with findings from the survey which suggest that younger people and customers with no qualifications were more likely to view their FND services as useful.

Another theme which emerged was that the customers who were most negative about FND overall were often suspicious or cynical about providers’ motives: *‘they’re just in there for the money, they ain’t there to help you.’* One customer felt that he had received a poor service and was angry about the large profits made by his high-profile provider which were regularly reported in the media. Another customer was upset by what he saw as the insensitive way in which his provider publicly displayed its money-driven ethos:

‘Each of these employment officers, they had these boards with stars on and to me it looked as though they were competing against each other...I’m not sure if it was stars or something, like “his performance this week by getting people jobs is this amount”, and so if they got somebody a job they’d get a bonus.’

(FND customer)

These customers' suspicions may have been exacerbated because they were confused about how providers were paid. (This is not surprising given that no providers appeared to explain the situation to customers as a matter at the induction or the first advisory meeting.) Several customers believed that providers were only entitled to a job outcome fee if they placed a customer into a job which they, as opposed to the customer, had found. At least one customer believed that providers were paid for every week that a customer remained unemployed.

Most helpful aspects of FND

The most valued aspect of FND was the one-to-one advisory support which nearly all customers received. Not all customers welcomed this, but those who did appreciated being able to see the same adviser at each meeting (where this was the case) and felt that the meetings were long enough and frequent enough to discuss their needs in depth. They liked having someone to talk to and generally found advisers friendly and keen to help.

Although employability training was often regarded as too basic, some customers who were inexperienced jobseekers singled out particular courses as having been among the most useful services they had received. A computer programmer who had not had a job interview for several years found a session on interview skills helpful. A care worker in her 50s was pleased to have been told by a trainer that she did not need to state her age on her CV. A chef who had had little experience of using computers was grateful that his provider taught him basic IT skills, including how to set up an email account. A recent graduate whose provider specialised in supporting graduates and professionals said that many parts of the provider's three-to-four month employability course had been useful to him – much more so than the employability sessions delivered by the mainstream FND provider which he had initially attended.

Other types of employability support were also mentioned by some customers: the ability to use the provider's computing, printing and postage facilities; the provider's CV writing service; and a covering letter written by the provider. Several customers highlighted the efforts made by the provider's employer engagement officer as the most useful service they had received. The one customer in the sample who said that he had found work through FND said that the job lead given by his adviser was the best thing that had happened to him on the programme.

Least useful aspects and suggestions for improvement

Several customers described compulsory employability training sessions as the least useful parts of their FND experience, as they felt that they already had good employability skills. For example, a bricklayer who went on to find work quickly objected to being put on a course without any say in the matter:

'[It would have been better] if they'd have actually asked what sort of help you need, rather than get a group of you and chuck you in. All right – some people might have needed help with writing CVs. I didn't. I didn't need help looking for a job, so to me it was a total waste of time.'

(FND customer)

Some customers disliked group sessions in general because they found them uncomfortable or boring. These customers preferred one-to-one meetings.

The least useful aspects of FND mentioned by other customers varied. One customer was disappointed about his provider's failure to deliver the ESOL training it had promised at induction. A customer who lived in a remote village and had argued with his provider about travel expenses cited this issue. One felt that his FND adviser did not have much time to spend with him because of a heavy caseloads (in contrast to the views described above). Other criticisms included receiving

conflicting advice on CVs from three different advisers, being pushed by advisers into applying for unsuitable jobs and having to change provider twice when the current one ceased trading.

Customers had many ideas about how FND could be improved. Several made comments about what they saw as the need for providers to make contact with potential employers and act as intermediaries so they could get a 'foot in the door'. It may be that some of the providers were already doing this (through an employer engagement officer for instance) but, if so, these customers were not aware of it.

Other suggestions for improving FND included:

- more advanced skills training; funding in advance for Construction Skills Certification Scheme training;
- segmenting customers so that not everyone received the same training or was put under pressure to apply for unskilled jobs; setting up an 'executive job club' to allow these customers to network and exchange ideas;
- payment for travel expenses in advance;
- funding for self-employment start-up costs;
- keeping FND services in one place to minimise travel (this customer had experienced multiple providers);
- separating clearly the roles of Jobcentre Plus and providers during FND so that there was no duplication of job-search checks;
- referring customers to FND providers earlier in their claim (from customers who were enthusiastic about FND).

8.3.2 Comparison to Jobcentre Plus services

As with perceptoins of FND overall, there was a wide range of views about how FND services compared with the support which customers had received from Jobcentre Plus during Stage 3. By far the most common observation was that FND providers offered more one-to-one advisory support than Jobcentre Plus. Many customers preferred the more frequent, longer one-to-one meetings under FND, and the fact that they tended to see the same adviser. This was felt to make the support more '*personal*' and to give FND advisers a better understanding of customers' backgrounds and needs compared to the '*production line*' meetings at Jobcentre Plus.

This view was common among customers who were interviewed six months after joining FND – and who had, therefore, experienced Stage 3 once Jobseekers REgime and Flexible New Deal (JRFND) was already well established – as well as among those who were interviewed 12 months into the programme, who might have been expected to notice a more marked difference. Customers in both groups often indicated that they had had few, if any, meetings with a Jobcentre Plus adviser following their Initial Stage 3 Review.

A minority of customers said that they had received minimal support from either their FND providers or Jobcentre Plus and as a result they saw little difference between the two. In one of the provider networks where FND was divided into stages, one provider was singled out by several customers as being more similar to Jobcentre Plus than other providers in this respect.

Some customers disliked the extra attention they received from FND providers. These tended to be skilled workers who were determined to stay in the same field and felt that the providers did not understand their situation. To them, having to attend meetings at an FND provider as well as signing

on was a nuisance. Some customers who had received regular advisory support from Jobcentre Plus during Stage 3 (all of them from the group interviewed six months after joining FND) said that they had found their Jobcentre Plus advisers more approachable than their FND advisers. Some customers preferred Jobcentre Plus services for other reasons. One felt that the Jobcentre Plus jobs database was easier to use. Another customer liked the fact that Jobcentre Plus offered to pay for travel to job interviews, which his current provider did not. Another thought that Jobcentre Plus had better access to training courses.

8.4 Summary

Overall, customers who experienced FND provision were slightly more positive about their experiences with the employment services than customers in the Phase 2 comparison areas. They were significantly more likely to report:

- having received enough support;
- finding the support useful;
- considering the support to be well matched to their needs and circumstances;
- not feeling under pressure to participate in unsuitable activities.

FND customers were correspondingly more likely to report an improvement across the majority of soft skill areas associated with looking for work such as confidence, motivation and awareness of employment options.

Views on FND provision did vary according to customer type – while customers qualified to Level 4 or Level 5 were more sceptical of the influence of the support, those qualified to below Level 2 and younger customers were more positive. This also reflected in the qualitative sample where customers felt the FND services were more suited to younger people, those with less job search experience and those seeking lower-skilled jobs. The findings suggest that FND was no more likely to address the needs of the higher-skilled and the higher-qualified customers than other employment regimes.

Staff identified numerous strengths with their FND provision, praising their capacity to deliver an employment service characterised by personal, one-to-one customer attention that was delivered by highly-skilled staff. Identified weaknesses in their operations related to heavy caseloads, administrative burden, an inability to help customers who needed specialist support, and problems with the sanctioning process.

9 Discussion and conclusions

This report presented evaluation findings on the Flexible New Deal (FND), part of the government's reforms to the Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) regime and the New Deals that were introduced from April 2009 (Phase 1 areas) and from April 2010 (Phase 2 areas).⁴⁰ The research is part of a wider evaluation of the Jobseekers Regime and Flexible New Deal (JRFND) and should be read in conjunction with reported surveys of customers and implementation findings (Adams *et al.*, 2010a and 2010b; Knight *et al.*, 2010; Vegeris *et al.*, 2010a and 2010b). A report on programme impacts is due in 2012. Separate research on FND and effects of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Commissioning Strategy on employment service market structures is available in Armstrong *et al.* (2011).

The FND programme typically covered weeks 52 through to 104 of a JSA claim, prior to which jobseekers received employment services through Jobcentre Plus. The programme was delivered by prime contracted providers and their delivery partners. Following a 'black box' approach, providers were granted the freedom to design a personalised package of work preparation and job search support to address the needs of the customer balanced with the needs of the local labour market. As set out in the *Flexible New Deal Supplier Guidance* issued by DWP, providers were required to supply a minimum service of fortnightly contact with customers⁴¹ and a four-week Mandatory Work-Related Activity (MWRA). Furthermore, providers were expected to monitor customer activities and report non-compliance to Jobcentre Plus for possible sanctioning. Throughout FND, jobseekers were also required to attend Jobcentre Plus on a fortnightly basis to sign a declaration detailing that they were available for employment and were actively seeking work.

Findings in the report contribute to the evaluation process study which aims to address the following objectives:

- to assess the delivery of JRFND by Jobcentre Plus and contracted providers;
- to examine the customer experience of JRFND and to determine what elements of JRFND appear to help customers;
- to compare the customer experience of JRFND to the experience of customers at similar points in their claim in Phase 2 areas;
- to contribute to future policy development.

9.1 Scope of the research

The survey (n=6,009) was conducted approximately 12 months after customers started on FND (Phase 1 areas), or the equivalent employment service in comparison areas (Phase 2 areas). The qualitative data focused only on the FND programme and covered two cohorts who started FND either six or 12 months prior to the research. Customer (n=44) and staff (n=71) interviews were matched to four FND provider networks. Together these quantitative and qualitative studies were designed to serve separate and complementary purposes.

⁴⁰ Due to the implementation of the Work Programme, Phase 2 roll-out did not include the FND; only Stages 1 to 3 of the Jobseekers Regime.

⁴¹ As a recessionary measure, a minimum service of advisory contact were added to the FND contract along with raising the service attachment fee from 20 to 40%. This was not part of the original FND design.

The customer survey performed a dual role. It provided a representative picture of customer views and experiences of the FND and tracked outcomes for different customer groups over one year.⁴² This information can be used to judge the programme in absolute terms, to help determine if minimum service standards have been adhered to, for example. At the same time, the survey captured a contemporaneous group of jobseekers under the previous JSA and New Deal service regimes. This design permits descriptive comparisons on the survey measures and gives some indication of how FND may differ from the other New Deals. However, it should be noted that further analysis is required before conclusions can be drawn about the performance of FND. This is due to fundamental differences between the populations and service delivery contexts in the Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas (refer to Section 1.2.1). A more robust analysis, which accounts for these variations, will help to establish if any of the outcomes can be attributed to the FND programme. These impact analyses are due to be reported in 2012.

While the survey of FND customers was able to establish a representative picture of the FND experience, the qualitative research helped to add clarity to the findings. Conversations with customers and staff revealed how FND was delivered and why certain outcomes might have occurred. Additionally, the research was designed to examine FND delivery under different programme delivery structures. These data will help to determine the strengths and weaknesses of certain practices which can contribute to the design of future employment programmes. Still, when interpreting the findings, it should be borne in mind that the qualitative data were gathered in a relatively small area of programme activity.

9.2 Discussion of key findings

In this section the evaluation findings are presented thematically according to the issues that emerged.

9.2.1 Early evidence on FND outcomes

It should be noted that the survey findings on outcomes are preliminary and ought to be treated with caution.

Overall, compared to the former New Deals, the survey found that 18–24-year-olds were less likely to be in paid work in FND areas while there was no difference in the employment rates of customers aged 25+. In both areas, the survey reflects the 12 to 24-month period after customers started a JSA claim. The results also showed some positive employment outcomes relating to the nature of work FND customers entered into.

In the comparison areas, between one and two years after claiming JSA, some young people would have been experiencing the end of their first cycle of the New Deal for Young People (NDYP)/the start of a subsequent cycle. On this basis the higher employment rate may reflect the effectiveness of undertaking the Options element within NDYP and progressing through the programme rather than a deterrent effect of initial referral to an Option or to the programme more generally. However, this more positive finding in comparison areas was not evident for certain disadvantaged groups. Young people with a disability and customers with no qualifications had similar rates of employment in both areas.

Differences in the nature of employment were also noted for young people. In Phase 2 areas a slightly greater proportion of jobs were secured with public/voluntary sector employers. This could reflect

⁴² Reports on service offer and take up are drawn from customer recall rather than administrative records and this should be taken into account when drawing conclusions.

stronger links between these employers and Jobcentre Plus than may exist between FND providers and employers in these sectors. It was also found that, among young people who entered work but subsequently returned to JSA by the time of the survey, customers in Phase 2 areas experienced a longer spell in employment. Under FND, more 18–24-year-olds were employed for very short periods (two months or less) which brings the nature and appropriateness of these jobs into question.⁴³ This suggests there is scope for FND providers to work more intensively with young people to improve their employability and job retention. It would also suggest that the job outcome and sustained job outcome payments offered to FND providers were not always having the intended effect.

FND outcomes were more positive for the age 25+ group and this may reflect differences in the NDYP and New Deal 25 Plus (ND25+) regimes (the 25+ comparison group in Phase 2 areas was made up of customers starting the 13th consecutive month of claiming who – if they continued claiming – would have experienced six further months of regular JSA signing before moving on to ND25+ for a maximum of six months within the survey reference period). Although there was little difference in the likelihood of having entered work, FND customers aged 25+ were slightly more likely to have entered full-time work and to consider that their job offered opportunities for progression. The receipt of out-of-work benefits was broadly the same for FND and comparison areas but the distribution varied. At the end of the 12-month period, more FND customers aged 25+ were claiming JSA, while in Phase 2 areas the receipt of incapacity benefits was higher. These differences may reflect greater knowledge of the benefits system among Jobcentre Plus advisers compared to FND advisers.

9.2.2 The FND ‘black box’

The ‘black box’ approach to employment support granted FND providers the flexibility to design services on an individual basis. For this reason, FND is intentionally less prescriptive than the previous New Deals. There might, therefore, be an expectation that the services and support offered under FND would qualitatively differ from other employment programmes. On the whole, the evaluation results suggest that FND was a ‘generalist’ service with a narrow range of support – in terms of service design and in the extent to which the programme may not have addressed the full spectrum of customer needs.

Did FND respond to customer needs?

As would be expected under a ‘black box’ approach, the evaluation found differences in the types of services offered and taken up by various customer subgroups. This could have been due to providers adjusting services to different customer needs. Advisers stated they used a person-centred approach to tailor services to individual circumstances. Yet, from customers’ perspectives, there was also evidence where certain customer subgroups were not satisfied with the usefulness or appropriateness of services received.

Overall, the use of services from other organisations was found to be very low. Only one in 20 customers (five %) reported being referred to another agency for support or advice. As an indication of the use of specialist services, this is likely to be an overestimate because it would include the transfer to another provider of end-to-end FND services within the supply chain. A separate study reporting on FND service networks (Armstrong *et al.*, 2011) also found that although more suppliers of specialist services, such as debt or drug/alcohol counselling, entered FND supply chains over the first year of operations, subcontractors of specialist services reported lower than anticipated rates of customer referrals. Together the evidence suggests that specialist support services may have been underutilised within FND.

⁴³ However, it should also be noted that these differences might be explained by differences in the labour market. The forthcoming impact analyses will control for differences between the two Phases.

Slightly more than half of FND customers in the survey found the help they received to be useful while six in ten felt the help matched their personal needs and circumstances. Although these figures were higher than for customers in comparison areas, substantial minorities of customers did not feel the FND services addressed their job search needs. In particular, ethnic minority customers, customers experiencing a long-term illness or disability and those whalified to Level 4 or 5 said they would have benefited from advice better tailored to their individual needs and abilities.

Younger jobseekers and those with no or lower qualifications were the groups most likely to find the FND support useful. In general, the likelihood of considering the support useful decreased with age and level of qualification, indicating that services were less appropriate for people with more labour market experience and the higher skilled. In the qualitative research, people from professional and highly-skilled backgrounds were the most negative about their FND experiences.

Indications that providers were struggling with certain customer subgroups were also found in the interviews with provider staff who identified certain customer groups as more challenging to help than others. These included the longer-term unemployed but also people with drug and alcohol addiction, mental health issues, learning and serious disabilities. Some staff questioned whether such customers in the later groups should be on JSA because it was felt they were unable to actively seek and be available for employment.

Some of the findings on the distribution of services and the perceived helpfulness or usefulness of services suggest that FND may not have addressed the more specific needs of certain customer groups.

Did FND offer innovation?

Overall, the range of support offered to customers under FND was very similar in nature to the support that customers in comparison areas received under the former New Deals. The majority of activity consisted of traditional employability support addressing, for example, job-search techniques, CVs, application forms, covering letters, interview skills, self-marketing and basic skills training. From the qualitative evidence, most customers found this support to be too basic, repeating content that was previously covered by Jobcentre Plus during the first 12 months of their claim.

The evaluation found little evidence of service innovation. The qualitative process research revealed that providers channelled customers through a similar sequence of activities: initial advisory meeting, induction, assessment, Action Plan, advisory meetings with offers of services, a possible intensive work-related activity, more advisory meetings with offers of services, and in-work support (for customers in employment). Most of these echo the basic requirements as set out in the *Flexible New Deal Supplier Guidance*. This suggests that the standards may be shaping the services. Yet, as discussed below, even the minimum standards were not always being met.

Other forms of support were perceived by customers as additional or innovative compared to previous services they had received; use of computing, printing and postage facilities; a CV writing service; help with covering letters. Customers also mentioned receiving additional communications from their advisers via email and text messaging. Customers appreciated the support received from staff who provided a more intensive job matching service and from staff who dealt directly with employers – employer engagement officers.

Further signs of innovation were found in FND operational systems. Some providers had developed sophisticated diagnostic tools for segmenting customers; data was collected to monitor customer progress or to assess the impact of services on employment outcomes; some advisory staff had an employment recruitment or human resources background. Other research on FND also found that, during the first year of operations, prime providers had invested in measures to improve service efficiencies like externally commissioning a service review (Armstrong *et al.*, 2011).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the qualitative research also identified differences in access to support under the 'black box' approach. These related to payment of travel expenses, training opportunities and in-work support. Limited training opportunities for advanced and specialist skills were identified as a general issue by both FND staff and customers in the qualitative sample. According to staff, some of this was due to their organisation's budget constraints. Additionally, the survey revealed that substantially fewer FND customers had attended a training course (not basic skills) at a local college or other provider, compared to customers in the comparison areas.

The evaluation found no evidence on the use of more innovative methods to improve customer access to services, such as distance learning technologies. This would have been particularly useful in rural areas. There was also no evidence of systems in place to reinforce positive customer behaviours such as financial incentives to encourage work retention.

Limitations in service design under FND reflect results elsewhere where providers were granted flexibilities with limited service prescription. In a review of contracted employment assistance in Australia and the Netherlands, Finn (2008) observed that 'black box' approaches can lead to a concentration of generic employability services which are less costly than more innovative interventions. It was concluded that processes for encouraging, developing and sharing best practices needed to be managed by an external body.

9.2.3 Advisory support

Perhaps innovation had more to do with **how** the employment service was delivered as opposed to **what** was delivered under FND. Staff distinguished the service as offering personal, one-to-one customer attention. They also pointed to the experience and diagnostic skills of front-line staff. Often it was felt that these qualities distinguished the FND programme from Jobcentre Plus services.

Although the nature of support offered was not substantially different under FND, there was some survey evidence to suggest that the way in which it was delivered resulted in a more positive experience for customers. In relative terms, the FND programme was generally characterised as offering a more intensive and personalised service when compared to the previous New Deals and Jobcentre Plus provision under the revised Jobseekers Regime. FND was identified with higher levels of one-to-one customer engagement and greater continuity with advisory staff. Additionally, FND customers were more likely to see the same adviser at each meeting and to have other communication with their advisers outside these meetings (e.g. telephone, email and text), compared to their counterparts in Phase 2 areas. In contrast to comparison areas, FND customers were also more likely to state that the support they received was useful in helping them to find work and they reported higher levels of satisfaction with the overall service they received.

However, counter to the requirement to maintain meaningful fortnightly contact with customers,⁴⁴ data from the survey suggest that many FND customers were not receiving regular advisory contact throughout the programme. More than half of the customers who had completed 12 months on FND recalled they had attended less than 20 face-to-face meetings with an adviser. It should be noted that this is a conservative estimate since it does not account for other activities that could constitute contact under the FND contract.⁴⁵ There is limited data in the qualitative research to explain why FND contact were not higher. Customer volumes and staff turnover may have contributed.

⁴⁴ This was a recessionary measure implemented at the start of FND alongside increasing the contract service fee from 20 to 40%.

⁴⁵ Other activities could supersede a fortnightly advisory meeting: short job-focused training; events/activities to improve job search skills; a period of work experience.

Adviser continuity was highly valued by both staff and customers. However, the qualitative research found that this relationship was sometimes intentionally discontinued as a strategy to provide momentum to the customer journey and introduce a fresh perspective. Adviser discontinuity was a natural consequence of the staged approach to FND delivery where, according to the prime provider's service design, jobseekers changed advisers at set points in their JSA claim. Customers under this system disliked having to reacquaint themselves with another adviser and to repeat details about their job search. Particularly in the network where customers changed providers with each stage of FND, it was also not clear from analysis of the staff interviews who managed the customer journey when the programme was segmented in this way.

9.2.4 Intensive work-related activity

There is evidence from the evaluation to suggest that providers were not satisfying the requirement to supply a four-week, continuous, full-time work-related activity as set out in the FND guidance. Among customers in the survey who had completed 52 weeks on the programme it was estimated that fewer than two-thirds took part in MWRA. This is likely to be an over-estimate since it accounted for all work placements of at least four weeks, and any form of training or self-employment support, regardless of the duration. Forthcoming impact analyses that incorporate administrative data on FND activities will help clarify these estimates.

Gaining first-hand experience through a work placement was much more likely to take place under FND than under the former regime. On the whole, 18–24-year-olds were more positive about a four-week work placement than the age 25+ group. However, the difficulty providers had in arranging work placements as part of the MWRA element of FND was evident. Fewer than half of the customers who reached the end of 12 months on FND had experienced a placement of four or more weeks.

The qualitative research identified numerous issues associated with the MWRA. First, work placements were the main or only form of MWRA on offer – some providers referred customers to specialist brokers for these services. Only a minority of providers in the sample talked about arranging work trials, training, or self-employment test trading as an alternative four-week activity. Second, providers had difficulties arranging work placements. This was due to the high volume of customers and the low supply of employers willing to host a placement. Certain customers were also deemed difficult to place. Some had personal problems that needed to be addressed; advisers had to manage people's negative attitudes about working for free; and, given the low-level jobs available as placements, providers questioned the value of arranging these for the highly skilled and professionals. Finally, the administrative paperwork for arranging a MWRA and transferring customer benefits was considered onerous by staff. Together, these problems with implementation help to explain the lower than expected proportions of surveyed customers who reported experience of a MWRA.

Customers in the qualitative study were most positive when a work placement matched their skills or gave them experience in a new field. Customers who were assigned to what they considered to be inappropriate placements gained little or nothing from the experience. There was also evidence that some employers were abusing the system, offering a string of work placements as a substitute for true employment.

9.2.5 Conditionality

As stated in the *Flexible New Deal evidence paper* (DWP, 2007c), increasing job seeker responsibilities over the length of a claim and matching this to greater opportunities for support has underpinned the JSA and New Deal regimes since 1998. Although this welfare-to-work philosophy was not new, FND was designed to increase job seeker activity relative to the earlier stages of JRFND. However, there is limited evidence from the evaluation to suggest this occurred.

In the qualitative research, provider staff listed numerous strategies for maintaining customer momentum in the programme. These included expanding job goals, increasing requirements for job search activities and encouraging participation in employability workshops. From the qualitative interviews customers were aware of and generally accepted the conditions of their benefit. They had repeatedly been reminded of the requirements at FND inductions, letters inviting them to attend mandatory adviser appointments and Fortnightly Jobsearch Review meetings at Jobcentre Plus. Some recalled being expected to expand their job goals and to increase the quota of job applications as their time on the programme increased. However, most did not perceive this as extra pressure and some stated they noticed no change in expectations throughout the programme.

These findings are reinforced by the survey results. Similar numbers (around 60%) of Phase 1 and 2 customers recalled that their participation in at least one of their employment activities was mandatory. Although this is a crude measure, this suggests that FND providers were enforcing standard features of employment programmes and that pressures to participate did exist. Still, it seems that two in five people did not perceive pressure to take part in activities. Furthermore, proportions perceiving certain activities of FND as mandatory were low.⁴⁶ Most customers did not recall that failure to take up specific support or activities would affect their benefit. For example, among customers who took part in certain activities (like basic skills training, help with CVs or job applications, skills assessment) proportions reporting that they were mandatory (i.e. subject to benefit sanction) were no higher than a quarter and most were lower than ten %. The highest level of obligation was associated with a work experience, part of the MWRA. Even so, fewer than half recalled this to be mandatory.

Reasons for this are not entirely clear from the data. It may be that people willingly took up services and activities without the need for extra pressure or they agreed to do so as a joint decision with their adviser. Previous research on JRFND may also give insight. It was found that Jobcentre Plus advisers were reluctant to threaten their customers with possible sanctioning because this extra pressure might damage their relationship (Vegeris *et al.*, 2010b). Some preferred using a softer approach to encourage participation. This same strategy may have been used by FND delivery staff.

9.2.6 Sanctioning

The evidence on sanctioning is limited to the qualitative data as this topic was not included in the customer survey.

Provider staff generally followed the same standard procedures to initiate the sanctioning process, through 'raising a doubt', which was issued through the prime provider or directly to Jobcentre Plus for decision making. Missed appointments for adviser meetings were reported as the most common misdemeanour. A reduction in benefits was sometimes seen as an effective motivator to change jobseeker behaviour. There was some evidence of this in the research with customers. But staff also noted that some longer-term claimants were not fazed by loss of money.

The research identified issues with the sanctioning process which may have hampered its delivery. Staff were burdened with administrative paperwork which detracted from their time with customers. They reported that the time lag between an incident and the 'punishment' was sometimes too great to be considered effective as a sanction would be enforced after a customer had changed their behaviour.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the division between the agency that instigates a possible sanction

⁴⁶ This does not include the requirement to attend regular meetings with an adviser.

⁴⁷ Similar issues about administrative burden and delays associated with the sanctioning process between contracted providers and Jobcentre Plus were reported in an evaluation of Multiple Provider Employment Zones (Policy Research Institute, 2006).

and the agency that removes (or re-instates) the benefit may have placed FND providers at a disadvantage. When customers successfully appealed to Jobcentre Plus to have a sanctioning decision overturned, FND providers were seen as the 'bad guys'. There was also some concern that customers were receiving mixed messages about their obligations to the FND provider because Jobcentre Plus ultimately controlled their benefit payments.

9.2.7 In-work support

The research with FND providers showed that in-work support was made available during the first six months of employment. This suggests that services to customers were being driven by the outcome-based payment schedule. Yet, as reported in the customer survey, the proportions receiving this service were not large. Only a small majority (54%) of people who left FND for work reported they had received any in-work contact from their provider. However, customers who did were generally satisfied with its frequency and one in four felt the contact had an influence on their work retention.

The qualitative study helped to clarify the dynamics behind in-work support. It was widely recognised that not all people who left FND for work wished to remain in contact with their provider. Providers took this into account when arranging the service, or they discontinued the service after it was communicated that the person did not want further contact. This may explain the low 'take up' of in-work support. It was also not clear from the research if all providers offered in-work support.

The nature of the support may be another explanatory factor. Providers tended to have dedicated staff with responsibility for in-work support. This meant that the service was not delivered by the customer's FND adviser, breaking continuity of support. Other research on post-employment support has identified the importance of maintaining adviser continuity through to employment in order to bring the strength of the relationship to bear on problems that may threaten job retention.⁴⁸ Furthermore, FND providers mainly communicated by telephone or email. These remote forms of contact instigated by an unfamiliar member of staff may have detracted from the perceived effectiveness of the support.

The qualitative research with customers also identified negative experiences of in-work support which might have influenced views on its usefulness. People expressed concern that regular personal calls during working hours would reflect negatively on their performance. Some were surprised about being contacted, stating there had been no prior discussion about in-work support. Still others were suspicious of the motives for maintaining contact because they understood that providers were profiting from it. Generally it was found that there had been poor communication of people's continuing role in the FNDI once they entered employment.

9.3 Conclusions

The evaluation studied staff and customer experiences on the FND, with data covering months three to 15 of programme operations. On the whole, the results reflect a programme that was still under development. It should also be noted that the announcement to terminate FND may have curtailed full implementation of the programme.

⁴⁸ Based on findings from the evaluation of the Employment Retention and Advancement demonstration. A final report is being prepared by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, Policy Studies Institute, and National Institute of Economic and Social Research and will be published by DWP in 2011.

Relative to the earlier stages of JSA services, FND was designed to place greater obligations on the jobseeker while at the same time increasing opportunities for employment support. The evaluation found little evidence to suggest that FND increased expectations on jobseekers. Customers perceived similar pressures to take part in activities in the comparison areas and most customers in the qualitative study stated that expectations for job search activities did not escalate during their time with the FND provider. The provision of more intensive advisory support was a major strength of the programme. Based on FND customer experience, the nature and frequency of advisory contact qualitatively differed from that received from Jobcentre Plus earlier in a claim and from that received by customers in comparison areas. Yet this service, along with the continuous four-week, work-related experience, fell short of expectations as set out in the guidelines for providers. There is also evidence to suggest that the choice of services on offer was narrow and did not address the full range of customer needs, contrary to what might be expected from a 'black box' approach.

9.4 Implications for future employment programmes

From these evaluation findings the following recommendations for the design of black box employment programmes can be drawn.

- **Regularly monitor the design, delivery and distribution of services across the customer spectrum to ensure minimum standards are upheld.** Monitoring will ensure that the purchasing authority gains an understanding of the 'black box' and retains information about what does and does not contribute to employment outcomes. Closer monitoring will also provide feedback on how fairly distributed services are to those with greater labour market disadvantage.
- **Understand that a minimum prescription ('black box') approach to contracting employment services does not necessarily equate to more innovation and a wider choice or variety of services.** The main observation of this research was that the intensity of advisory support varied between customers and during the 12-month period of participation. Despite limited prescription on what providers should deliver, little innovation was evident in the design and content of services. This suggests there is room to improve the match of services to customers and to develop further innovations in service design/content. This has implications for other black box employment programmes expected to serve a wide range of customer groups.
- **The nature of any ongoing relationship between providers and customers who have entered work needs to be agreed in advance on a case-by-case basis.** Under outcome-based funding, providers are incentivised to provide in-work support to those who find work. This evaluation found some positive evidence that this extra support can help mitigate issues that prevent people from staying in work. But customers did not always welcome the contact and some were sceptical of their provider's motives. Explaining to customers how providers are paid may help them to understand why providers want to give them further support after they start work. Furthermore, providers should consider using less intrusive systems for confirming the employment status of their customers.
- **An intensive period of work-related activity may not be practical or beneficial for all customers.** Although full-time work-related activity can be valuable and useful for jobseekers, it may not be practical or beneficial to make this mandatory for all customers, especially if placements do not relate to a customer's skills nor provide experience in a new field. A more flexible approach to delivery may be more effective, where the interests and circumstances of the jobseeker are considered. Furthermore, if the work-related activity takes the form of a work placement, brokers would need to manage the system so that the demand for placements does not outstrip the supply of positions within participating organisations. This is particularly relevant in a weak economy where there may be a high volume of jobseekers seeking placements.

- **Delivery models that segment the customer journey can negatively impact customer-advisers relations.** The research identified weaknesses in a segmented or staged FND delivery model in which customers transferred to different advisers or organisations at set time points during the 12-month programme period. Under this model there was limited adviser continuity, a highly-valued feature of FND. Additionally, when the mainstream FND service was delivered by different organisations, customers were required to repeatedly explain their personal circumstances to new people, which they found very unhelpful. This may have been partly due to current data protection rules which do not enhance partnership working within multi-agency service delivery.

Appendix A

Additional analysis of customers aged 50+

This appendix presents findings from the Flexible New Deal (FND) customer surveys focused just on those customers aged 50 or over. For the purposes of analysis customers have been divided into three age bands: 50-54, 55-59, and 60-64. Findings are presented for each of these three groups except where noted (the two upper age bands have been grouped together for certain question areas due to base sizes being too small for meaningful statistical analysis to be carried out) and are compared with the overall findings for the 50+ age group as well as customers aged 25-49 where relevant.

The analysis presented in this appendix covers:

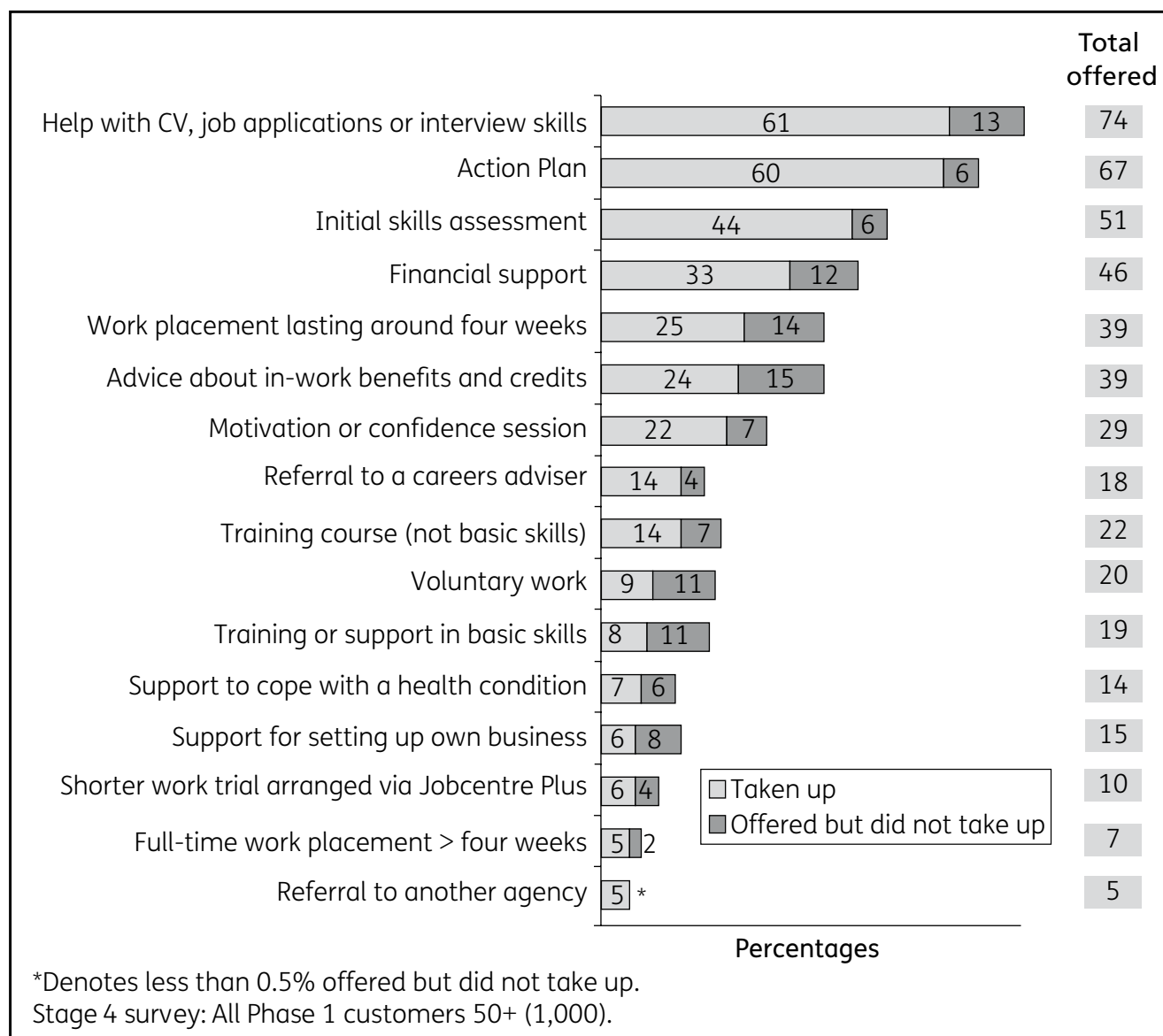
- support taken up during FND and customer views on the usefulness of the support (Figure A.1, Tables A.1–A.3);
- level and nature of adviser contact (Tables A.4–A.7);
- whether customers felt under pressure to take part in activities they felt were unsuitable (Table A.8) as well as other views on usefulness and appropriateness of the support received;
- customer destinations (Figure A.2 and Table A.9);
- whether training undertaken and possibilities for promotion or increased responsibilities in current job, salary and sector in which currently working (Tables A.10–A.13);
- health, disability and parental status (Tables A.14 and A.15).

Statistically significant differences at the 95% level are indicated on the tables (note that because of the relatively small sample sizes, many of the differences by Phase or age group seen in the tables are not statistically significant). Any differences commented on in the text are significant, at the 95% level.

Take up of support types

Figure A.1 illustrates the support types offered and taken up by customers aged 50 or over in FND Phase 1 areas (the support types are shown in descending order of commonality of being taken up by older customers). Comparison figures for all customers can be found in Chapter 3.

Figure A.1 Proportions of older customers offered and took up each FND support type



In total, around three-quarters of all older customers were offered help with CV, job applications or interview skills (making it the most commonly offered support type).

Around one in seven (14%) customers aged 50+ were offered a four-week work placement but did not take it up. A quarter did take this up.

Table A.1 shows the proportion of customers who took up each form of support offered by their FND provider broken down by detailed age group. Results are based on all customers that started FND during the survey reference period (irrespective of what they were doing at the time of the survey interview).

Findings for the 50-54, 55-59 and 60+ age groups are compared with each other and with overall findings for customers aged 25-49. The 60+ group are shown separately despite low base sizes given the statistically significant differences here between this group and the 55-59-year-olds.

Table A.1 Proportion taking up each FND support type by age (Phase 1 only)

| | 25-49 % | 50+ % | 50-54 % | 55-59 % | 60+ % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| Help with writing a CV, job applications or interview skills | 62 | 61 | 59 | 60 | 56 |
| Drawing up an Action Plan | 66 | 60 [^] | 62 | 61 | 42 [*] |
| An initial assessment of your skills | 47 | 44 | 43 | 44 | 46 |
| Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for or taking work | 39 | 33 [^] | 32 | 36 | 21 [*] |
| A work experience placement or trial organised by the FND provider lasting around four weeks | 27 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 11 [*] |
| Advice on what benefits or credits you might be entitled to once in work | 24 | 24 | 26 | 25 | 6 [*] |
| A session on motivation or confidence | 25 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 15 |
| A referral to a careers adviser | 19 | 14 [^] | 15 | 13 | 11 |
| A place on a training course at a local college or other training provider | 17 | 14 | 17 | 14 | 15 |
| Voluntary work | 6 | 9 [^] | 8 | 10 | 6 |
| Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language | 11 | 8 [^] | 8 | 8 | 2 |
| Support or advice to help you cope with any health conditions that you may have | 6 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 6 |
| Support or advice for setting up your own business | 7 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 6 |
| A Work Trial lasting less than four weeks arranged via the Jobcentre | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| A full-time work placement lasting longer than four weeks | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Referral to another agency for support or advice | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| Any other sort of advice, support or training | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Did not take up any support | 7 | 10 [^] | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| <i>Base: All customers</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Unweighted</i> | 1,002 | 1,000 | 493 | 521 | 48 |

Note: Base sizes for the 60+ group are low and findings should be treated with caution.

[^]Used to indicate a statistically significant difference at the 95% level between 25-49 and 50+ age groups.

^{*}Used to indicate a statistically significant difference at the 95% level between the 50-54, 55-59 or 60+ age group and other 50+ groups.

Customers aged 50+ were less likely to take up several support options than customers aged 25-49, including drawing up an Action Plan with their FND provider (60% of 50+ customers compared with 66% of those aged 25-49); receiving financial support to help cover the cost of looking for or taking work (33% 50+, 39% 25-49); referral to a careers adviser (14% 50+, 19% 25-49); and basic skills support or training (eight % 50+, 11% 25-49).

However, this was not true across the board: they were just as likely as 25-49-year-olds to have taken up some support types which might be considered part of the 'core' FND offer: help with a CV, job application or interview skills or an initial skills assessment (the small differences between the 25-49 and 50+ age groups for these support types are not statistically significant). All customers aged 25+ were less likely to have taken up these support types than younger customers aged 18-24, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Customers aged 50+ were slightly – but significantly – more likely than those aged 25-49 to have taken up voluntary work during FND (nine % 50+, six % 25-49).

Overall, one in ten (ten %) 50+ customers who had entered FND during the sampling period had not taken up any support at all, slightly but significantly more than 25-49-year-olds (seven %). Linked to this, on average older customers had taken up three of the different support types listed; by comparison customers aged 25-49 had taken up four different types of activities or support.

Exploring differences by specific age band within the overall 50+ group shows minimal variation in take up of FND support services between the 50-54 and 55-59 groups. However those aged 60 or over were significantly less likely to take up a range of support types, namely:

- drawing up an Action Plan (42% compared with 61% of 55-59-year-olds);
- financial support to help cover the costs of looking for or taking up work (21% compared to 36%);
- a work placement lasting around four weeks (11% compared to 26%);
- advice on in-work benefits and credits (six % compared to 25%).

Mandatory Work-Related Activity

Just over a quarter (27%) of all older customers had taken up a work placement that lasted at least four weeks. This was slightly – but not significantly – less than the proportion of 25-49-year-old customers that had taken up a placement of this nature (30%) and significantly less than the overall average when younger customers are factored in (34% of 18-24-year-olds had taken up a work placement lasting at least four weeks).

It is also possible that other activities could have qualified as an Mandatory Work-Related Activity (MWRA): a training course at a local college or provider, basic skills support or training, voluntary work and/or support for becoming self-employed (however, these activities could also have been less intensive interventions that would not qualify as MWRA so this measure is likely to be an overestimate). Overall, just over two-fifths (43%) of older customers undertook any of these activities or a work placement lasting four weeks or longer. Again, this is significantly less than average when younger customers are factored in, but only slightly and not significantly less than the proportion of 25-49-year-olds (47%).

It should be noted that when likelihood to have taken up MWRA is explored among only those customers who reached the end of a year of FND, these differences by age have largely evened out. By the end of a year of FND 44% of older customers had taken up a work placement lasting four weeks or more, which is line with the 25-49 age group (45%). The proportion of older customers doing any potential MWRA activity (i.e. including training, voluntary work and self-employment support) had risen to three-fifths (60%) by the end of FND, slightly but not significantly less than among 25-49-year-olds (64%).

Table A.2 shows patterns of take up of support in Phase 2 comparison areas where the New Deal 25 Plus (ND25+) regime was still in place.

Note: The survey reference period starts at the 13th consecutive month of claiming. Typically, customers would not start ND25+ until after 18 consecutive months of claiming.

Table A.2 Proportion taking up each support type by age in Phase 2 comparison areas

| | 25-49 % | 50+ % | 50-54 % | 55-59 % | 60+ % |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| A 12 month Restart interview with a Jobcentre Plus adviser | 35 | 28 [^] | 32 [*] | 26 | 23 |
| A training course at a local college or other training provider | 23 | 23 | 24 | 22 | 14 |
| Referral to a Gateway 2 Work course | 26 | 22 [^] | 25 | 21 | 8 [*] |
| Advice on what benefits or credits you might be entitled to once in work | 24 | 19 [^] | 18 | 21 | 12 |
| Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for or taking work | 20 | 17 | 19 | 18 | 3 [*] |
| A session on motivation or confidence | 14 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 8 |
| Referral to another agency for support or advice | 12 | 12 | 14 | 11 | 12 |
| Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language | 11 | 10 | 12 | 9 | 5 |
| Voluntary work | 9 | 10 | 11 | 11 | 4 |
| Subsidised employment – as part of a New Deal option or a recruitment subsidy voucher | 11 | 9 | 11 | 8 | 9 |
| Support or advice for setting up your own business | 7 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| A full-time work placement lasting longer than four weeks | 6 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| Support or advice to help you cope with any health conditions that you may have | 6 | 6 | 9 [*] | 5 | 0 |
| A Work Trial lasting less than four weeks arranged via the Jobcentre | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| A place on an Environment Task Force | 1 | 1 | 1 | <1 | 2 [*] |
| Did not take up any support | 21 | 28 [^] | 23 | 29 | 49 [*] |
| <i>Base: All customers</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Unweighted</i> | 1,005 | 1,000 | 490 | 485 | 75 |

[^]Used to indicate a statistically significant difference at the 95% level between 25-49 and 50+ age groups.

^{*}Used to indicate a statistically significant difference at the 95% level between the 50-54, 55-59 or 60+ age group and other 50+ groups.

Over the survey reference period (months 13 to 24 after starting a claim) just under three in ten (28%) customers aged 50+ in Phase 2 comparison areas reported that they did not take up any support at all additional to their Fortnightly Jobsearch Reviews. This is significantly higher than both the proportion of 25-49-year-olds in Phase 2 reporting this (21%), and higher than the proportion of 50+ year olds in FND Phase 1 areas who did not take up any additional support over this period (ten % – see Table A.1). In Phase 1 areas, the likelihood of not taking up any of the listed support activities increased with age within the broad 50+ group and rose to around half (49%) of all customers aged 60+.

As seen in FND Phase 1 areas, older customers were slightly less likely to have taken up several support types than customers aged 25-49 (12-month Restart interview – 28% 50+, 35% 25-49; Referral to Gateway 2 Work – 22% 50+, 26% 25-49; financial support to cover the costs of looking for or taking work – 17% 50+, 20% 25-49; advice on in-work benefits and credits – 19% 50+, 24% 25-49). However, in Phase 2 areas there was greater differentiation between those aged 50-54 and those aged 55-59 than seen under FND. Specifically, those aged 55-59 were significantly less

likely than those aged 50-54 to recall having taken up a 12-month Restart interview (26% 55-59 compared with 32% 50-54); referral to a Gateway 2 Work course (21% 55-59, 25% 50-54); and support or advice to help cope with health conditions (five % 55-59, nine % 50-54). Again, matching the picture in FND Phase 1 areas, those aged 60+ were significantly less likely to take up a range of support types.

When asked whether they were told they would be at risk of losing their benefit if they did not take up any support, older customers in Phase 1 areas were more likely to say this was the case than those in Phase 2 areas (60% Phase 1, 53% Phase 2). By contrast, there was no difference in the proportions of customers aged 25-49 reporting this (60% in both Phases).

Customer views on usefulness of the support types taken up

Table A.3 shows the proportion of customers finding each FND support type taken up useful. Findings are shown for the 55+ age group combined as base sizes are not large enough to support a separate 60+ analysis.

The table is ranked according to the support types found most useful by the 50+ group overall. Help with CV, job applications or interview skills, a full-time work placement lasting longer than four weeks and support or training with basic skills were all found useful by around two-thirds of those who had taken up the support.

Table A.3 Proportion of customers finding each FND support type taken up useful (Phase 1 only)

| | 25-49 % | 50+ % | 50-54 % | 55+ % |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Help with writing a CV, job applications or interview skills | 67 | 66 | 66 | 65 |
| A full-time work placement lasting longer than four weeks | 52 | 65 [^] | 72 | 59 [*] |
| Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language | 51 | 64 [^] | 52 | 65 [*] |
| Advice on what benefits or credits you might be entitled to once in work | 52 | 60 [^] | 67 [*] | 56 |
| Voluntary work | 51 | 59 [^] | 48 [*] | 62 |
| A session on motivation or confidence | 52 | 58 [^] | 52 | 59 [*] |
| Support or advice for setting up your own business | 53 | 54 | 42 [*] | 63 |
| Support or advice to help you cope with any health conditions that you may have | 57 | 53 | 52 | 55 |
| A Work Trial lasting less than four weeks arranged via the Jobcentre | 38 | 52 [^] | 52 | 46 |
| Referral to another agency for support or advice | 54 | 51 | 52 | 46 |
| A place on a training course at a local college or other training provider | 53 | 50 | 53 | 45 [*] |
| A work experience placement or trial organised by the Flexible New Deal provider lasting around four weeks | 51 | 50 | 47 | 52 |
| Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for or taking work | 54 | 49 [^] | 54 [*] | 46 |
| A referral to a careers adviser | 49 | 46 | 38 [*] | 54 |
| Drawing up an action plan | 47 | 45 | 43 | 45 |
| An initial assessment of your skills | 44 | 42 | 38 | 43 |

[^]Used to indicate a statistically significant difference at the 95% level between 25-49 and 50+ age groups.

^{*}Used to indicate a statistically significant difference at the 95% level between the 50-54, 55-59 or 60+ age group and other 50+ groups.

Adviser contact

Tables A.4 to A.7 show the level and nature of adviser contact for older customers in FND as well as in Phase 2 comparison areas.

Overall, in FND Phase 1 areas, two in five (40%) customers aged 50+ recalled having fewer than ten meetings with an adviser – a slightly but significantly higher proportion than among 25–49-year-olds – 35% (Table A.4). However, when looking just among those who got to the end of a year of FND support this difference by age has evened out with 25–49-year-olds and the 50+ customers equally likely to have had fewer than ten meetings (28% 25–49, 27% 50+).

Likelihood of having fewer than ten meetings was much higher in Phase 2 areas where ND25+ support was not available until 18 consecutive months of claiming for most customers: approaching two-thirds (63% of older customers recalled having fewer than ten face-to-face meetings with an adviser – comparable to the proportion of 25–49-year-olds reporting this (64%). There was relatively little significant variation across detailed age band within the 50+ group.

Reflecting the overall picture, older customers in FND Phase 1 areas were more likely to always or almost always see the same adviser over this period in FND Phase 1 areas (70%) compared with customers in Phase 2 comparison areas – 38% (see Table A.5). There was little variation in this by detailed age group and overall the 50+ age group were just as likely to always or almost always see the same adviser as those aged 25–49 in FND areas (69%).

Similarly, reflecting the overall picture (Table A.6), older customers in FND Phase 1 areas were more likely to have had some telephone, text or email contact with an adviser during this period of claiming than customers in Phase 2 comparison areas.

However, within FND areas, older customers were less likely to have received some contact of this type than customers aged 25–49 (35% had no contact of this type compared with 29% of 25–49-year-olds).

Looking at the in-work contact received by customers entering paid work after participating in some FND activity shows that older customers were just as likely to receive this as 25–49-year-olds (56% of those who had entered work in both cases).

Table A.4 Number of face-to-face adviser meetings

| | 25-49 | | | | | | All 50+ | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|----|
| | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| 1-2 | 12 | 20* | 11 | 21* | 11* | 12* | 10* | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 |
| 3-4 | 10 | 23* | 13 | 23* | 14* | 11* | 19 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 |
| 5-6 | 7 | 14* | 11 | 12 | 10 | 12 | 15 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| 7-9 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| 10-19 | 22 | 13* | 18 | 11* | 19* | 19* | 13 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 14 | 14 |
| 20-29 | 19 | 5* | 20 | 7* | 22* | 17* | 23* | 7 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 9 |
| 30-39 | 7 | 1* | 5 | 2* | 4* | 6* | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 40-49 | 3 | * | 2 | * | 3* | 2 | - | * | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 50 or more | 4 | 2* | 4 | 1* | 4* | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Cannot remember any | 6 | 11* | 7 | 12* | 5* | 8* | 6 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 9 | 9 |
| Don't know | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 7 |
| Base: All customers | 1,002 | 1,005 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 493 | 521 | 48 | 490 | 485 | 485 | 75 | 75 |
| Unweighted | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*Indicates significant difference at the 95% level between Phase 1 and 2.

Table A.5 Whether always seen same adviser

| | 25-49 | | | | | | 50+ | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|----|
| | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Always or almost always saw the same adviser | 69 | 43* | 70 | 38* | 69* | 71* | 66* | 37 | 39 | 39 | 36 | 36 |
| Saw the same adviser sometimes | 19 | 25* | 21 | 26* | 21* | 20 | 22 | 27 | 25 | 25 | 21 | 21 |
| Saw a different adviser each time | 11 | 30* | 8 | 35* | 9* | 8* | 11* | 34 | 34 | 34 | 38 | 38 |
| Don't know | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Base: All customers | 1,002 | 1,005 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 493 | 521 | 48 | 490 | 485 | 485 | 75 | 75 |
| Unweighted | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*Indicates significant difference at the 95% level between Phase 1 and 2.

Table A.6 Whether had telephone, text or email contact with an adviser during the claim period

| | 25-49 | | 50+ | | Phase 1 | | | Phase 2 | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|-----|---------|-------|-----|
| | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60+ | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60+ |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Yes, regularly, more than once a fortnight | 23 | 4* | 15 | 4* | 18* | 15* | 6 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Yes, occasionally, less than once a fortnight | 29 | 13* | 27 | 11* | 30* | 24* | 27* | 13 | 10 | 8 |
| Once or twice | 18 | 12* | 21 | 14* | 22* | 20* | 33* | 13 | 13 | 14 |
| No | 29 | 70* | 35 | 70* | 30* | 40* | 31* | 68 | 72 | 70 |
| Don't know | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| <i>Base: All customers</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Unweighted</i> | 1,002 | 1,005 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 493 | 521 | 48 | 490 | 485 | 75 |

*Indicates significant difference at the 95% level between Phase 1 and 2.

Table A.7 Contact with FND provider after starting work (Phase 1 only)

| | 25-49 % | 50+ % | 50-54 % | 55+ % |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Once | 11 | 10 | 9 | 9 |
| Twice | 12 [^] | 18 | 15 | 18 |
| Three to four times | 19 | 17 | 21 | 15 |
| Five or more times | 12 | 11 | 9 | 12 |
| Summary: Any contact | 56 | 56 | 55 | 57 |
| No contact | 44 | 44 | 44 | 43 |
| Don't know | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| <i>Base: All customers who entered work Unweighted</i> | 430 | 319 | 184 | 170 |

[^]Used to indicate a statistically significant difference at the 95% level between 25-49 and 50+ age groups.

Views on support received from FND provider/Jobcentre Plus

Table A.8 shows the extent to which customers agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘you felt under pressure to take part in activities that were not suited to your needs and circumstances’.

Overall, just under two in five (38%) of customers aged 50+ agreed that they felt under pressure in FND Phase 1 areas – an identical proportion as reported this in Phase 2 comparison areas.

Those aged 60+ were significantly less likely to report feeling under pressure and this pattern is observed in both Phases.

When asked whether they agreed or disagreed that support was offered that matched their personal needs and circumstances, half (50%) of all customers aged 50 or over in FND Phase 1 areas agreed this was the case. This is identical to the proportion of customers reporting this in Phase 2 areas but is lower than the proportion of 25–49-year-old customers in FND Phase 1 areas who agreed that they received support matched to their needs and circumstances (58%) – suggesting that older customers undergoing FND were no better or worse off in this respect than their counterparts in Phase 2 areas but did not fare as well as customers aged 25-49. Views on this did not vary by specific age group with the 50+ category in either Phase.

However, older customers in FND Phase 1 were more likely than their counterparts in Phase 2 comparison areas to report an increase in confidence (39% compared to 31%) as a result of the support received – this was true across each of the detailed 50+ age groups.

Reflecting the overall picture, when asked what other support could have been offered, older customers in FND Phase 1 areas were more likely to say ‘nothing’ than their counterparts in Phase 2 areas (42% compared to 36%). Within Phase 1 areas, likelihood of saying this increased with age (50-54 39%, 55-59 44%, 60-64 52%). Older customers that had participated in FND were most likely to have wanted more support that was tailored to their needs and abilities (14%), more general support and encouragement (13%) and more information on or a broader range of training opportunities (12%).

Whether felt under pressure

Table A.8 Extent to which agree: Felt under pressure to take part in activities not suited to their needs and circumstances

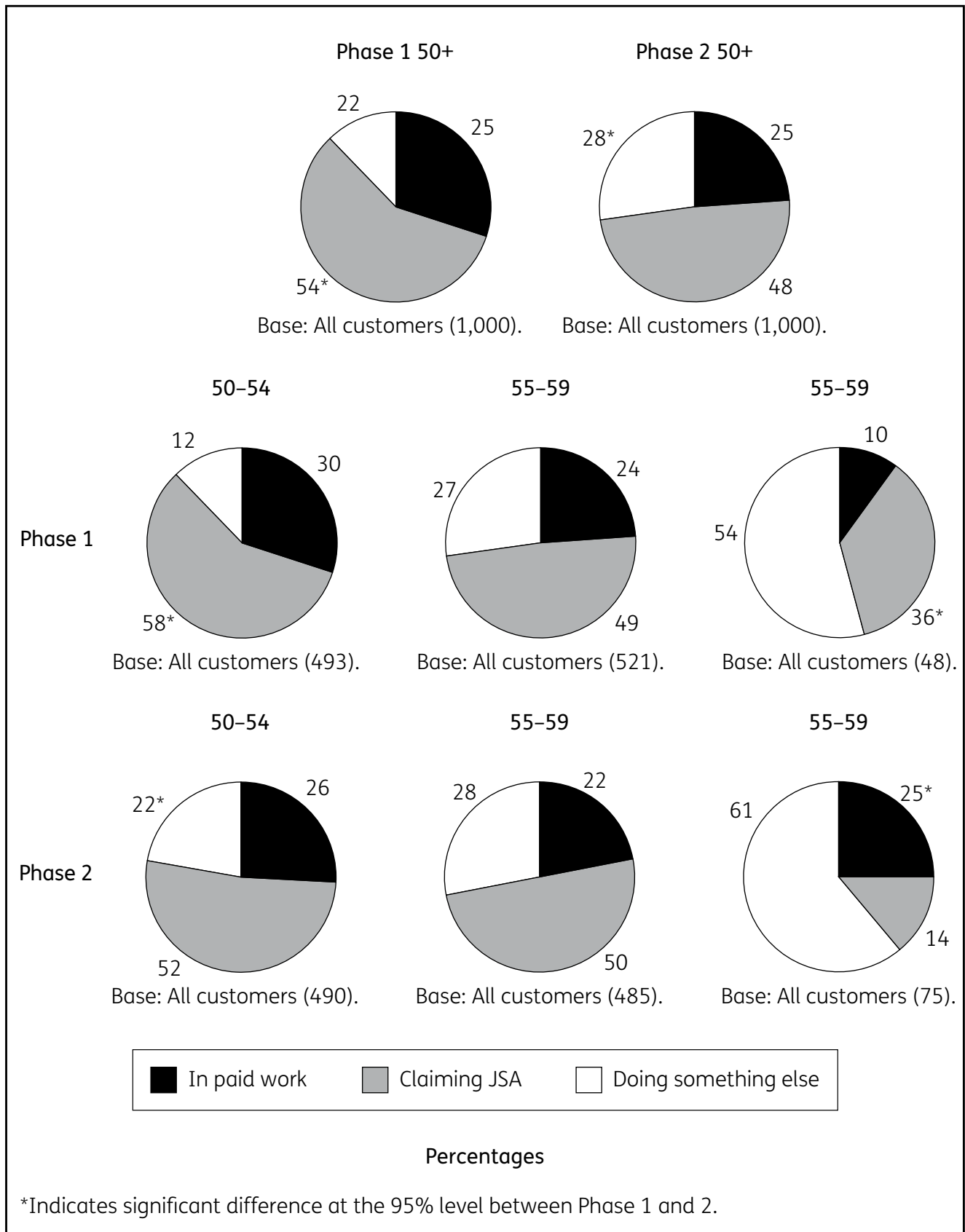
| | 25-49 | | | | | | 50+ | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|---|
| | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Strongly agree | 21 | 24 | 22 | 23 | 21 | 23 | 11 | 23 | 23 | 25 | 20 | |
| Slightly agree | 15 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 6 | 16 | 14 | 16 | 11 | |
| Summary: agree | 36 | 41* | 38 | 38 | 37 | 39 | 17 | 39 | 37 | 41 | 30 | |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 10 | 12 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 7 | |
| Slightly disagree | 23 | 21 | 23 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 39 | 23 | 22 | 18 | 24 | |
| Strongly disagree | 29 | 25* | 25 | 28 | 29 | 25 | 29 | 25 | 29 | 27 | 34 | |
| Don't know | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Base: All customers | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unweighted | 1,002 | 1,005 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 493 | 521 | 48 | 493 | 490 | 485 | 75 | |

*Indicates significant difference at the 95% level between Phase 1 and 2.

Customer destinations

Figure A.2 summarises main destinations for older customers in Phase 1 and Phase 2 (note low base sizes for customers aged 60+). Table A.9 provides more detail on employment and other destinations.

Figure A.2 Summary of destinations of customers aged 50+



Older customers were less likely to be in paid work than customers aged 25-49 in both Phases. However they were equally likely to be in paid work in Phase 1 as in Phase 2 (25% were in both cases, compared with 32% of 25-49-year-olds in Phase 1 and 31% of 25-49-year-olds in Phase 2).

In FND Phase 1 areas, likelihood to be in work (and in full-time work in particular) decreased with age within the 50+ group – from 30% of those aged 50-54 in any paid work to just ten % of those aged 60 or over. Likelihood to be in any paid work for older customers was more even across detailed age bands in Phase 2 areas and indeed a quarter (25%) of those aged 60+ were in work (though low base sizes should be noted). This difference in paid work outcomes for the 60+ group between Phases is in part explained by a higher than average proportion of customers aged 60 or over being in part-time work in Phase 2 areas compared with Phase 1 areas (14% compared to four %). It is not possible to tell from the survey findings whether the higher proportion of 60+ customers entering work in Phase 2 areas related to labour market characteristics in these areas or other reasons.

As described in Chapter 6, reflecting the overall picture for 25+-year-olds, those aged 50+ in FND areas were significantly more likely to be claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) at the time of interview than was the case in Phase 2 comparison areas (54% Phase 1, 48% Phase 2). However, this was linked to the fact that more older customers in Phase 2 areas were neither claiming nor in paid work at the time of the interview – just over a quarter (28%) compared to just over a fifth (22%) of customers in Phase 1 areas. This difference is most marked for the 60+ group where just over a third (36%) of Phase 1 60+ customers were claiming JSA at the time of the interview compared with just 14% of 60+ customers in Phase 2. These differences may reflect greater knowledge of the benefits system among Jobcentre Plus advisers compared to FND advisers meaning that older customers were more likely to be signposted or referred to benefits other than JSA in Phase 1 areas.

Linked to this, while the proportion of older customers neither claiming nor in paid work increased by age within the overall 50+ category in both Phases, older customers aged 50+ were slightly more likely to be setting up a claim for another benefit for people out of work in Phase 2 (11%) than in Phase 1 (eight %). This difference was particularly marked for those aged 60 or over (12% in Phase 2 compared with none in Phase 1).

As might be expected, proportions of those retired or claiming a pension or Pension Credit increased sharply with age, up to just over two in five (42%) of customers aged 60 or over in Phase 1 areas compared with around half (49%) of those aged 60 or over in Phase 2 areas.

Table A.9 Activity at the time of survey interview

| | 50+ | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 25-49 | | | | Phase 1 | | | | Phase 2 | | | |
| | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % |
| Currently claiming JSA | 56 | 52 | 54 | 48* | 58 | 49 | 36* | 52 | 50 | 14 | | |
| Self-employed | 5 | 6 | 4 | 6* | 6 | 4* | 0 | 4 | 7 | 5 | | |
| Working full time for an employer – 30 hours or more per week | 21 | 18 | 13 | 13 | 16 | 12 | 6 | 15 | 13 | 7 | | |
| Working part-time for an employer – less than 30 hours per week | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 14 | | |
| Retired and/or claiming a pension/ pension credit | <0.5 | <0.5 | 10 | 11 | 2* | 14 | 42 | 5 | 11 | 49 | | |
| In full-time training or education – 16 hours or more per week | 1 | 1 | <0.5 | 1 | <0.5* | <0.5* | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | | |
| In part-time training or education – 16 hours or more per week | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | |
| In the process of setting up a new claim for JSA | 1 | 1 | <0.5* | 2 | 0* | <0.5* | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | | |
| Receiving, or in the process of claiming for another benefit for people who are not working | 7 | 8 | 8 | 11 | 6* | 10 | 0* | 10 | 11 | 12 | | |
| Working for an employer in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | | |
| Summary: in paid work | 32 | 31 | 25 | 25 | 30 | 24 | 10* | 26 | 22 | 25 | | |
| Summary: in training/education | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | | |
| <i>Base: All customers</i> | <i>1,002</i> | <i>1,005</i> | <i>1,000</i> | <i>1,000</i> | <i>493</i> | <i>521</i> | <i>48</i> | <i>490</i> | <i>485</i> | <i>75</i> | | |
| <i>Unweighted</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*Indicates significant difference at the 95% level between Phase 1 and 2.

Nature of work and training/progression opportunities

Tables A.10 to A.13 outline the nature of the work entered by older customers.

There was little difference by age in likelihood of customers to have undertaken any training with their employer or any training towards a qualification (Table A.10).

However, over two-fifths (44%) of older customers in FND Phase 1 areas felt that their job offered opportunities for promotion or increased responsibility compared with less than a third (31%) of Phase 2 older customers in work. This suggests that where older customers were entering work it was more likely to be considered sustainable in FND Phase 1 areas (although it should be noted that it was still a minority of customers who considered there to be opportunities for progression or promotion). In Phase 2 areas customers aged 55+ were much less likely to feel this than those aged 50-54, whereas in Phase 1 areas customers aged 55-59 were just as likely to report potential for promotion or progression as those aged 50-54.

Older customers in FND Phase 1 areas were more likely to be employed on a permanent basis than customers aged 25-49 (59% of 50+ customers in work compared to 51% of 25-49-year-olds) and were correspondingly less likely to be in fixed-term contracts lasting less than 12 months (six % 50+ compared to 11% 25-49). They were also more likely to be employed in the charity or voluntary sector (12% 50+, four % 25-49).

Overall, across both Phases customers aged 50+ were more likely to have entered part-time work than those aged 25-49 (16% of those in work in both Phases compared with seven % 25-49 Phase 1 and ten % 25-49 Phase 2). However, underneath this overall picture is an interesting variation by detailed age group; in Phase 1 areas customers aged 50-54 were no more likely than customers aged 25-49 to be in part-time work (seven % were) but over a fifth (22%) of those aged 55 or over were. This distinction was not observed in Phase 2 areas where customers aged 50-54 were just as likely to be in part-time work as those aged 55+ (16% and 15% respectively).

Beyond this, the sector profile of jobs entered by older customers broadly matched that seen among 25-49-year-olds. On average, older customers' annual earnings were slightly less in Phase 1 areas compared to Phase 2 areas – this was true across all detailed age groups.

Table A.10 Proportion of customers training/training towards a formal qualification

| | 25-49 | | 50+ | | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | 50-54 % | 55+ % | 50-54 % | 55+ % |
| Yes – a formal recognised qualification | 9 | 8 | 11 | 7 | 12 | 8 | 8 | 6 |
| Yes – part or a unit of a recognised qualification | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Undertook training but did not lead to either full/part of a recognised qualification (or don't know) | 29 | 33 | 28 | 33 | 30 | 28 | 33 | 36 |
| Did not undertake any training with employer (or don't know) | 59 | 56 | 58 | 57 | 55 | 61 | 58 | 55 |
| <i>Base: All customers that entered work with an employer</i> | 366 | 337 | 267 | 242 | 149 | 145 | 128 | 128 |
| <i>Unweighted</i> | | | | | | | | |

Table A.11 Whether current job offers opportunities for promotion or substantially increasing responsibilities

| | 25-49 | | 50+ | | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | 50-54 % | 55+ % | 50-54 % | 55+ % |
| Yes | 59 | 55 | 44 | 31* | 44 | 45* | 41 | 26 |
| No | 38 | 37 | 52 | 66* | 53 | 51* | 54 | 73 |
| Don't know | 3 | 8* | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| <i>Base: All customers in work</i> | 269 | 266 | 222 | 194 | 120 | 123 | 99 | 104 |

*Indicates significant difference at the 95% level between Phase 1 and 2.

Employment Outcomes

Table A.12 Sector currently working in

| | 25-49 | | 50+ | | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | 50-54 % | 55+ % | 50-54 % | 55+ % |
| Primary, utilities and manufacturing | 16 | 13 | 19 | 13 | 13 | 24 | 12 | 16 |
| Construction | 12 | 12 | 11 | 12 | 14 | 8 | 10 | 13 |
| Wholesale and retail | 20 | 20 | 20 | 18 | 20 | 18 | 17 | 18 |
| Hotels and restaurants | 6 | 7 | 6 | 2* | 6 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| Transport and communications | 12 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 14 |
| Financial and business services | 18 | 19 | 18 | 24 | 19 | 19 | 24 | 21 |
| Public administration, education, health and other service activities | 15 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 15 | 19 | 15 |
| Don't know | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| <i>Base: All customers that entered work Unweighted</i> | 441 | 437 | 350 | 355 | 195 | 190 | 196 | 177 |

*Indicates significant difference at the 95% level between Phase 1 and 2.

Table A.13 Salary

| | 25-49 | | 50+ | | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | 50-54 % | 55+ % | 50-54 % | 55+ % |
| £0-£4,999 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 8 | 16 | 12 | 13 |
| £5,000-£9,999 | 19 | 19 | 23 | 15* | 26 | 21* | 12 | 17 |
| £10,000-£19,999 | 44 | 38* | 36 | 31 | 33 | 36 | 36 | 27 |
| £20,000-£29,999 | 6 | 9* | 7 | 12* | 10 | 5 | 11 | 11 |
| £30,000-£39,999 | 4 | 2* | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 |
| £40,000+ | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2* | 4 | 5 |
| Unable to calculate salary | 3 | 5* | 2 | 6* | 4 | 1* | 3 | 9 |
| Don't know | <0.5 | 1 | <0.5 | 1 | <0.5 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Refused | 14 | 13 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 14 | 11 |
| Annual mean salary [^] | £11,200 | £11,325 | £10,375 | £12,475 | £10,575 | £10,375 | £13,425 | £12,500 |
| Base: All in paid work | | | | | | | | |
| Unweighted | 430 | 412 | 319 | 327 | 184 | 170 | 179 | 165 |

[^]Annual mean salary rounded to the nearest £50.

*Indicates significant difference at the 95% level between Phase 1 and 2.

Health, disability and caring responsibilities

Tables A.14 and A.15 show the proportions of customers in this age group with a health condition or disability as well as an indication of caring responsibilities.

Around three in ten customers had an illness or disability, and one in ten was the parent or guardian of a child under 16.

Table A.14 Whether have an illness or disability

| | 25-49 | | 50+ | | Phase 1 | | | Phase 2 | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|-------|---------|---------|-------|
| | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | Phase 1 % | Phase 2 % | 50-54 % | 55-59 % | 60+ % | 50-54 % | 55-59 % | 60+ % |
| Yes | 20 | 20 | 28 | 32* | 27* | 29 | 25 | 33 | 32 | 22 |
| No | 80 | 80 | 71 | 68 | 72 | 71 | 75 | 67 | 67 | 78 |
| Base: All customers Unweighted | 1,002 | 1,005 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 493 | 521 | 48 | 490 | 485 | 75 |

*Indicates significant difference at the 95% level between Phase 1 and 2.

Table A.15 Whether the parent or guardian of a child under 16

| | 25-49 | | 50+ | | Phase 1 | | | Phase 2 | | |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|-----|---------|-------|-----|
| | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60+ | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60+ |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Yes | 30 | 35* | 9 | 10 | 12 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 6 | 4 |
| No | 70 | 65* | 90 | 90 | 87 | 91 | 92 | 84 | 94 | 96 |
| <i>Base: All customers</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Unweighted</i> | 1,002 | 1,005 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 493 | 521 | 48 | 490 | 485 | 75 |

*Indicates significant difference at the 95% level between Phase 1 and 2.

Appendix B

Survey sampling, fieldwork outcomes and weighting

B.1 Sampling

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) drew customer records from those in Phase 1 districts who entered the Flexible New Deal (FND) (i.e. had been claiming for more than 52 weeks) between weeks commencing 30 November 2009 and 8 March 2010, and an equal number of records of those customers who had claimed for 52 weeks by the same point in Phase 2. The selection of Phase 1 records was based on data from the meetings database, and Phase 2 on data from the benefits database, both administered by Jobcentre Plus. The timing of data delivery dictated data sources.

A total of 34,643 customer records were supplied to IFF research by the DWP. Around three % of records supplied were excluded from the sampling frame as it would not have been possible to contact them (no valid telephone numbers), leaving 33,680 usable records.

For the purposes of the main stage survey measures were taken to ensure that customers interviewed were just coming up to or had only recently finished FND/equivalent provision. Therefore, the sampling window was narrowed as detailed in the table below.

Table B.1 Sampling frame by age

| Age band | Dates entered FND/equivalent point in Phase 2 |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Under 25s | 18 December 2009 – 12 March 2010 |
| 25-49 | 4 January 2010 – 12 February 2010 |
| 50+ | 4 January 2010 – 12 March 2010 |

This drawn sample was then checked to ensure it was distributed evenly across Phase. Finally the profile in terms of gender, ethnicity, health/disability status, and district was compared to that of the customer population within each Phase to ensure it was an accurate reflection.

B.2 Opt out and fieldwork outcomes

All 33,680 customers for whom IFF held useable contact details were given the opportunity to opt-out of the study prior to being contacted by telephone. Letters were sent out which gave a dedicated phone number at IFF that they could call if they did not wish to be contacted further. Less than one % of those drawn in each Phase informed us they did not want to participate following their receipt of the opt-out letter.

The remaining 33,609 were, therefore, available to be approached during the fieldwork. Table B.2 below shows the final fieldwork outcomes for those with definite outcomes. It excludes those left with no specific outcome (e.g. those called but not answered, those who asked to be called another time or who were not contacted because Phase/age quotas were filled).

The ‘unreachable’ sample includes those with invalid or out-of-date telephone numbers, those who would not be available before the end of the fieldwork, had moved abroad, were in prison, or were deceased. The ‘unable to participate’ category includes customers who were unable to take part in the survey due to health or language reasons. The refused category shows customers who did not want to participate or quit during the interview. The overall response rate was 74% (completes as a percentage of completes plus refusals).

Table B.2 Stage 2 Fieldwork outcomes

| | All those called with a definite outcome % |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Unreachable | 42 |
| Unable to participate | 1 |
| Refused | 15 |
| Screened out | 1 |
| Completes | 41 |
| <i>Base: All records with definite outcome</i> | 14,536 |

Before commencing an interview customers were asked to confirm that they had started a claim for Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) within a specified date range (refer to Table C.1). One % of those who began an interview were screened out at this stage as they disagreed with the details held by the Jobcentre Plus (they either reported that they had never received JSA at all, or that they had started claiming JSA at some point but not within the specified timeframe, or that they had started a claim for a different benefit, not JSA in the specified timeframe).

B.3 Completed interviews

Six thousand and nine interviews were conducted, split evenly across each Phase/age cell as detailed in Table B.3.

Table B.3 Achieved interviews by Phase and age

| FND | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | ALL |
|------------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Under 25 | 1,002 | 1,000 | 2,002 |
| 25 – 49 | 1,002 | 1,005 | 2,007 |
| 50 or over | 1,000 | 1,000 | 2,000 |
| All | 3,004 | 3,005 | 6,009 |

B.4 Permission to link data

The vast majority of customers interviewed (95%) were happy to have their records linked to administrative data held by the DWP.

B.5 Weighting

There were two stages to the weighting process for the FND survey. The 50+ age group were over sampled to ensure sufficient sample will be available in each Phase for the longitudinal element, so initially a design weight was applied to correct for this and align the age profile with the age profile of the population in each Phase.

Secondly, non-response rates for customer types within each Phase were analysed resulting in a response weight being applied to correct for response bias by ethnicity. Gender and health/disability status were also checked but no weighting was required as the achieved sample closely matched the population on these variables. The weighted profile of customers in each Phase is presented in Appendices D, E and F.

Appendix C

Survey profile of customers

The first two columns of Table C.1 show the profile of those interviewed in the Flexible New Deal (FND) survey within Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas, based on demographics reported by customers rather than on information supplied by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on the sample frame (as the data available from DWP administrative records was not always complete).

This data has been weighted to align the profile of those within each Phase to the overall population within the Phase as discussed above. Profiles are broadly similar between Phase 1 and Phase 2. The only notable differences were as follows:

- A higher proportion of 18–24-year-olds in Phase 1 (35% in Phase 1 compared to 29% in Phase 2).
- A higher percentage of customers from a white British ethnic background in Phase 1 compared to Phase 2 (86% compared with 80%).
- A higher proportion of customers in Phase 1 living rent free (28% in Phase 1 and 25% in Phase 2).
- A higher proportion of Phase 2 who are married (14% in Phase 1 and 17% in Phase 2).

Throughout the report findings have been analysed by these subgroups within each Phase, and significant differences reported where relevant with both Phase 1 and Phase 2.

As customer profile is based on that reported by customers during the questionnaire, there are some small differences when compared to the demographics supplied by the DWP on the sample.

The third column of Table C.1 shows the population figures provided by the DWP for all those starting claims in the specified timeframe as the sample used for this study. The population is broken down by age, gender, ethnicity and disability. Numbers provided were rounded by the DWP. Following the weighting there were no significant differences between the overall profile of those interviewed and the profile of the entire population starting claims in those weeks in terms of gender, age, ethnicity or disability.

Table C.1 Weighted customer profile within Phase

| | Phase 1 Customers – reported % | Phase 2 Customers – reported % | All – DWP population figures % |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Age | | | |
| Under 25 | 35 | 29 | 33 |
| 25-49 | 40 | 46 | 43 |
| 50+ | 24 | 24 | 24 |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 77 | 77 | 78 |
| Female | 23 | 23 | 22 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| White British | 86* | 80 | 79 |
| White Irish | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| White other | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Mixed white and black Caribbean | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Mixed white and black African | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Mixed white and Asian | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or black British Caribbean | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Black or black British African | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Black or black British Other | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British Indian | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Asian or Asian British Pakistani | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Asian or Asian British other | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other ethnic background | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Whether claimed Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) prior to FND timeframe | | | |
| Yes | 63 | 62 | N/A |
| No | 37 | 38 | N/A |
| Whether living with partner who claims JSA or other out-of-work benefit | | | |
| Partner claims out-of-work benefit | 8 | 8 | N/A |
| Partner does not claim out-of-work benefit/ no partner | 91 | 92 | N/A |
| Whether currently suffering from long-term illness/disability | | | |
| Suffering from long-term illness or disability | 19 | 21 | 23 |
| Not suffering from long-term illness or disability | 81 | 79 | 77 |

Continued

Table C.1 Continued

| | Phase 1 Customers – reported % | Phase 2 Customers – reported % | All – DWP population figures % |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Barriers to claiming | | | |
| Recently left prison, on probation, or community service | 3 | 4 | N/A |
| Former member of the UK armed services | 3 | 3 | N/A |
| Neither of these barriers | 93 | 92 | N/A |
| Whether living with... | | | |
| A parent (including adopted parent or step parent) | 34 | N/A | N/A |
| Have any children or step-children aged 18 or over living with you | 6 | N/A | N/A |
| Neither | 60 | N/A | N/A |
| Parent claiming JSA | 2 | N/A | N/A |
| Children aged over 18 claiming JSA | 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Housing situation | | | |
| Own property outright | 5 | 5 | N/A |
| Paying mortgage | 10 | 13 | N/A |
| Live rent free | 28 | 25* | N/A |
| Rent | 33 | 35 | N/A |
| Rent covered by Housing Benefit | 21 | 20 | N/A |
| Qualifications | | | |
| No qualifications | 34 | 33 | N/A |
| Highest qualification – below Level 1 (entry level) | 5 | 5 | N/A |
| Highest qualification – Level 1 | 13 | 13 | N/A |
| Highest qualification – Level 2 | 24 | 23 | N/A |
| Highest qualification – Level 3 | 11 | 11 | N/A |
| Highest qualification – Level 4 | 9 | 10 | N/A |
| Highest qualification – Level 5 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| Unknown Level | 0 | 1 | N/A |
| Parental status | | | |
| No children under 16 | 80 | 77 | N/A |
| Parent or guardian of child under 16 | 20 | 23 | N/A |
| Parent or guardian of child under 5 | 11 | 11 | N/A |
| Lone parent of child under 16 | 3 | 3 | N/A |
| Sexual orientation | | | |
| Heterosexual/straight | 95 | 95 | N/A |
| Gay man | 1 | 1 | N/A |
| Gay woman/lesbian | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| Bi-sexual | 1 | 1 | N/A |
| Other | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| Prefer not to say | 3 | 3 | N/A |

Continued

Table C.1 Continued

| | Phase 1 Customers – reported % | Phase 2 Customers – reported % | All – DWP population figures % |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Marital or same-sex civil partnership status | | | |
| Single | 59 | 56 | N/A |
| In a relationship but never married and never registered a same-sex civil partnership | 13 | 13 | N/A |
| Married | 14 | 17* | N/A |
| Separated, but still legally married | 3 | 3 | N/A |
| Divorced | 9 | 9 | N/A |
| Widowed | 1 | 1 | N/A |
| In a registered same-sex civil partnership | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| Surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| Refused | 1 | 1 | N/A |
| Religion | | | |
| Christian (including Church of England/Scotland, Catholic, Protestant, and all other Christian denominations) | 49 | 49 | N/A |
| Buddhist | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| Hindu | 1 | 1 | N/A |
| Jewish | | | N/A |
| Muslim | 4 | 6* | N/A |
| Sikh | 0 | 1 | N/A |
| Other | 2 | 2 | N/A |
| No religion | 42 | 40 | N/A |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | 2 | N/A |
| <i>Base: *All respondents in study (weighted)</i> | | | |
| <i>^All customers starting a claim within FND timeframe</i> | 3,004* | 3,005* | ^18,160 |

Table C.2 Jobcentre Plus districts in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of JRFND⁴⁹

| Phase One | Phase Two |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Ayrshire, Dumfries, Galloway & Inverclyde | Essex |
| Edinburgh, Lothian & Borders | Hampshire |
| Lanarkshire & Dumbarton | North & North East London |
| Tees Valley | City and East London |
| North & East Yorkshire and The Humber | South London |
| Greater Manchester East & West | West London |
| Greater Manchester Central | South Tyne & Wear Valley |
| Derbyshire | Cumbria |
| South Yorkshire | Cheshire & Warrington |
| South East Wales | Lancashire |
| North & Mid Wales | West of England |
| Coventry & Warwickshire | West Yorkshire |
| Staffordshire | Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside |
| The Marches | Glasgow |
| Leicestershire & Northamptonshire | Highlands, Islands, Clyde Coast & Grampian |
| Nottinghamshire | Greater Merseyside |
| Lincolnshire & Rutland | Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire |
| Suffolk & Cambridgeshire | Liverpool & Wirral |
| Norfolk | Northumbria |
| Birmingham & Solihull | Berks, Bucks & Oxfordshire |
| Black Country | Gloucestershire & Wiltshire |
| South West Wales | Somerset & Dorset |
| South Wales Valleys | |
| Central London | |
| Lambeth, Southwark & Wandsworth | |
| Kent | |
| Surrey & Sussex | |
| Cornwall & Devon | |

⁴⁹ This does not reflect the current organisation of Jobcentre Plus districts.

Appendix D

Survey invitation/opt-out letter

Dear _____

Survey about your experiences of claiming Jobseeker's Allowance

I am writing to ask for your help with an important research study which has been commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The aim of this research is to talk to people about their experiences of claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and what they think about the help they have received from Jobcentre Plus (part of DWP) and any other organisations. Your name has been selected from records of people who have claimed JSA within the last two years. We are keen to speak to you regardless of whether you are now working, claiming benefit, retired or doing something else.

This research will be carried out on our behalf by IFF Research, an independent research agency. IFF will be conducting a telephone survey with a random selection of customers in December 2010. Under the terms of the Data Protection Act, 1998, we are permitted to give your information to other organisations for the use of research and statistics.

If you are selected IFF will be in contact over the next few weeks to see if you are able to help us with this study – you do not need to respond to this letter. Telephone interviews will last around 15 minutes and can take place at a time that is convenient to you.

Anything you tell the researchers will be held in the strictest confidence. The findings of the study will not identify you, and no personal information will be passed to anyone outside the research team and the Department for Work and Pensions research team. Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary and will not affect any benefits you receive either now or in the future.

If you do not wish to take part, please let IFF know by calling the freephone number **08000 147 353**, leaving your name and quoting the **reference number** at the top of this letter before Sunday XX December. If you have any questions about the research process, please call a member of the research team at IFF Research on 0207 098 3982.

If you are contacted by IFF Research I hope you will take the opportunity to contribute. The information you provide will allow us to improve the help and support we give to unemployed people in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Garlick
Department for Work and Pensions

Appendix E

FND/comparison survey questionnaire

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| STAGE: SURVEY | |
| STAGE 1/COMPARISON | 1 |
| STAGE 2/COMPARISON | 2 |
| STAGE 3/COMPARISON | 3 |
| FND/COMPARISON | 4 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| PHASE: RECORD PHASE FROM SAMPLE | |
| Phase One | 1 |
| Phase Two | 2 |
| | |
| | |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| AGE: RECORD AGE FROM SAMPLE | |
| 18-24 | 1 |
| 25-49 | 2 |
| 50+ | 3 |
| | |
| | |

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

ASK FOR NAMED RESPONDENT

- S1. Good morning/afternoon, my name is _____. I work for IFF RESEARCH, an independent research company currently conducting a project on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions. We are talking to people who have claimed Jobseeker’s Allowance to find out what they think about the services they have received from Jobcentre Plus and other organisations. We would like to speak to you regardless of whether you are now working, claiming benefit or doing something else. You may recall receiving a letter about the survey?

If you wish to take part the interview will take around 15 minutes to complete, depending on your answers.

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY

The interview will take around 15 minutes to complete

The interview will be conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

Your name has been randomly selected from Jobcentre Plus records of people who recently claimed Jobseeker’s Allowance

The survey is intended to find out people’s views about the support they receive from Jobcentre Plus and other organisations and about what people do after they stop claiming benefits or change the benefit they are claiming

We would like to speak to people who are claiming or have claimed Jobseeker’s Allowance

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We would like to speak to you regardless of whether you are now claiming benefit, working, or doing something else

Completing the survey will not affect your benefits or other dealings with DWP or Jobcentre Plus, either now or in the future

All responses will be treated with the strictest confidence under the guidelines of the Market Research Society

Contact at IFF is Katharina Boehmker on 0207 250 3035

If necessary contact at DWP is Matthew Garlick on 0114 294 8217, refer to IFF contacts first

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------|
| Continue | 1 | GO TO A1 |
| Definite appointment | 2 | MAKE DEFINITE APPOINTMENT/SOFT CALL BACK |
| Soft appointment | 3 | THANK AND CLOSE |
| Refusal | 4 | |
| Not available in deadline | 5 | |
| Respondent not known at address | 6 | |
| Respondent has died | 7 | |
| Respondent is in prison | 8 | |
| Respondent is living outside the UK | 9 | |
| Respondent unable to participate due to health/disability (please specify) | 10 | GO TO LANGUAGE TEXT |
| Respondent cannot complete interview in English (please specify preferred language if possible) | 11 | |

LANGUAGE TEXT IF RESPONDENT ABLE TO SPECIFY LANGUAGE

We will try our best to call back soon with an interviewer who can speak this language and help you to complete the survey.

THANK AND CLOSE

SECTION A: CONFIRMING STATUS WHEN CLAIM STARTED

ASK IF PHASE 2

A1a. First of all, could you confirm that you started a claim for Jobseeker’s Allowance or had a New Jobseeker’s Interview for a new claim sometime around [MONTH AND YEAR OF CLAIM START DATE]?

ADD IF NECESSARY: For the moment it does not matter whether you are still claiming, how long the claim was for or if you have now stopped, please could you just confirm if you did start a claim for Jobseeker’s Allowance in [MONTH AND YEAR OF CLAIM START DATE]

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Yes – started claim for JSA sometime around [MONTH AND YEAR] | 1 | GOTO A2 |
| Started claim for JSA but not sure it was in [MONTH AND YEAR] | 2 | GO TO A1C |
| Started benefit claim or received benefit in [MONTH AND YEAR] but not JSA | 3 | THANK AND CLOSE |
| Never started a benefit claim or received benefits | 4 | |
| Tried to start a claim but not eligible or did not receive payment | 5 | |

ASK IF PHASE 1

A1b. First of all, could you confirm that you were referred to a Flexible New Deal provider sometime around [MONTH AND YEAR OF ENTERED FND DATE]?

ADD AS NECESSARY:

The Flexible New Deal involves being referred to another organisation separate from Jobcentre Plus for more help to find a job. You would only go to the Jobcentre to sign on, instead receiving support from a different organisation based at a different location.

You might also know this as ‘Stage 4’

The provider MIGHT have been called [INSERT FND PROVIDER FROM SAMPLE]

It does not matter whether you are still registered with them, whether or not this was your first referral to them, how long you went there for or if you have now stopped going, please could you just confirm if you were referred to Flexible New Deal provider sometime around [MONTH AND YEAR OF ENTERED FND DATE]

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Yes – was referred to Flexible New Deal provider sometime around [MONTH AND YEAR] | 1 | GOTO A2 |
| Referred to FND provider but not sure it was in [MONTH AND YEAR] | 2 | GO TO A1C |
| Have never been referred to a Flexible New Deal provider | 3 | THANK AND CLOSE |

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A1bi And can you confirm the name of your Flexible New Deal provider, are they called [INSERT FND PROVIDER FROM SAMPLE] or do you know them by another name?

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------|---|---------|
| Yes – [INSERT FND PROVIDER FROM SAMPLE] | 1 | GOTO A2 |
| Know them by another name [PLEASE SPECIFY] | 2 | |
| Don't know | 3 | |

CATI INSTRUCTION DERIVE FND PROVIDER TEXT SUBS FROM A1BI

If A1Bi/DK, then text sub = “your FND provider”

ASK IF PHASE 2 AND DISAGREES WITH SAMPLE NJI MONTH (A1a=2)

A1c. We understand from our records that you were claiming Jobseeker’s Allowance in [MONTH AND YEAR FROM SAMPLE]. Roughly when did you start THAT PARTICULAR CLAIM for Jobseeker’s Allowance?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: We are asking when they started the claim that they were still on in [MONTH OF ATTENDED INTERVIEW DATE], it doesn’t matter if this isn’t their most recent claim.

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----|--|
| Before October 2008 | 1 | |
| October 2008 | 2 | |
| November 2008 | 3 | |
| December 2008 | 4 | |
| January 2009 | 5 | |
| February 2009 | 6 | |
| March 2009 | 7 | |
| April 2009 | 8 | |
| May 2009 | 9 | |
| After May 2009 | 10 | |
| Don't know/can't remember (DO NOT READ OUT) | 11 | |
| Refused (DO NOT READ OUT) | 12 | |

ASK IF PHASE 1 AND DISAGREES WITH SAMPLE FND MONTH (A1B=2)

A1d. Roughly when were you referred to [FND PROVIDER FROM A1BI]?

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----|--|
| Before October 2009 | 1 | |
| October 2009 | 2 | |
| November 2009 | 3 | |
| December 2009 | 4 | |
| January 2010 | 5 | |
| February 2010 | 6 | |
| March 2010 | 7 | |
| April 2010 | 8 | |
| May 2010 | 9 | |
| After May 2010 | 10 | |
| Don't know/can't remember (DO NOT READ OUT) | 11 | |
| Refused (DO NOT READ OUT) | 12 | |

CATI INSTRUCTION FOR ALL FUTURE [MONTH AND YEAR OF CLAIM START DATE/DATE ENTERED FND] TEXT SUBS

IF A1A=1 USE MONTH AND YEAR FROM SAMPLE CLAIM START DATE

IF A1B=1 USE MONTH AND YEAR FROM SAMPLE ENTERED FND DATE

IF A1A=2 USE MONTH AND YEAR GIVEN AT A1C

IF A1B=2 USE MONTH AND YEAR GIVEN AT A1D

ASK ALL

A2. Had you ever claimed Jobseeker's Allowance BEFORE [MONTH AND YEAR OF CLAIM START DATE]?

ADD IF NECESSARY: If you started to set up a claim but did not receive payment please count this as 'no'

| | | |
|-----|---|----------|
| Yes | 1 | CONTINUE |
| No | 2 | ASK A4 |

A3 DELETED

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ASK ALL

A4. In the period IMMEDIATELY before you started claiming for Jobseeker's Allowance on or around [MONTH AND YEAR] had you been claiming any of the following benefits (READ OUT)?

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Income Support | 1 |
| Incapacity Benefit | 2 |
| Employment and Support Allowance | 3 |
| Any other benefit (SPECIFY) | 4 |
| (DO NOT READ OUT) None/don't know | 5 |

IF INCOME SUPPORT

A5. In [MONTH AND YEAR OF CLAIM START DATE] approximately how long had you been claiming Income Support?

EXACT IF POSSIBLE:

_____ weeks

_____ months (MAX 99)

IF DON'T KNOW: Would you say it was...READ OUT

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Less than a month | 1 |
| Less than 3 months | 2 |
| Less than 6 months | 3 |
| Less than 12 months | 4 |
| 12 months or more | 5 |
| Don't know | X |

SECTION B: CURRENT SITUATION/OUTCOME

ASK ALL

B1. Are you currently claiming or continuing to sign on for Jobseeker’s Allowance?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: If no longer signing on at the Jobcentre but are going to a different organisation for Flexible New Deal support but still receive the weekly JSA payment code ‘yes’ here

INTERVIEWER NOTE: If they are receiving a training allowance instead which is the same amount as Jobseeker’s Allowance code ‘yes’ here

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------|---|----------|
| Yes – receiving JSA (or training allowance) | 1 | CONTINUE |
| No | 2 | GO TO B4 |

ASK IF STILL CLAIMING (B1=1)

B2. Can I just check, has there been any period between [MONTH AND YEAR OF CLAIM START DATE] and now when you haven’t claimed Jobseeker’s Allowance?

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Yes – one period | 1 | CONTINUE |
| Yes – more than one period | 2 | |
| No – claimed continually | 3 | |
| Don’t know | 4 | THANK AND CLOSE |

ASK IF PHASE 1 AND CURRENTLY CLAIMING (B1/1)

B3. Can you tell us whether you are...

READ OUT, SINGLECODE

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----------|
| Still seeing a Flexible New Deal Provider and don’t currently need to sign on at the Jobcentre | 1 | CONTINUE |
| Seeing both Flexible New Deal Provider and signing on/ having appointments at Jobcentre Plus | 2 | |
| ONLY signing on or having appointments at Jobcentre Plus and no longer have contact with a Flexible New Deal provider | 3 | |

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ASK IF NOT CLAIMING NOW OR HAD BREAK (B1=2 OR B2=1 OR 2)

B4. When did you end the claim for Jobseeker's Allowance you started on [MONTH AND YEAR OF CLAIM START DATE]?

IF PHASE 1: We are interested in the claim that you were on when you were referred to [FND PROVIDER FROM A1BI] in [MONTH AND YEAR OF ENTERED FND DATE]. When did you end this claim?

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----|--|
| June 2009 | 1 | |
| July 2009 | 2 | |
| August 2009 | 3 | |
| September 2009 | 4 | |
| October 2009 | 5 | |
| November 2009 | 6 | |
| December 2009 | 7 | |
| January 2010 | 8 | |
| February 2010 | 9 | |
| March 2010 | 10 | |
| April 2010 | 11 | |
| May 2010 | 12 | |
| June 2010 | 13 | |
| July 2010 | 14 | |
| August 2010 | 15 | |
| September 2010 | 16 | |
| October 2010 | 17 | |
| November 2010 | 18 | |
| December 2010 | 19 | |
| January 2011 | 20 | |
| Don't know/can't remember (DO NOT READ OUT) | 21 | |
| Refused (DO NOT READ OUT) | 22 | |

B4A DELETED

ASK IF NOT CLAIMING NOW OR HAD BREAK AND ABLE TO GIVE MONTH ENDED ((B1=2 OR B2=1 OR 2) AND B4 NOT DK/REF)

B4B Could you tell me which week in [MONTH AND YEAR FROM B4] you ended the claim for Jobseeker’s Allowance you started on [MONTH AND YEAR OF CLAIM START DATE]?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY. CODE ONE ONLY.

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------|---|--|
| First week | 1 | |
| Second week | 2 | |
| Third week | 3 | |
| Fourth week | 4 | |
| Fifth week | 5 | |
| Don’t know/can’t remember (DO NOT READ OUT) | 6 | |
| Refused (DO NOT READ OUT) | 7 | |

CATI DUMMY VARIABLE

FOR TEXT SUBS (ALL SINGLE CODE)

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Claiming currently – continuous claim | 1 | B1=1 AND B2=3 |
| Claiming currently – break in claim | 2 | B1=1 AND B2=1-2 |
| Not currently claiming | 3 | B1=2 |

IF NOT CURRENTLY CLAIMING (B1=2)

B5. Could you tell me whether you are currently . . . ?

READ OUT

B5H ONLY - INTERVIEWER NOTE:

Code Yes for Income Support, Incapacity Benefit or Employment and Support Allowance.

Code No for Tax Credits or Pension/Pension Credits only.

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| self employed | 1 | 2 |
| working full time for an employer in a paid role - 30 hours or more per week | 1 | 2 |
| working part time for an employer in a paid role – less than 30 hours per week | 1 | 2 |
| retired and/or claiming a pension/pension credit | 1 | 2 |
| in full time training or education – 16 hours or more per week | 1 | 2 |
| in part time training or education – less than 16 hours per week | 1 | 2 |
| in the process of making a new claim for JSA | 1 | 2 |
| receiving, or in the process of claiming another benefit for people who are not working | 1 | 2 |
| working for an employer in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship | 1 | 2 |

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IF YES TO MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF B5A-C=1)

B5X Which of these would you consider your main job?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY. CODE ONE ONLY.

| | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| SHOW ALL B5A-C=1 | 1 | |
| etc | 2 | |

IF YES TO MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF B5A-C=1)

READ OUT: Throughout the rest of the survey please think just about this main job or role when answering questions.

IF NOT CURRENTLY CLAIMING JSA [B1=2]

B6. Are you currently looking for [IF WORKING (B5A-C=1): other] paid work?

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |

IF NOT DOING ANY OF ABOVE [B5A-I ALL=2]

B7. Why are you not claiming?

DO NOT READ OUT – CODE AS APPROPRIATE. PROBE FULLY.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT GIVES ANSWER AVAILABLE AT B5, RETURN AND CODE IT THERE.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|--|
| Partner's status changed | 1 | |
| Became ill/went to hospital | 2 | |
| Decided not to claim | 3 | |
| Did not like JCP service | 4 | |
| Began living with partner | 5 | |
| Told no longer eligible/benefit stopped | 6 | |
| Went to prison | 7 | |
| Partner started claiming on respondent's behalf | 8 | |
| Moved house | 9 | |
| Went overseas | 10 | |
| Full time carer | 11 | |
| Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) | 12 | |
| Don't know | 13 | |

ASK IF SETTING UP OR CLAIMING ANOTHER BENEFIT (B5H=1)

B8. Which benefit are you receiving or in the process of claiming for now?

DO NOT READ OUT – MULTI CODE

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Income Support | 1 | |
| Employment and Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit | 2 | |
| Carer's Allowance | 3 | |
| Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) | 4 | |
| (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know | x | |

SECTION C: ESTABLISHING IF ANY WORK OUTCOME

IF NOT CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK OR HAD A BREAK BUT NOW CLAIMING AGAIN ((B5A=2 AND B5B=2 AND B5C=2) OR (B2=1 OR 2))

C1. AT ANY POINT SINCE ending your JSA claim on/in [END DATE] have you been...

READ OUT

CATI INSTRUCTION: Do not show current activities (if B5E=1 do not show C1E etc).

| | Yes | No |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| self employed | 1 | 2 |
| working full time for an employer in a paid role – 30 hours or more per week | 1 | 2 |
| working part time for an employer in a paid role – less than 30 hours per week | 1 | 2 |
| THERE IS NO CODE D | 1 | 2 |
| in full time training or education – 16 hours or more per week | 1 | 2 |
| in part time training or education – less than 16 hours per week | 1 | 2 |
| THERE IS NO CODE G | 1 | 2 |
| THERE IS NO CODE H | 1 | 2 |
| working for an employer in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship | 1 | 2 |

IF WORKED AT SOME POINT AFTER CLAIM (ANY OF C1A-C OR I=1)

C2. Have you had one [IF HAD EMPLOYER (C1B OR C=1): job [IF WORKED FOR AN EMPLOYER AND SELF EMPLOYED (C1A=1 AND (B=1 OR C=1): or] [IF SELF EMPLOYED (C1A=1): period of self employment] since [END DATE] or more than one?

IF C1A=1 SHOW: INTERVIEWER NOTE: For self employed count different projects/contracts as ONE period unless doing a new role/set up a new business.

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| One | 1 | |
| More than one (please specify number) | 2 | |

CATI DUMMY VARIABLE

FOR TEXT SUBS

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Working now | 1 | B5A OR B OR C=1 |
| Worked after ending claim but not now - one job | 2 | (C1A OR B OR C =1) AND C2=1 |
| Worked since ending claim but not now - more than one job | 3 | (C1A OR B OR C =1) AND C2=2 |
| Unpaid role | 4 | (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=1)) |
| WORKING/WORKED | 5 | (B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A OR B OR C =1) |
| MAIN/MOST RECENT ACTIVITY: Self employed | 6 | (B5X=1 OR D1X=1) OR (B5A=1 AND B5B=2 AND B5C=2) OR (C1A=1 AND C1B=2 AND C1C=2) |
| MAIN/MOST RECENT ACTIVITY: Working for an employer | 7 | (B5X=2 OR 3 OR D1X=2 OR 3) OR ((B5B=1 OR B5C=1) AND (B5A=2)) OR ((C1B=1 OR C1C=1) AND CA=2) |

SECTION D: EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

CATI INSTRUCTION FOR CURRENT WORKERS THROUGH SECTIONS D AND E:

IF CURRENTLY DO MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF B5A-C=1) ONLY FOLLOW ROUTING AND TEXT SUBS FOR MAIN TYPE AS RECORDED AT B5X

IF WORKED OR WORKING (B5A-C=1 OR C1A-C=1) OR HAD UNPAID WORK (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=1) READ OUT:

D1. I'd now like to ask a few questions about the [IF CURRENTLY MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF B5A-C=1: **main**] [IF HAD EMPLOYER (B5B OR C=1 OR C1B OR C=1): **job** [IF WORKED FOR AN EMPLOYER AND SELF EMPLOYED (C1A=1 AND (B=1 OR C=1): **or**] [IF SELF EMPLOYED (B5A=1 OR C1A=1): **self employment**] [IF UNPAID (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=1): **unpaid role**] you [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND B5I=1): **are currently doing**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C OR I=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **did** [IF >1 JOB (C2=2): **most recently**].

IF WORKED FOR AN EMPLOYER AND SELF EMPLOYED SINCE CLAIM ENDED BUT NOT CURRENTLY (C1A=1 AND (B=1 OR C=1):

D1X Which of these did you finish most recently?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY. CODE ONE ONLY.

| | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| SHOW ALL C1A-C=1 | 1 | |
| etc | 2 | |

IF YES TO MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF C4A-C=1)

READ OUT: Throughout the rest of the survey please think just about this most recent job or role when answering questions.

CATI INSTRUCTION FOR THOSE WHO WORKED SINCE ENDING CLAIM BUT NOT NOW THROUGH SECTIONS D AND E:

IF HAVE HAD MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK SINCE CLAIM ENDED (MORE THAN ONE OF C1A-C=1) FOLLOW ROUTING AND TEXT SUBS FOR MOST RECENT TYPE AS RECORDED AT D1X

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IF WORKING/WORKED FOR AN EMPLOYER (FULL TIME, PART TIME) (B5B OR C=1 OR C1B OR C=1) OR HAD UNPAID WORK (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=1))

D4. Is [TEXT SUB IF EMPLOYER NOT DK: [EMPLOYER FROM D2] TEXT SUB IF D2=DK: “your employer”] a...?

CODE ONE ONLY

Interviewer note: IF PAID VIA AGENCY ask about the organisation placed with, not the agency

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Charity/voluntary organisation | 1 | |
| Government funded organisation (including schools, hospitals, armed forces etc.) | 2 | |
| Neither (i.e. private sector) | 3 | |
| (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know | x | |

IF WORKING/WORKED (FULL TIME, PART TIME, SELF EMPLOYED) ((B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A OR B OR C =1)) OR HAD UNPAID WORK (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=1))

D5. What [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND B5I=1): **does**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **did**] [TEXT SUB IF EMPLOYER NOT DK: [EMPLOYER FROM D2] TEXT SUB IF D2=DK: “your employer”] mainly do?

PROBE AS NECESSARY:

What is the main product or service of your employer?

What exactly does your employer make or do at this establishment?

What material or machinery does that involve using?

Interviewer note: IF PAID VIA AGENCY ask about the organisation placed with, not the agency

[IF SELF EMPLOYED (B5A=1 OR C1A=1)]: What [IF WORKING NOW (B5A =1): **is**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A =1): **was**] the main activity of your business?

PROBE AS NECESSARY:

What is/was the main product or service?

What exactly do/did you make or do?

What material or machinery does/did that involve using?]

WRITE IN. TO BE CODED TO 4 DIGIT SIC 2007. ALLOW REF

IF WORKING/WORKED FOR AN EMPLOYER (FULL TIME, PART TIME) (B5B OR C=1 OR C1B OR C=1) OR HAD UNPAID WORK (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=1))

D6. **And what** [IF WORKING NOW (B5B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND B5I=1): **is**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **was**] **your job title and your main duties or responsibilities?**

PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS.

E.G. IF RESPONDENT IS "SUPERVISOR" ASK WHAT KIND OF SUPERVISOR, WHERE? IF 'ASSISTANT, WHAT SORT OF ASSISTANT?

WRITE IN. TO BE CODED TO 4 DIGIT SOC. ALLOW REF.

IF WORKING/WORKED (FULL TIME, PART TIME, SELF EMPLOYED) ((B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A OR B OR C =1)) OR HAD UNPAID WORK (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=1))

D7. **And still thinking about the** [IF CURRENTLY MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF B5A-C=1: **main**] [IF UNPAID (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=2): **unpaid role**] [IF WORKING/WORKED (FULL TIME, PART TIME, SELF EMPLOYED) ((B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A OR B OR C =1)) **job**] **you** [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND B5I=1): **are currently doing**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **did**] [IF >1 JOB (C2=2): **most recently**] **after ending the JSA claim on/in** [END DATE] **how many hours on average** [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND B5I=1): **do**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **did**] **you work per week?**

RECORD NUMBER OF HOURS (1-130)

ALLOW DK AND REF

CATI CHECK – IF OVER 50 HOURS PER WEEK

Can I just confirm that you [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND B5I=1): **are**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **were**] **working** [HOURS GIVEN] **hours on AVERAGE per week?**

| | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------|
| Yes | 1 | CONTINUE |
| No | 2 | GO BACK AND AMEND HOURS |

ASK IF DK OR REF HOURS (D7=DK OR REF)

D8. **Would you say that you typically** [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND B5I=1): **work**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **worked**]...

READ OUT – SINGLE CODE

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|---|
| Less than 16 hours per week | 1 |
| At least 16 hours but fewer than 30 hours per week | 2 |
| 30 hours or more per week | 3 |
| Don't know/Can't remember (DO NOT READ OUT) | X |
| Refused (DO NOT READ OUT) | x |

IF WORKING/WORKED (FULL TIME, PART TIME, SELF EMPLOYED) ((B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A OR B OR C=1)) NOT UNPAID ROLE.

D8A **And whilst you** [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **have been**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **were**] **working in this** [IF CURRENTLY MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF B5A-C=1: **main role**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1) [IF >1 JOB (C2=2): **most recent role**] **have you received...?**

READ OUT. CODE ALL MENTIONED.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Working tax credits including Return to Work, In Work, or Child Tax Credits which are paid weekly | 1 |
| Job Grant - a tax free lump sum when you start a new job | 2 |
| None of the above | 3 |
| Don't know (DO NOT READ OUT) | 4 |
| Unwilling to answer (DO NOT READ OUT) | x |

IF WORKING/WORKED (FULL TIME, PART TIME, SELF EMPLOYED) ((B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A OR B OR C=1)) NOT UNPAID ROLE.

D9. **We would like to ask you how much you** [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **are**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **were**] **paid in your** [IF CURRENTLY MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF B5A-C=1: **main role**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1) [IF >1 JOB (C2=2): **most recent role after ending the JSA claim on/in** [END DATE]].

Would it be easiest to tell us how much you [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **are**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **were**] **paid before tax...**

ADD IF NECESSARY: All your answers will be held in the strictest confidence, and will be used for statistical purposes only

READ OUT – SINGLE CODE

| | |
|------------------------------------------|---|
| Per year (annual salary) | 1 |
| Per month | 2 |
| Per week | 3 |
| Per hour | 4 |
| Other (please type in) (DO NOT READ OUT) | 5 |
| Unwilling to answer (DO NOT READ OUT) | x |

ASK IF WANT TO ANSWER PER YEAR (D9=1)

D10. **What** [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **is**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **was**] **your salary per year before tax to the nearest £1000?**

DO NOT INCLUDE ANY BONUSES, TAX CREDITS OR BENEFITS

TYPE IN FIGURE E.G. 15000

CATI CHECK - IF LESS THAN £5,000 OR MORE THAN £50,000

Can I just confirm that your salary per YEAR, before tax [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **is**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **was**] **£[AMOUNT AT D10]?**

| | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------|
| Yes | 1 | CONTINUE |
| No | 2 | GO BACK AND AMEND PAY |

ASK IF WANT TO ANSWER PER MONTH (D9=2)

D11. **What** [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **are**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **were**] **you paid per month before tax and any other deductions to the nearest £100?**

DO NOT INCLUDE ANY BONUSES, TAX CREDITS OR BENEFITS

TYPE IN FIGURE E.G. 800

CATI CHECK - IF LESS THAN £400 OR MORE THAN £4,000

Can I just confirm that you [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **are**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **were**] **paid £[AMOUNT AT D11] per MONTH, before tax and any other deductions?**

| | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------|
| Yes | 1 | CONTINUE |
| No | 2 | GO BACK AND AMEND PAY |

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ASK IF WANT TO ANSWER PER WEEK (D9=3)

- D12. **What** [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **are**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **were**] **you paid per week before tax and any other deductions to the nearest £20?**

DO NOT INCLUDE ANY BONUSES, TAX CREDITS OR BENEFITS

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF RATE OF PAY VARIES THEN ASK FOR RATE OF PAY THIS WEEK. DO NOT INCLUDE OVERTIME RATE IF DIFFERENT TO NORMAL RATE.

TYPE IN FIGURE E.G. 200

CATI CHECK - IF LESS THAN £100 OR MORE THAN £1,000

Can I just confirm that you [[IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **are**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **were**] **paid £[AMOUNT AT D12] per WEEK, before tax and any other deductions?**

| | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------|
| Yes | 1 | CONTINUE |
| No | 2 | GO BACK AND AMEND PAY |

ASK IF WANT TO ANSWER PER HOUR (D9=4)

- D13. **What** [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **are**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **were**] **you paid per hour before tax and any other deductions to the nearest 50 pence?**

DO NOT INCLUDE ANY BONUSES, TAX CREDITS OR BENEFITS

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF RATE OF PAY VARIES THEN ASK FOR RATE OF PAY TODAY. DO NOT INCLUDE OVERTIME RATE IF DIFFERENT TO NORMAL RATE.

TYPE IN FIGURE E.G. 750 = £7.50

CATI CHECK - IF LESS THAN £5 OR MORE THAN £25

Can I just confirm that you [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **are**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **were**] **paid [AMOUNT AT D13] per HOUR, before tax and any other deductions?**

INTERVIEWER NOTE. Please use decimal point so 7.50 = £7.50, 10.00 = £10

| | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------|
| Yes | 1 | CONTINUE |
| No | 2 | GO BACK AND AMEND PAY |

ASK IF WANT TO ANSWER OTHER (D9=5)

D14. **What** [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1): **are**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1): **were**] **you paid per** [AS ENTERED AT D9 OTHER] **before tax and any other deductions to the nearest 50 pence?**

DO NOT INCLUDE ANY BONUSES, TAX CREDITS OR BENEFITS

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF RATE OF PAY VARIES THEN ASK FOR RATE OF PAY TODAY. DO NOT INCLUDE OVERTIME RATE IF DIFFERENT TO NORMAL RATE.

TYPE IN FIGURE E.G. 750 = £7.50

SECTION E – VIEWS ON SUITABILITY OF OUTCOME

IF WORKED OR IN UNPAID ROLE AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=2)

- E1. **How many full months and weeks** [IF HAD EMPLOYER (C1B OR C =1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **did you work in this**] [IF SELF EMPLOYED (C1A=1): **did this**] [IF >1 JOB (C2=2): **most recent**] [IF SELF EMPLOYED (C1A=1): **period of self employment or freelancing last**] [IF UNPAID ROLE: C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **unpaid role**] for after ending the JSA claim on/in [END DATE]]??

Interviewer note: e.g. if worked there for six weeks should be coded as one month in first box and two weeks in second box.

ENTER FULL MONTHS, ALLOW NUMBER 0-6

ALLOW DK AND REF AND SKIP WEEKS IF DK OR REF

ENTER FULL MONTHS, ALLOW NUMBER 0-4

ALLOW DK AND REF

IF DK OR REF TO DETAILED WEEKS AND MONTHS ABOVE

- E1B **Are you able to tell me whether it was....**

PROMPT AS NECESSARY

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Less than 4 weeks | 1 |
| Between a month and six months | 2 |
| Six months or more | 3 |
| Refused (DO NOT READ OUT) | x |

- E2. IF WORKED OR IN UNPAID ROLE AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1) **Why did you** [IF HAD EMPLOYER (C1B OR C =1)” **leave this job** [IF SELF EMPLOYED (C1A=1): “**end your period of self employment or freelancing**”] [IF UNPAID ROLE: C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **leave this** [IF >1 JOB: most recent] **unpaid role**]?

DO NOT READ OUT – MULTI CODE

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Contract ended/temporary work | 1 |
| Sacked/dismissed | 2 |
| Made redundant | 3 |
| Went into training/education | 4 |
| Wasn't earning enough | 5 |
| No promotion prospects | 6 |
| Child care commitments | 7 |
| Health reasons | 8 |
| The company closed | 9 |
| Job was not suitable in some other way (please specify) | 10 |
| Transport issues/difficulty getting to work | 12 |
| Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) | 11 |
| Refused (DO NOT READ OUT) | x |

IF WORKING/WORKED (FULL TIME, PART TIME, SELF EMPLOYED) ((B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A OR B OR C =1)) OR IN UNPAID ROLE (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=2))

- E3. **To what extent do you agree that your** [IF CURRENTLY MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF B5A-C=1: **main**] [IF PREVIOUSLY MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF C1A-C=1: **most recent**] [IF HAD EMPLOYER (B5B OR C=1 OR C1B OR C=1): **job** [IF SELF EMPLOYED (B5A=1 OR C1A=1): **work**] [IF UNPAID (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=1): **unpaid role**] [IF WORKING NOW (B5A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND B5I=1): **is**] [IF WORKED AFTER CLAIM BUT NOT NOW (C1A OR B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND C1I=1): **was**] **a good match for your experience, skills and interests?**

READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Agree strongly | 1 | |
| Agree slightly | 2 | |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 3 | |
| Disagree slightly | 4 | |
| Disagree strongly | 5 | |
| Don't know (DO NOT READ OUT) | 6 | |

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IF DISAGREE WORK WAS GOOD MATCH (E3=4 OR 5)

E3A Are any of the following reasons why you decided to take this [IF CURRENTLY MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF B5A-C=1: **main**] [IF PREVIOUSLY MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF C1A-C=1: **most recent**] [IF HAD EMPLOYER (B5B OR C=1 OR C1B OR C=1): **job**] [IF SELF EMPLOYED (B5A=1 OR C1A=1): **work**] [IF UNPAID (C1A-C=2 AND (B5I=1 OR C1I=1): **unpaid role**]?

READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| There were few jobs available that matched your experience, skills or interest | 1 | |
| You wanted to move into work as soon as possible | 2 | |
| You felt under strong pressure from Jobcentre Plus to take THIS job | 3 | |
| IF PHASE 1: You felt under strong pressure from your Flexible New Deal provider to take THIS job | 4 | |
| You hope it will lead to a job that better matches your experience, skills and interest | 5 | |
| [NOT IF VOLUNTARY: You needed the money] | 6 | |
| It suited my childcare responsibilities | 7 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: None of the above (please specify) | 8 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know | 9 | |

IF IN PAID WORK WITH AN EMPLOYER CURRENTLY OR HAVE BEEN SINCE AT SOME POINT (ANY OF B5B-C OR C1B-C=1)

E3B Whilst with [[TEXT SUB IF EMPLOYER NOT DK: [EMPLOYER FROM D2] TEXT SUB IF D2=DK: “your employer” [IF CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK B5B-C=1: **have you done**/IF HAVE BEEN IN PAID WORK C1B-C=1: **did you do**] any of the following . . .?

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----------|
| Attended a training course off-site | 1 | ASK E3c |
| Attended training courses at the place where you [IF CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK B5B-C=1: work /IF HAVE BEEN IN PAID WORK C1B-C=1: worked] | 2 | |
| Attended seminars or conferences aimed at developing knowledge and skills | 3 | |
| Undertaken any other learning or training funded or supported by your employer | 4 | |
| (DO NOT READ OUT) None of the above | 5 | CHECK E4 |
| Don't know | x | |

IF TRAINED (E3B=1-4)

E3C And has any of this training been designed to lead to a formal, recognised qualification, or part or a unit of a recognised qualification...?

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|---|---------|
| Yes - a formal, recognised qualification | 1 | ASK E3D |
| Yes - part or a unit of a recognised qualification | 2 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Other (specify) | 3 | |
| No - neither | 4 | ASK E3E |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know | x | |

IF TRAINED AND WAS LEADING TO A FULL OR PART QUALIFICATION (E3C=1 or 2 or 3)

E3D Qualifications are often classified by their level. Is/was this further training at...?

READ OUT, CODE ONE ONLY

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| LEVEL 3 which includes GNVQ or BTEC National and NVQ Level 3 | | |
| LEVEL 2 which includes GNVQ Intermediate, BTEC Intermediate/Diploma, NVQ Level 2 | | |
| LEVEL 1 which includes GNVQ/GSVQ Foundation, BTEC First, NVQ Level 1 | | |
| Entry level qualification, for example City & Guilds certificate or BTEC certificate | | |
| Don't know | | |
| Other (write in) | | |

IF TRAINED AND WAS LEADING TO A FULL OR PART QUALIFICATION (E3C=1 or 2 or 3)

E3E What is the name of the qualification?

PROBE FULLY – LEVEL, GRADE.

| |
|-----------------------------|
| <i>ALLOW DK AND REFUSED</i> |
|-----------------------------|

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IF TRAINED (E3B=1-4)

E3E Was this training delivered by ... ?

READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY.

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| A private training company | 1 |
| A further education college | 2 |
| Your employer | 3 |
| Anyone else (please specify) | 4 |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know | x |

IF TRAINED (E3B=1-4)

E3F And how useful did you find this training for developing your skills and knowledge?

READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Very useful | 1 |
| Quite useful | 2 |
| Not very useful | 3 |
| Not at all useful | 4 |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know | x |

IF WORKING FOR EMPLOYER OR IN UNPAID ROLE NOW (B5 B OR C=1) OR (C1A-C=2 AND B5I=1)

E4. Do you think that ...?

| | Yes | No | DK |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| the [IF CURRENTLY MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF WORK (MORE THAN ONE OF B5A-C=1: main] [IF EMPLOYED (B5B OR C=1): job [IF UNPAID (C1A-C=2 AND B5I=1): unpaid role] that you are currently doing offers opportunities for promotion or for substantially increasing your responsibilities | 1 | 2 | x |
| [TEXT SUB IF EMPLOYER NOT DK: [EMPLOYER FROM D2] TEXT SUB IF D2=DK: "your employer" will offer you training that would help you get a promotion or more responsibilities | 1 | 2 | x |

SECTION F: OVERALL VIEWS ON FND/JCP SUPPORT

CATI DUMMY VARIABLE: FOR “END DATE” TEXT SUBS

END DATE FROM B4A/B4 (e.g. “20th July 2009”). IF B4=DK/REF: “the date you ended this particular claim that you had started in [START DATE]”. IF B4A=DK/REF BUT B4B NOT DK/REF COMBINE B4 AND B4B (E.G. “the second week of July 2009”). IF B4A AND B=DK/REF ONLY SHOW MONTH FROM B4 “July 2009”

READ OUT

I’d now like to ask a few questions about your general views on the service that you have received since [DATE ENTERED STAGE].

So please could you just answer about your experiences between [DATE ENTERED STAGE] and [IF STILL CLAIMING WITH NO BREAK (B2=3): today/IF CLAIM FINISHED (B1=2 OR B2=1-2): [END DATE] and not any other experiences.

ASK ALL IN PHASE 1:

F1. Not including Jobcentre Plus , how many different organisations have you received support from since entering the Flexible New Deal in [DATE ENTERED STAGE]?

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| One | 1 | |
| Two | 2 | |
| Three | 3 | |
| Four | 4 | |
| Five or more | 5 | |
| Don’t know (DO NOT READ OUT) | 6 | |

CATI DUMMY VARIABLE: FOR FND PROVIDER TEXT SUBS

IF F1=1 USE ‘Flexible New Deal provider’

IF F1>1 USE ‘Flexible New Deal providers’

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ASK ALL

F2. To what extent do you agree that between [DATE ENTERED STAGE]] and [IF STILL CLAIMING WITH NO BREAK (B2=3): today/IF CLAIM FINISHED (B1=2 OR B2=1-2): END DATE]...?

FOR SECOND CODE ONLY: INTERVIEWER NOTE: If felt under pressure use agree

ROTATE CODES

| | Strongly agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Strongly disagree | (DO NOT READ OUT) DK |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Support was offered that matched your personal needs and circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | X |
| You felt under pressure to take part in activities that were not suited to your needs and circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | X |

THERE IS NO F3

ASK ALL

F4. As a RESULT of support delivered or arranged BY [IF PHASE 1: your Flexible New Deal provider(s); PHASE 2: Jobcentre Plus or your New Deal provider] over this period do you feel that.....?

ROTATE. CODE ONE CODE FOR EACH FACTOR

| | Increased greatly | Increased to some extent | Did not increase at all/no change | DO NOT READ OUT: Decreased | DO NOT READ OUT: DK |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Your confidence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Your motivation to find work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Your awareness of the types of work that you could do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Your awareness of the range of ways you can look for job vacancies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Your job application, CV writing and interview skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Your work-related skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

ASK ALL

- F5. Overall, how useful have you found the support you received from [IF PHASE 1: your Flexible New Deal provider(s); PHASE 2: Jobcentre Plus or your New Deal provider] since [DATE ENTERED STAGE]?

READ OUT

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Very useful | 1 | |
| Fairly useful | 2 | |
| Not very useful | 3 | |
| Not at all useful | 4 | |
| Don't know (DO NOT READ OUT) | 5 | |

ASK ALL

- F6. [TEXT SUB IF PHASE 1: Just thinking about [FND PROVIDER FROM A1BI] [TEXT SUB IF F1/2-5: and any other organisations you have received support from since [DATE ENTERED STAGE]], and not your Jobcentre, do you feel that you received enough support from them?

[TEXT SUB IF PHASE 2: Do you feel that you received enough support from your Jobcentre or your New Deal provider since [DATE ENTERED STAGE]?

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |

ASK ALL

- F7. What could they have offered you to help you find work [TEXT SUB IF CURENTLY IN PAID WORK: more quickly]?

PROBE FULLY

What additional information, advice or support would you have liked?

What could have been better?

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| WRITE IN | | |
| Nothing | V | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know | X | |

- F8. DELETED

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ASK IF P1 OR P2 AND IN PAID WORK WITH AN EMPLOYER CURRENTLY OR HAVE BEEN SINCE AT SOME POINT (ANY OF B5B-C OR C1B-C=1)

- F9. As far as you know, did [IF PHASE 1: your FND provider(s)] [IF PHASE 2: Jobcentre Plus or your New Deal provider] talk to [TEXT SUB: EMPLOYER NAME FROM D2] [IF D2/NULL: your employer] about you at any point before you were offered the job you entered when you finished your claim?

| | | |
|------------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
| Don't know | 3 | |

IF JCP/FND PROVIDER SPOKE TO EMPLOYER (F9/1)

- F10. And would you say that the fact that they spoke to your employer about you.....?

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Played a big part in helping you get the job | 1 | |
| Played a small part in helping you get the job | 2 | |
| Played no role in getting you the job | 3 | |
| Don't know | 4 | |

There is no section G

SECTION H: LEVEL OF CONTACT WITH FND PROVIDER/JCP

ASK ALL

IF PHASE 1

Again, in this next section, we just want you to concentrate on your experiences with [IF PHASE 1: FND PROVIDER FROM A1BI] [TEXT SUB IF F1/2-5: and any other organisations you have received support from since [DATE ENTERED STAGE], and not your Jobcentre.

- H1. Not including signing on, how many face-to-face interviews did you have with [IF PHASE 1: your FND provider(s), IF PHASE 2: Jobcentre Plus or your New Deal adviser] during this period, that is between [DATE ENTERED STAGE] and [IF STILL CLAIMING WITH NO BREAK (B2=3): today/ IF CLAIM FINISHED (B1=2 OR B2=1-2): END DATE]?

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1-2 | 1 | |
| 3-4 | 2 | |
| 5-6 | 3 | |
| 7-10 | 4 | |
| 10-19 | 5 | |
| 20 -29 | 6 | |
| 30-39 | 7 | |
| 40-49 | 8 | |
| 50 or more (WRITE IN) | 9 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Cannot remember any interviews other than signing on | 7 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know | X | |

IF RECALLS ONE OR MORE INTERVIEWS OR UNSURE (H1=1-6 OR X)

- H2. And for these interviews between [DATE ENTERED STAGE] and [IF STILL CLAIMING WITH NO BREAK (B2=3): today/IF CLAIM FINISHED (B1=2 OR B2=1-2): END DATE], did you always see the same adviser?

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Always or almost always saw the same adviser | 1 | |
| Saw the same adviser sometimes | 2 | |
| Saw a different adviser each time | 3 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know | X | |

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ASK ALL

H3. And did you have any telephone, text or email contact with an adviser at all during this period?

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Yes – regularly, more than once a fortnight | 1 | |
| Yes – occasionally, less than once a fortnight | 2 | |
| Once or twice | 3 | |
| No | 4 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know | X | |

ASK ALL

H4. Thinking overall about the amount of contact you had with an adviser at [IF PHASE 1: your FND provider(s), IF PHASE 2: Jobcentre Plus or your New Deal adviser] during this period, would you say it was...?

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|
| Too much | 1 | | |
| About right | 2 | | |
| Not enough | 3 | | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know | X | | |

IF PHASE 1 AND IN WORK OR ENTERED WORK (B5A-C=1 OR C1A-C=1)

H5. And did you have any contact with a Flexible New Deal provider, after you had started work?

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know | X | |

H6 DELETED

IF THEY WERE CONTACTED BY PROVIDER (H5=1)

H7. How many times did you have contact with them once you had started work....?

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Once | 1 | |
| Twice | 2 | |
| Three or four times | 3 | |
| Five or more times | 4 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know | X | |

IF HAD SOME CONTACT WITH PROVIDER AFTER STARTED WORK (H5=1)

H8. Thinking overall about the amount of contact you had with a Flexible New Deal provider after you had started work, would you say it was...?

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Too much | 1 | |
| About right | 2 | |
| Not enough | 3 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know | X | |

H9 DELETED

IF HAD SOME CONTACT WITH PROVIDER AFTER STARTED WORK AND STILL IN WORK (H5=1 AND B5A-C=1)

H10. Did the contact from your Flexible New Deal provider have any impact on you staying in work? Would you say it had a....

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Big impact | 1 | |
| Small impact | 2 | |
| Or no impact at all | 3 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Negative impact | 4 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know | X | |

H11 DELETED

SECTION I: EXPERIENCES OF CLAIMING: FND/COMPARISON

ASK ALL

I'd now like to ask a few questions about some of the specific things that may have happened as part of the process of claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.

Again, throughout this next section we are only interested in your period of claiming between [DATE ENTERED STAGE] and [IF STILL CLAIMING WITH NO BREAK (B2=3): today/IF CLAIM FINISHED (B1=2 OR B2=1-2): END DATE], and not any other experiences.

SECTION IA: EXPERIENCES OF FND IN PHASE 1

IF PHASE 1

- I1. Again, in this next section, we just want you to concentrate on your experiences with [IF PHASE 1: FND PROVIDER FROM A1BI] [TEXT SUB IF F1/2-5: and any other organisations you have received support from since [DATE ENTERED STAGE], and not your Jobcentre.

So since [DATE ENTERED STAGE], did they offer you and of the following...?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: Only if offered from [DATE ENTERED STAGE] to [IF STILL CLAIMING WITH NO BREAK (B2=3): today/IF CLAIM FINISHED (B1=2 OR B2=1-2): END DATE]

ASK FOR EACH CODED 'YES' AT I1 – ASK AFTER 'YES' CODE AT I1

- I2. And did you take this up?

IF ANY CODED 'YES' AT I2

- NEWI3. And which of these would you say was useful in moving you closer to finding work?
READ OUT ALL THOSE CODED YES AT I2. MULTICODE.

| | I1 | | | I2 | | | 13 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|--------|
| | Yes | No | DK | Yes | No | DK | Useful |
| An initial assessment of your skills | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 1 |
| Drawing up an action plan | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 2 |
| Help with writing a CV, job applications or interview skills | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 3 |
| A referral to a careers adviser | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 4 |
| A place on a training course at a local college or other training provider | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 5 |
| A session on motivation or confidence | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 6 |
| Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 7 |
| A work experience placement or trial organised by the Flexible New Deal provider lasting around four weeks | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 8 |
| A Work Trial lasting less than four weeks arranged via the Jobcentre | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 9 |
| A full-time work placement lasting longer than four weeks | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 10 |
| Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for or taking work ADD AS NECESSARY: This might have involved money for travel costs, clothes, childcare or tools you needed to take a particular role. | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 11 |
| Support or advice for setting up your own business | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 12 |
| Voluntary work | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 13 |
| Advice on what benefits or credits you might be entitled to once in work | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 14 |
| Support or advice to help you cope with any health conditions that you may have | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 15 |
| Referral to another agency for support or advice [PLEASE SPECIFY AGENCY] | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 16 |
| Any other sort of advice, support or training from the Jobcentre during this time that we have not mentioned? [PLEASE SPECIFY] | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 17 |
| None of these | | | | | | | 18 |
| Don't know | | | | | | | 19 |

EXPERIENCES OF PHASE 2 COMPARISON AREAS (12 MONTHS CLAIMING ONWARDS)

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IF PHASE 2:

- I4. Again just thinking about the period since [DATE ENTERED STAGE], did the Jobcentre offer you any of the following.....?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: Only if offered from [DATE ENTERED STAGE] to [IF STILL CLAIMING WITH NO BREAK (B2=3): today/IF CLAIM FINISHED (B1=2 OR B2=1-2): END DATE]

ASK FOR EACH CODED 'YES' AT H15 – ASK AFTER 'YES' CODE AT H15

- I5. And did you take this up?

IF ANY CODED 'YES' AT I5

- NEWI6. And which of these would you say was useful in moving you closer to finding work?

READ OUT ALL THOSE CODED YES AT I5. MULTICODE

| I6 | I4 | | | I5 | | | 16 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|--------|
| | Yes | No | DK | Yes | No | DK | Useful |
| A 12 month Restart interview with a Jobcentre Plus adviser | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 1 |
| Referral to a Gateway 2 Work course ADD AS NECESSARY: You would have been required to attend every day for around a week to receive advice and help on things like communication skills, punctuality, timekeeping, team working and problem solving | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 2 |
| A training course at a local college or other training provider | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 3 |
| A session on motivation or confidence | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 4 |
| Support or training in maths, reading, writing or English language | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 5 |
| Support or advice for setting up your own business | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 6 |
| Subsidised employment - as part of a New Deal option or a recruitment subsidy voucher | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 7 |
| Voluntary work | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 8 |
| A place on an Environment Task Force | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 9 |
| A Work Trial lasting less than four weeks arranged via the Jobcentre | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 10 |
| A full-time work placement lasting longer than four weeks | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 11 |
| Financial support to help cover the costs associated with looking for or taking work ADD AS NECESSARY: This might have involved money for travel costs, clothes, childcare or tools you needed to take a particular role. | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 12 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Advice on what benefits or credits you might be entitled to once in work | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 13 |
| Support or advice to help you cope with any health conditions that you may have | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 14 |
| Referral to another agency for support or advice [PLEASE SPECIFY AGENCY] | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 15 |
| Any other sort of advice, support or training from the Jobcentre during this time that we have not mentioned? [PLEASE SPECIFY] | 1 | 2 | X | 1 | 2 | X | 16 |
| None of these | | | | | | | 17 |
| Don't know | | | | | | | 18 |

MANDATION

IF OFFERED ANY TYPE OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT (ANY OF I1 OR I4=1)

17. When claiming JSA everyone has to do certain things such as signing on, attending interviews and proving they are looking for work.

BUT did the adviser at [IF PHASE 1: your Flexible New Deal Provider PHASE 2: Jobcentre Plus] say you would be at risk of losing your benefit if you didn't take up any of the additional activities or support that you just told me that you were offered?

You said that you were offered; [TEXT SUB: CATI INSTRUCTION: JUST SHOW THOSE MENTIONED AS OFFERED AT H15],

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No – only normal JSA requirements (signing on, attending interviews and proving they are looking for work) | 2 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know | X | |

IF WAS TOLD ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES MENTIONED MANDATORY (I7=1)

18. Which of the activities or types of support you mentioned were you told you HAD to do?

MULTICODE, PROMPT AS NECESSARY

CATI INSTRUCTION: JUST SHOW THOSE MENTIONED AS OFFERED AT I1 OR I4

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: Do not include the normal conditions of claiming JSA such as signing on, attending interviews and showing proof they have been looking for work. If these were the only requirements return to the previous question.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| SHOW EACH OF THE ACTIVITIES OFFERED AT I1 OR I4 – USING THE VERBATIM SPECIFY TEXT FOR OTHER TRAINING AND OTHER ADVICE/SUPPORT CODES | 1 |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know | X |

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IF WORKING OR WORKED AT SOME POINT (B5A-C=1 OR C1A-C=1 OR B5I=1 or C1I=1)

- I9. Thinking about the job that you entered when you finished your claim, would you say that the activities that you took part in since [DATE ENTERED STAGE]?

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Played a big part in helping you get the job | 1 |
| Played a small part in helping you get the job | 2 |
| Played no role in getting you the job | 3 |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Did not take part in any activities over this period | 4 |
| Don't know | X |

I10 DELETED

IF NOT WORKED (NOT(B5A-C=1 OR C1A-C=1 OR B5I=1 or C1I=1))

- I11. And do you feel that the activities that you took part in over this period have made you...?

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|---|
| A lot more likely to find work | 1 |
| A little more likely to find work | 2 |
| Had no impact on your likelihood to find work | 3 |
| Don't know | X |

SECTION J: DEMOGRAPHICS

READ OUT

- J1. That’s all I need to know about your experiences of claiming Jobseeker’s Allowance. The next few questions are about yourself and are for classification purposes only.
- J2. In terms of housing do you?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: If rent is *partially* covered by Housing Benefit but respondent pays the rest of the rent then code option ‘4’. If respondent pays rent to a relative/friend, or if other people contribute to the rent, also code ‘4’.

READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Own your property, and are in the process of paying back a mortgage or loan | 1 | |
| Own your property outright, no mortgage owed | 2 | |
| Live rent free in a relative’s/friend’s property | 3 | |
| Rent | 4 | |
| Have your rent fully covered by Housing Benefit | 5 | |
| Pay part rent and part mortgage/shared ownership | 6 | |
| Squat | 7 | |
| Other (please specify) | 8 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | X | |

IF RENT (J2=4 OR 5)

J3. And who is your landlord . . . ?

ADD IF NECESSARY: If property is let through an agent, please answer about the owner not the agent.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: If the respondent does not know who the landlord is, use code 6 (other private individual), not DK.

PROMPT IF NECESSARY.

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| The local authority/council | 1 | |
| A housing association, charitable trust or Local Housing Company | 2 | |
| The employer (organisation/company) of a household member | 3 | |
| The employer (individual person) of a household member | 4 | |
| Relative/friend of a household member | 5 | |
| Another individual/private landlord | 6 | |
| Another organisation | 7 | |
| Other (please specify) | 8 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know | 9 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | x | |

ASK ALL

J4. When you started your claim for Jobseeker's Allowance on [MONTH AND YEAR OF CLAIM START DATE] did you have any qualifications from school, college, university, work, government schemes or anywhere else?

| | | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| Yes | 1 | CONTINUE |
| No | 2 | SKIP NEXT |
| Refused | 3 | |

IF HAD A QUALIFICATION (J4=1)

J5. **Qualifications are often classified by their level. Did you have any qualifications at the following levels on [MONTH AND YEAR OF CLAIM START DATE]?**

PROMPT AS NECESSARY

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|------------|
| LEVEL 2 which includes 5 GCSEs Grades A-C, 5 GCEs O Level, 5 CSEs Grade 1, GNVQ Intermediate, BTEC Intermediate/Diploma, NVQ Level 2, 1 A Level, 3 or fewer AS Levels | 1 | 2 | X |
| IF YES OR DON'T KNOW TO A ASK B IF NO ASK E | | | |
| IF YES OR DK TO A | | | |
| LEVEL 5 which covers Doctorates, Masters, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates | 1 | 2 | X |
| IF NO OR DON'T KNOW TO B ASK C | | | |
| LEVEL 4 which is an Undergraduate or First degree, Foundation Degree, PGCE, HND, HNC, NVQ Level 4, Dip Ed, Cert Ed, other undergraduate diplomas or certificates or other professional qualifications at an undergraduate level | 1 | 2 | X |
| IF NO OR DON'T KNOW TO C ASK D | | | |
| LEVEL 3 which includes 2 or more A levels, 4 or more AS levels, GNVQ or BTEC National and NVQ Level 3 | 1 | 2 | X |
| IF A=NO OR (A=DK AND (D=NO OR D=DK)) | | | |
| LEVEL 1 qualifications, for example GCSE Grades D-G , CSE Grade 2 or under , GNVQ/GSVQ Foundation, BTEC First, NVQ Level 1 or less than 5 GCSE Grades A-C | 1 | 2 | X |
| IF NO OR DON'T KNOW AT E ASK F | | | |
| Entry level qualification, for example City & Guilds certificate or BTEC certificate | 1 | 2 | X |
| IF NO OR DON'T KNOW AT F ASK G | | | |
| Some other qualifications (IF YES SAY: please specify type, grade and level of the highest qualification you have) | 1 | 2 | X |

ASK ALL

J6. **What is your date of birth?**

RECORD DD/MM/YYYY

| |
|-------------------------------|
| ALLOW 01/01/1940 – 01/01/1994 |
| ALLOW REFUSED |

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IF AGE IS REFUSED (J6=REFUSED)

J7. Which of the following age bands do you fall into? *READ OUT*

| | | |
|---------------------------|----|--|
| 18-19 years | 1 | |
| 20-24 years | 2 | |
| 25-29 years | 3 | |
| 30-34 years | 4 | |
| 35-39 years | 5 | |
| 40-44 years | 6 | |
| 45-49 years | 7 | |
| 50-54 years | 8 | |
| 55-59 years | 9 | |
| 60+ years | 10 | |
| Refused (DO NOT READ OUT) | x | |

ASK ALL

J8. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

PROMPT AS NECESSARY *SINGLE CODE.*

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----|--|
| WHITE British | 1 | |
| WHITE Irish | 2 | |
| WHITE Other background (SPECIFY) | 3 | |
| MIXED White and Black Caribbean | 4 | |
| MIXED White and Black African | 5 | |
| MIXED White and Asian | 6 | |
| MIXED Other mixed background (SPECIFY) | 7 | |
| BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH Caribbean | 8 | |
| BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH African | 9 | |
| BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH Other background (PLEASE SPECIFY) | 10 | |
| ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Indian | 11 | |
| ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Pakistani | 12 | |
| ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Bangladeshi | 13 | |
| ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Other background (PLEASE SPECIFY) | 14 | |
| CHINESE | 15 | |
| OTHER ETHNIC BACKGROUND (PLEASE SPECIFY) | 16 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know/Refused | 17 | |

ASK ALL

J9. Are you currently suffering from any long term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | X | |

IF HEALTH PROBLEM (J9=1)

J10. Could you tell me what your MAIN illness, health condition or disability is?

PROMPT AS NECESSARY. CODE ONE ONLY.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--|
| MENTAL HEALTH | | |
| Depression | 1 | |
| Stress or anxiety | 2 | |
| Problems due to alcohol or drug addiction | 3 | |
| Fatigue or problems with concentration or memory | 4 | |
| Any other mental health condition (please specify) | 5 | |
| LEARNING DIFFICULTIES | | |
| Learning difficulties including dyslexia | 6 | |
| MUSCULO-SKELETAL/PHYSICAL INJURY | | |
| Problems with your arms or hands | 7 | |
| Problems with your legs or feet | 8 | |
| Problems with your neck or back | 9 | |
| Pain or discomfort | 10 | |
| Any other musculo-skeletal problem or physical injuries (please specify) | 11 | |
| SENSORY IMPAIRMENT | | |
| Difficulty with seeing | 12 | |
| Difficulty with hearing | 13 | |
| Dizziness or balance problems | 14 | |
| Any other sensory impairment problem (please specify) | 15 | |
| CHRONIC/SYSTEMIC/PROGRESSIVE | | |
| Problems with your bowels, stomach, liver, kidneys or digestion including Crohn's disease | 16 | |
| Chest or breathing problems including asthma | 17 | |
| Heart or blood pressure problems including angina | 18 | |
| Skin conditions or allergies | 19 | |
| Cancer or other progressive illness not covered above | 20 | |
| Any other chronic/systemic illness (please specify) | 21 | |

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| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----|--|
| OTHER CONDITION OR DISABILITY | | |
| Speech problems | 22 | |
| Obesity | 23 | |
| Aspergers syndrome | 24 | |
| Diabetes | 25 | |
| Any other health condition or disability issue (please specify) | 26 | |
| Prefer not to say | X | |

ASK PHASE 1:

J11a At the time you moved on to [FND PROVIDER FROM A1BI] in [INSERT FND START MONTH] did you...

ALLOW MULTICODE

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Live with a parent (including adopted parent or step parent) | 1 | |
| Have any children or step-children aged 18 or over living with you | 2 | |
| Neither | 3 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | X | |

IF J11a=1

J11b And was the parent that you lived with also claiming Jobseekers Allowance at the time?

INTERVIEW NOTE: If lived with both parents and one parent claimed Jobseekers Allowance then code 'yes'

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | X | |

IF J11a=2

J11b And were any children that you lived with also claiming Jobseekers Allowance at the time?

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | X | |

ASK ALL

J11. Are you currently living with a spouse or a partner who receives Jobseekers Allowance or another benefit for people who are not working...?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: Code as Yes if partner receives Income Support, Incapacity Benefit or Employment and Support Allowance. Code No if partner receives Tax Credits or Pension/ Pension Credits only.

PROMPT IF NECESSARY

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Yes – partner claims out of work benefit | 1 | |
| No – has no partner or they do not claim an out of work benefit | 2 | |
| Unsure (please specify benefit claimed) | 3 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | X | |

ASK ALL

J12. Are you the parent or guardian of any children under the age of 16?

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | X | |

IF HAVE CHILDREN (J12=1)

J13. Are you the parent or guardian of any children under the age of 5?

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | X | |

IF HAVE CHILDREN (J12=1)

J14. And are you currently a single parent living with children aged under 16?

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | X | |

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IF A SINGLE PARENT (J14/1)

J15. And how old was your youngest child on their last birthday?

ENTER ONE AGE ONLY

DP INSTRUCTION: ALLOW 0-15 YEARS

IF A PARENT (F6/1)

J16. Are any of your children currently suffering from any long term illness, health problem or disability which limits YOUR daily activities or the work YOU can do?

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | X | |

ASK ALL

The DWP are keen to ensure that their services for the unemployed are available to, and appropriate for, people from all parts of the community. To help us understand if this is the case, we would like to ask you a few personal questions. These will include questions about any barriers you might face to entering work, your sexual orientation, marital status and religious beliefs. We appreciate that these questions are sensitive and would like to assure you once again that your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. We would not pass on any personal information to anyone else.

J17. When you started your JSA claim in June 2009...?

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Had you recently left prison or been on probation or on a community sentence? | 1 | |
| And are you a former member of the UK armed services? | 2 | |
| (SINGLE CODE) Or do none of the above apply | 3 | |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Refused | 4 | |

ASK IF EX ARNED SERVICES (F11=2)

J18. And when did you leave the armed services?

| |
|----------------------|
| WRITE IN YEAR (YYYY) |
|----------------------|

ASK ALL

J19. Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself...?

PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Heterosexual/straight | 1 | |
| Gay man | 2 | |
| Gay woman/lesbian | 3 | |
| Bi-sexual | 4 | |
| Other (WRITE IN) | 5 | |
| Prefer not to say (DO NOT READ OUT) | 6 | |

J20. And which of the following best describes your legal marital or same-sex civil partnership status...?

PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--|
| Single | 1 | |
| In a relationship but never married and never registered a same-sex civil partnership | 2 | |
| Married | 3 | |
| Separated, but still legally married | 4 | |
| Divorced | 5 | |
| Widowed | 6 | |
| In a registered same-sex civil partnership | 7 | |
| Separated, but still legally in a same-sex civil partnership | 8 | |
| Formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved | 9 | |
| Surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership | 10 | |
| Refused (DO NOT READ OUT) | 11 | |

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ASK ALL

J21. What is your religion?

PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

INTERVIEWER NOTE: christian includes Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations.

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Christian (including Church of England/Scotland, Catholic, Protestant, and all other Christian denominations) | 1 | |
| Buddhist | 2 | |
| Hindu | 3 | |
| Jewish | 4 | |
| Muslim | 5 | |
| Sikh | 6 | |
| OTHER (WRITE IN) | 7 | |
| No religion | 8 | |
| (DO NOT READ OUT) Prefer not to say | 9 | |

ASK ALL

J22. INTERVIEWER RECORD GENDER

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| Male | 1 | |
| Female | 2 | |

J23. And could I take your home postcode?

| | | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| WRITE IN | 1 | |
| Don't know/refused | 2 | |

J24. Would it be OK if the answers you have given to this survey were combined with administrative records held by the Department for Work and Pensions? Your answers will of course be treated in the strictest confidence by the research team and will not affect your dealings, either now or in the future, with the DWP. Your answers would be used for statistical purposes only and nothing that would identify you as an individual will be used.

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |

| |
|--------------------------------------|
| THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE INTERVIEW |
|--------------------------------------|

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------|
| I declare that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct. | | |
| Interviewer signature: | Date: | |
| Finish time: | Interview Length | mins |

Appendix F

Qualitative instruments

Provider topic guides

SPECIALIST PROVIDER

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Please describe your role within the organisation and what your responsibility is regarding the delivery of FND services?
Probe for how long they've been in the role, what percentage (approximate) of their time is spent with FND customers, what part of the delivery are they responsible for? (part/specialist?)
Interviewer note: this topic guide is for specialist providers/those providing specific elements of FND
- 1.2 What training, if any, have you received, in delivering FND services?
Probe regarding induction training, frequency of training, type of training, for example specifically on systems or on diagnostic tools etc
If receive training – how effective do you think this? Why/why not?
If do not receive training – do you think you would benefit from training? Why/why not?

2 PROVISION DELIVERED

- 2.1 Can you describe the range of services that your organisation currently offers your customers under FND within [state specific area e.g. Greater Manchester Central/Surrey and Sussex or Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire]?
Probe for a list of interventions and courses, e.g. work related activity/placements, skills assessments etc Which ones are most frequently used? Less frequently? what do these involve, for example in what format (face to face, group etc). Establish a proportion of individual time versus group time that a customer would have under any of these interventions/courses
- 2.2 What happens with an FND customer once they start with your organisation?
Probe for a description of the process
- 2.3 How, if at all, does the nature or type of support change over time as the length of the customer's time with you increases?
Probe for examples
If the respondent mentions group settings at Q2.1
- 2.4 How do you determine whether one-to-one or group work is appropriate for customers?
Probe for examples
If the respondent mentions providing work placements at Q2.1

- 2.5 What does a typical work-related activity or placement involve?
Probe for what point does someone typically come to the provider to undertake work related activity? How does the provider match the customer's needs with the placement/activity?
Probe for example
- 2.6 What do you think are the benefits, if any, of work related activity?
Probe for examples
Probe for any drawbacks

If the respondent mentions providing skills assessments and development at Q2.1
- 2.7 How do you integrate a customer's skill assessment and development into their action plans?
Probe for how these are included in the customer's action plans, how do they ensure that these skills action plans are adhered to? how do they perceive the appropriateness of skills training delivered by local training providers?

If the respondent mentions providing in-work support at Q2.1
- 2.8 a) What services are you offering customers through in-work support?
Probe for what the practical in-work support (mentoring, counselling, contact etc) involves, how effective this has been in achieving outcomes for customers?
Probe for examples
If they provide payments to employers, how effective are these in supporting customers in work?
- 3 WORKING WITH CUSTOMERS**
- 3.1 How much information do customers have about the services you offer when they start with you? How accurate is this information?
Probe for why they think they are informed/have little information, when and where customers are getting any information from. Determine whether the information is just about the provision the customer should expect under FND in general or specifically with the organisation
- 3.2 When a customer starts with you, what information do you provide the customer with?
Probe for examples
- 3.3 Can you describe the process for determining the appropriate support for customers?
Probe to see how, if at all, the organisation diagnoses customer's needs?
Probe to see how, if at all, a customer's barriers to work are identified and how best to help them is determined
Probe to see if segmentation tools are used and if so what type(s), what happens to customers once they are allocated to a segment?
Probe for specific examples, especially regarding identification of barriers and appropriate action planning
 Interviewer Note: We are looking to identify if creaming or parking is occurring
- 3.4 How, if at all, do you tailor your services to meet each individual customer's needs?
Probe for how different types of customer groups, 18-24, self employed, lone parents, individuals with health conditions, older workers, homeless etc are treated.
Probe how customers' barriers to work are overcome.
Probe for specific examples
 Interviewer Note: We are looking to identify if creaming or parking is occurring

- 3.5 Have there been any customers that you have not been able to support into work, for example, customers whose barriers to work you have not been able to attenuate or overcome?
Interviewer Note: We are looking to identify if creaming or parking is occurring
If Yes probe for examples of ways in which they have helped move the customer closer towards being able to hold down a job
If No How do you gauge or measure progress for those who did not find work?
- 3.6 How do you, if at all, cater for customers who require childcare?
Probe to see if they understand there is a requirement under Jobseekers' Allowance to support customers with children. Probe for examples
- 3.7 In general, how many advisors would a customer see during their time with your organisation or while being provided services by the wider supply chain?
*Probe for split between in-house and wider supply chain (where appropriate),
Probe how this changes with length of time a customer spends on the programme/those closest to the market versus those farthest away.
Probe what advantages/disadvantages single customer contacts/multiple customer contacts have*
- 3.8 How do you refer customers on to other providers in the supply network or indeed hand customers back to their main provider?
*Probe for how efficient this internal process is, how do they decide which provider to use, including [other] specialist providers? Is it advantageous to have a choice of provider/not have a choice? do they use named providers? how much information is given to the customer about the other provider, length of time between activities (is there a waiting list to get on specific courses/programmes of support?)
Probe to see how they refer customers to non-contracted providers such as community organisations, Learning and Skills Council providers etc*
- 3.9 Are you given set time frames to work with customers on the FND programme?
*Probe for how this works across all the organisation's suppliers, what happens if they do not deliver their services within that time frame
If appropriate:
Probe how customer information such as assessments/action plans is passed between providers as the customer progresses, what happens if a customer who had found work loses their job and returns to FND?*
- 3.10 Do customers have to travel to a different site from the prime provider to access your services?
If so, how is this managed?
*Probe to see if customers find this difficult/a challenge/off putting
Probe to see if it is affecting levels of attendance, if so, how are they managing this?*
- 4 CONDITIONALITY & SANCTIONS**
- 4.1 How does your organisation ensure that customers undertake all the activities required to help them find work or continue to receive benefit?
Probe for a description of the process

4.2 Have you needed to ‘raise a doubt’ about any of your customers?

If Yes

- a) In what circumstances have you raised a doubt?
Probe for examples, probe if there have been any circumstances where the provider has not raised a doubt despite non-compliance
- b) Could you describe the process of raising a doubt?
Probe for whether the sub-contractor raises the doubt themselves directly or whether the managing or prime provider does. Confirm how this is monitored by the prime provider – how does the prime provider ensure that raising doubts is a fair and consistent process? do staff undergo compliance training?

Where sub-contractor has raised a doubt directly

- c) When you have raised a doubt, how well do you think the process for JCP dealing with a sanction worked?
Probe for how quick/appropriate JCP’s responses have been, has this influenced customer behaviour?
- d) In general, how do you think sanctions impact, if at all, on customer behaviour?
Probe for specific examples, positively or negatively? Effect on relationships with customers?

If No

- e) Why are you not referring customers at all for a possible sanction?

5 REFERRAL PROCESS

5.1 How do you receive referrals?

Probe for a description of the process
Probe for how effective this is

5.2 Are you aware of how referrals are made? For example by geography, capacity, specialism etc
Is the number of referrals driven by any performance targets?

Probe to see if there are other sub-contractors vying for referrals

5.3 Have the levels of FND referrals been similar to what you expected? Why do think this is?

Probe for whether it is related to higher/lower numbers of customers generally or due to the process itself. Probe to see if referral levels have changed over time

6 RELATIONSHIPS

6.1 Would you have any interaction with JCP staff?

If Yes: Overall, how would you describe your working relationship with JCP?
Probe as an organisation/as an individual,
Probe to see if it is the same across all JCP offices/personnel

If No: go to Q6.3

6.2 Do you have any contact with JCP staff regarding a customer’s progress?

Probe for specific examples
Probe to see if formal or informal contact, if dependable on customer or JCP adviser

6.3 Would you have any interaction with DWP staff?

If **Yes**: Overall, how would you describe your working relationship with DWP with particular reference to performance/contract management?

Probe for examples

Go to Q6.4

If **No to contact with DWP and contact with JCP (Q6.1) ask:**

Would you like to have contact with either JCP or DWP? Why

6.4 Could you describe the types of contact you have with your prime provider?

Probe for examples, frequency, type of communication used

6.5 Could you describe the types of contact you have with other providers within this delivery network?

Probe for examples, frequency, type of communication used, referrals etc

7 OVERALL VIEWS

7.1 Overall, what do you think are the strengths of the way in which your organisation delivers services under the FND programme?

Probe, if applicable, how using different providers or how being one provider amongst a number is impacting upon service delivery

7.2 And, overall, what do you think are the weaknesses of the way in which your organisation delivers services under the FND programme?

Probe, if applicable, how using different providers or how being one provider amongst a number is impacting upon service delivery

7.3 Finally, overall, how do you feel that the FND experience could be improved to move customers closer to or into work more quickly?

Probe for examples

8 CLOSE

Sometimes it is helpful to re-contact people to find out more about their views and experiences or to explore their responses in more depth. Would it be acceptable for PricewaterhouseCoopers to contact you again to discuss topics similar to those we've covered today?

Yes

No

It depends, specify:

THANK AND CLOSE

RECORD:

- Your name, date and duration of interview
- Any impressions of the respondent's level of knowledge about FND and attitudes toward JCPs, DWP and FND if these have not emerged clearly in answers already recorded

END-TO-END PROVIDER

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Could you please describe your role within the organisation and what your responsibility is regarding the delivery of FND?
Probe for how long they've been in the role, what percentage (approximate) of their time is spent with FND customers, what part of the delivery are they responsible for? (part/all/specialist?)
 Interviewer note: this topic guide is for end-to-end providers
- 1.2 What training, if any, have you received, in delivering FND services?
Probe regarding induction training, frequency of training, type of training, for example specifically on systems or on diagnostic tools etc
If receive training – how effective do you think this? Why/why not?
If do not receive training – do you think you would benefit from training? Why/why not?

2 PROVISION DELIVERED

- 2.1 Can you describe the range of services that your organisation currently offers your customers under FND within [state specific area e.g. Greater Manchester Central/Surrey and Sussex or Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire]?
- 2.2 **Probe for a list of interventions and courses. Which ones are most frequently used? Less frequently? what do these involve, for example in what format (face to face, group etc). Establish a proportion of individual time versus group time that a customer would have under FND**
- 2.3 What happens with an FND customer once they start with your organisation?
Probe for a description of the process
- 2.4 How, if at all, does the nature or type of support change over time as the length of the customer's time with you increases?
Probe for examples
If the respondent mentions group settings at Q2.1
- 2.5 How do you determine whether one-to-one or group work is appropriate for customers?
Probe for examples
- 2.6 How are you ensuring that each customer experiences a minimum of four continuous weeks of full-time work or work-related activity?
Probe for what this work-related activity or placement involves, at what point does someone typically undertake work related activity?
Probe for examples
- 2.7 What do you think are the benefits, if any, of work related activity?
Probe for examples
Probe for any drawbacks
- 2.8 How do you integrate a customer's skill assessment and development into their action plans?
Probe for how these are included in action plans, how do they ensure that these skills action plans are adhered to? how do they perceive the appropriateness of skills training delivered by local training providers?

- 2.9 a) Are you offering customers in-work support? By that I mean are you providing customers with support once they have gained employment?
Interview note: If asked for further explanation give examples of mentoring, counselling, regular contact, payments to employers etc
If **Yes**: *Probe for what the practical in-work support (mentoring, counselling, contact etc) involves, how effective this has been in achieving outcomes for customers?*
Probe for examples
If they provide payments to employers, how effective are these in supporting customers in work?
Probe for examples
- If **No**: *Probe to see if there is any level of interaction with a customer when in employment?*

3 WORKING WITH CUSTOMERS

- 3.1 How much information do customers have about the services you offer when they start with you? How accurate is this information?
Probe for why they think they are informed/have little information, when and where customers are getting any information from. Determine whether the information is about the organisation itself or just the provision the customer should expect under FND
- 3.2 When a customer starts with you, do you provide customers with information about the full range of services available under FND or do you tailor this based on their personal circumstances?
Probe to see if they think it is important for the customer to know the full range of services available
- 3.3 Can you describe the process for determining the appropriate support for customers?
Probe to see how, if at all, the organisation diagnoses customer's needs?
Probe to see how, if at all, a customer's barriers to work are identified and how best to help them is determined
Probe to see if segmentation tools are used and if so what type(s), what happens to customers once they are allocated to a segment?
Probe for specific examples, especially regarding identification of barriers and appropriate action planning
Interviewer Note: We are looking to identify if creaming or parking is occurring
- 3.4 How, if at all, do you tailor your services to meet each individual customer's needs?
Probe for how different types of customer groups, 18-24, self employed, lone parents, individuals with health conditions, older workers, homeless etc are treated.
Probe how customers' barriers to work are overcome.
Probe for specific examples
Interviewer Note: We are looking to identify if creaming or parking is occurring
- 3.5 Have there been any customers that you have not been able to support into work, for example, customers whose barriers to work you have not been able to attenuate or overcome?
Interviewer Note: We are looking to identify if creaming or parking is occurring
If **Yes** *probe for examples of ways in which they have helped move the customer closer towards being able to hold down a job*
- If **No** *How do you gauge or measure progress for those who did not find work?*

- 3.6 How do you, if at all, cater for customers who require childcare?
Probe to see if they understand there is a requirement under Jobseekers' Allowance to support customers with children. Probe for examples
- 3.7 In general, how many advisors would a customer see during their time with your organisation or while being provided services by the wider supply chain?
*Probe for split between in-house and wider supply chain (where appropriate),
 Probe how this changes with length of time a customer spends on the programme/those closest to the market versus those farthest away.
 Probe what advantages/disadvantages single customer contacts/multiple customer contacts have*
- 3.8 How do you refer customers on to other providers in the supply network?
*Probe for how efficient this internal process is, how do they decide which provider to use? Is it advantageous to have a choice of provider/not have a choice? do they use named providers? how much information is given to the customer about the other provider, length of time between activities (is there a waiting list to get on specific courses/programmes of support?)
 Probe to see how they refer customers to non-contracted providers such as community organisations, Learning and Skills Council providers etc*
- 3.9 What happens to a customer's journey if they require specialist support?
Probe to see if this is given at the same time as more general employment support? does it increase the length of time a customer is with you
- 3.10 How do you ensure that the customer progresses through the FND programme without losing momentum or purpose?
*Probe for how this works across all the organisation's suppliers
 If appropriate:
 Probe how customer information such as assessments/action plans is passed between providers as the customer progresses, what happens if a customer who had found work loses their job and returns to FND?*
- 3.11 Do customers have to travel between sites at different stages of the FND programme? If so, how is this managed?
*Probe to see if customers find this difficult/a challenge/off putting
 Probe to see if it is affecting levels of attendance, if so, how are they managing this?*

4 CONDITIONALITY & SANCTIONS

- 4.1 How does your organisation ensure that customers undertake all the activities required to help them find work or continue to receive benefit?
Probe for a description of the process
- 4.2 Have you needed to 'raise a doubt' about any of your customers?
 If Yes
 f) In what circumstances have you raised a doubt?
Probe for examples, probe if there have been any circumstances where the provider has not raised a doubt despite non-compliance

- g) Could you describe the process of raising a doubt?
*If a sub-contractor:
Probe for whether the sub-contractor raises the doubt themselves directly or whether the managing or prime provider does. Confirm how this is monitored by the prime provider – how does the prime provider ensure that raising doubts is a fair and consistent process? do staff undergo compliance training?*
- h) When you have raised a doubt, how well do you think the process for JCP dealing with a sanction worked?
Probe for how quick/appropriate JCP's responses have been, has this influenced customer behaviour?
- i) In general, how do you think sanctions impact, if at all, on customer behaviour?
Probe for specific examples, positively or negatively? Effect on relationships with customers?

If No

- j) Why are you not referring customers at all for a possible sanction?

5 REFERRAL PROCESS

- 5.1 How do you receive referrals? Directly from JobCentre Plus or from another provider?

If from JCP go to Q5.2a

If from another provider: go to Q5.2b

If receive referrals from JCP

- 5.2 a) In general, how effective, if at all, do you believe the handover process from JCP is?
Probe regarding speed i.e. length of time it takes to see customers once they've been referred, the level of information provided, sufficiently detailed action plans with job goals outlined etc

If receive referrals from another provider

- 5.2 b) Are you aware of how referrals are made? Is the number of referrals driven by any performance targets?
Probe to see if there are other sub-contractors vying for referrals

- 5.3 Are you working with Jobcentre Plus to provide warm handovers for new referrals? (aka joint Pre Provision Reviews, tripartite PPRs – terminology may vary)?

Interviewer, refer to briefing notes

If **yes**, how do you think these are working in relation to:

- a) improving customer attendance?
Probe, if needed, for examples
- b) improving customer engagement?
Probe, if needed, for examples
- c) overall, how do feel these types of meetings are working?
Probe, if need, how this process could be improved
- d) where are these meetings generally held? (i.e. at JCP or provider site)
Probe if, at all, location effects the handover process

If **No**, do you intend to provide joint Pre Provision Reviews at any time in the future?
Probe for reasons why/why not

6 RELATIONSHIPS WITH JOBCENTRE PLUS

- 6.1 Overall, how would you describe your working relationship with JCP?
*Probe as an organisation/as an individual,
 Probe to see if it is the same across all JCP offices/personnel*
- 6.2 Would you have any interaction with DWP staff?
 If **Yes**: Overall, how would you describe your working relationship with DWP with particular reference to performance/contract management?
Probe for examples
- If **No**: Go to Q6.3
- 6.3 In your opinion, how does fortnightly signing at JCP offices impact, if at all, upon the FND process?
Probe if customers have provided feedback about signing on at JCP offices whilst attending meetings/sessions etc at providers' offices
- 6.4 Do you have any contact with JCP staff regarding a customer's progress?
*Probe for specific examples
 Probe to see if formal or informal contact, if dependable on customer or JCP adviser*
- 6.5 Have you handed any customers back to JCP once the FND programme has finished?
If YES, probe for a description of the process

If NO, probe if there is a process in place and how this will work

Interviewer Note: This is unlikely to have happened yet so we are trying to establish with this question whether a process is in place to transition customers back to JCP

7 OVERALL VIEWS

- 7.1 Overall, what do you think are the strengths of the way in which your organisation delivers the FND programme?
Probe, if applicable, how using different providers or how being one provider amongst a number is impacting upon service delivery
- 7.2 And, overall, what do you think are the weaknesses of the way in which your organisation delivers the FND programme?
Probe, if applicable, how using different providers or how being one provider amongst a number is impacting upon service delivery
- 7.3 Finally, overall, how do you feel that the FND experience could be improved to move customers closer to or into work more quickly?
Probe for examples

8 CLOSE

Sometimes it is helpful to re-contact people to find out more about their views and experiences or to explore their responses in more depth. Would it be acceptable for PricewaterhouseCoopers to contact you again to discuss topics similar to those we've covered today?

Yes

No

It depends, *specify*:

THANK AND CLOSE

RECORD:

- Your name, date and duration of interview
- Any impressions of the respondent's level of knowledge about FND and attitudes toward JCPs, DWP and FND if these have not emerged clearly in answers already recorded

Customer topic guide

Section A: Customer background

The aim of this section is to obtain contextual and socio-demographic information. Keep brief.

1. **Tell me a bit about yourself ...**
 - Are you claiming JSA? Receiving some other benefit? Working? Training? Volunteering?
 - *Establish Flexible New Deal participation*
 - If no longer claiming JSA and not in work, ask, **Why did you decide to stop claiming Jobseeker's Allowance?**
 - Who lives with you in your household at the moment? (household composition, other workers, number and ages of children, *clarify whether lone parent*)
 - Establish caring responsibilities or dependents living elsewhere
2. **How long have you been/were you claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for?**
Refer to JSA claim start date in database. If moved in and out of work since then, establish that interview is about the claim starting on [date given].
 - Have you claimed JSA previously?
[Establish a brief claims history, including whether transferred from other benefits (eg IB or IS) to JSA.]
3. **What is your most recent/current job?**
 - Job title, type of work
 - Permanent/temporary
 - Full time/part time
 - Employee/self-employed
 - Have you always done this type of work in the past?
 - When did the job start (and finish)? Why did it finish? (if relevant)

If customer is working:

4. **How is the job going?**
5. **Do you need anything extra to help you do your job?**
Probe on:
 - Personal circumstances, e.g. childcare, travel to work
 - Do you have any disabilities or health conditions that make working more difficult?
[Prompt on these difficulties in rest of interview when asking about work-related services]

If customer is currently on JSA:

6. **What kind of work are you looking for?**
 - type of work, permanent/temporary, full time/part time, employee/self employed, level of pay

7. Is there anything that makes gaining work difficult for you at the moment

Probe on:

- Personal circumstances (childcare, health conditions, disability, etc.)
- Availability of jobs (probe type of job, location, hours, pay etc.)
- Skills, qualifications, experience
- Confidence in ability to find work
- Awareness of how to look for work, present yourself to an employer, keep a job once started

[Prompt on these difficulties in rest of interview when asking about work-related services]

Section B: FND process and experience

Here, customers are asked to describe their FND journey to date and comment on specific experiences. This section is structured around a timeline.

8. Can you please describe for me what you have been doing on the Flexible New Deal, starting from when you last saw your Jobcentre Plus personal adviser [not the fortnightly signing officer] and covering the initial meeting at [name provider], then what you've been doing month by month ... *Show timeline.*

Establish how long customer has been on FND.

Fill in timeline

Indicate if activities delivered in group or one-to-one format

Indicate different providers (and if charity, private/public sector), what service(s) received from each and locations

Indicate how activity related to their job goals

9. *Districts 5 & 6 only*, Were you given a choice between FND providers in your area? *If yes*, Why did you choose this FND provider?

10. *If not already covered*, Over a four week period, are/were you required to take full-time employment or a work-related activity?

[Be aware that some customers (lone parents, people with health conditions/disabilities) may have restrictions as to the days/hours they are available for work.]

Ask for details

- When did/will this happen?
- If relevant, What is your opinion of this experience? How helpful was it?

11. What are your views on the different activities you've taken part in?

*Refer to timeline and ask **about each activity**.*

- Probe for details on the positive/negative aspects of the service
- Was it clear to you why you took part in the activity? (*i.e.*, was its relevance to finding work explained?)
- Was it pitched at the right level for you?
- *If delivered by different organisations*, Were there any differences in the quality of services delivered by one organisation compared to another organisation?
- *If received both group & 1-2-1 delivery*, What did you think about the different formats? *Prompt for pros and cons.*
- *If took training*, How does the training you received relate to your job goals?

12. How was your experience of reaching the location or different locations where services were provided?
Refer to timeline and prompt for examples.
 - If relevant, What did you think about going to different locations for different activities?
13. *Delivery models B and C only*, How much say do you feel you've had in the organisations you received services from?
 - Did you feel you had a choice? *Prompt for examples. What influenced a decision?*
 - Did you ever feel pushed by staff to go to a certain provider? *Prompt for examples.*
14. How much say do you feel you've had in the activities you participated in?
 - Did you feel you had a choice? *Prompt for examples. What influenced a decision?*
If they did not participate in an option, ask why.
 - Did you ever feel pushed by staff into decisions? *Prompt for examples.*
15. Have you been threatened with a benefit sanction while on FND?
If yes,
 - What was this for?
 - What did you think about it?
 - Did it change your behaviour in any way? How?
16. Did you experience a benefit sanction while on FND?
If yes,
 - What was this for? [*Establish if related to a warning of a benefit sanction.*]
 - What happened to your benefits?
 - What did you think about it?
 - Did it change your behaviour in any way? How?
17. While on the Flexible New Deal, have you noticed any changes over time regarding:
 - Choice of services, *if yes, prompt for examples.*
 - Demands on your time (intensity of participation), *if yes, prompt for examples.*
 - Pressure to enter work, *if yes, prompt for examples.*
18. Are you still visiting your local Jobcentre Plus to sign on fortnightly?
 - What happens at these meetings?
 - What do you think about these meetings?
 - Any suggestions for improvement?

Section B: Assessments and Action Plans

19. How did your FND provider assess your support needs?
E.g. literacy/numeracy, work interests and attitudes, special work related needs
 - What did you think of the process?
 - Was it clear to you how activities followed from the assessment results?
 - Have there been ongoing assessments?
20. Do you have an Action Plan(s)?
Prompt for a Back-to-work Action Plan, Skills Action Plan. [Note that the FND provider is not responsible for formulating the Skills Action Plan.]
 - How useful has this been?
 - Have Action Plans been updated? How often?
 - *If relevant*, How do the Back-to-work Action Plan and Skills Action Plan relate to each other? (i.e., *Have skills related to job goals been written into the Skills Action Plan?*)

Section C: Contact with FND staff

21. How much contact have you had with an FND service provider?

Establish if they have been assigned a personal adviser or coach.

- What form does this contact usually take (e.g. f2f meeting, telephone, text message)?
How frequent?
- How do you feel about the contact you've had? Would you like more or less?
- Has the nature or frequency of contact changed over time? If so, how?
- If relevant, How does your adviser/coach compare to your Jobcentre Plus personal adviser (Stage 3)?

If no assigned adviser, How did you stay in contact with your FND provider?

22. What are your impressions of the different staff you've encountered?

Establish the different roles of support staff (e.g. adviser, job coach/broker, trainers/facilitators)

- Do you feel these people understood your situation?
Prompt on whether staff addressed any barriers to work mentioned previously.
- Was there anyone who was particularly helpful? Why?

23. Did you receive help from staff in looking for work?

Prompt for examples.

- Did it change the way you looked for jobs?
- Did it change the types of jobs you were looking for?

24. Did you feel you were encouraged to:

- Change your job goals? *Prompt for examples.*
- Change your attitude to finding work? *Prompt for examples.*

25. Did you ever feel pushed to

- Apply for jobs outside your choice of work?
Prompt for examples.
- Accept an offer of employment that was not related to your choice of work?
Prompt for examples.

Section D: Those who left Flexible New Deal

Questions in this section are for those who have left JSA and entered work (they may have subsequently left work). Word appropriately if respondent is self-employed. Refer to information supplied in Qs 3-5.

26. Can you tell me more about how you found your current job?

Prompt for information on where job was advertised and the interview process.

- What helped you to secure the job?
[Probe customer on the separate roles of JCP and FND provider in helping them to find work, i.e., what support received earlier in claim from JCP helped?]
- How did your experience on the Flexible New Deal help you to find work?
- Was there anything on the Flexible New Deal that was not helpful for your job search?

27. Why did you accept this particular job offer?

Wait for spontaneous response, then prompt for reasons like rate of pay, similarity to previous work, job interest.

- Were you told about tax credits and other benefits for workers?
- Did other in-work supports like [if relevant] Tax Credits or help with childcare costs have a role in your decision?
- Did you feel you had to compromise your expectations for work?

28. *If respondent is no longer in work, Can you please explain why you are no longer working?*
29. **What contact do you (or did you) have with your FND provider while working?**
Prompt to describe the nature and frequency of contact.
- What do you think about this?
 - Do you think this is helping you stay in the job?
30. *If respondent is in work, What are your plans for this job?*
- Do you intend to stay with this employer?
 - Are there any opportunities for promotion? Is this important to you?

Section E: General views

31. **Overall, how do you feel about the help you've received while on the Flexible New Deal?**
- How does it compare with what you expected?
 - Did you need all the support you were given?
 - Do you think you received enough help? What other help would you have liked?
 - How does it compare to the help you received during your last 6 months at Jobcentre plus (Stage 3)? *Ask for examples.*
32. **In your view, what service or services have helped the most?**
- Probe in relation to work preparation and the job search
33. **In your view, what service or services were the least helpful?**
- Probe in relation to work preparation and the job search
34. **What could be changed or improved about the Flexible New Deal to help people into work?**

Thank you very much for your help!

Flexible New Deal – timeline for recording customer experiences

| | DATE | COMMENTS |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----------|
| Month/Date of FND referral interview (JCP pre-provision interview) | | |
| Month/Date of FND initial interview* | | |

* If possible, establish time between pre-provision and initial FND interviews.

| Months on FND | ACTIVITIES (indicate group/1-2-1 format, sector, different locations) | COMMENTS (related to job goals? training goals?) |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Month 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |

| Months on FND | ACTIVITIES | COMMENTS |
|---------------|------------|----------|
| Month 7 | | |
| 8 | | |
| 9 | | |
| 10 | | |
| 11 | | |
| 12 | | |
| OTHER | | |

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This report presents qualitative and quantitative research findings from an evaluation of the Flexible New Deal (FND), Phase 1 of which was introduced in October 2009 in 28 Jobcentre Plus districts in England, Scotland and Wales.

The research consisted of qualitative research into customer and provider experiences of FND delivery and a quantitative survey of customer experiences of FND in Phase 1 areas compared with customers at the same point in their claims experiencing the former Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) regime and New Deals in Phase 2 areas. Comparisons between the two areas provide an indication of FND services in contrast to JSA/New Deal services but they do not constitute an impact assessment.

This is the fourth in a series of evaluation reports aiming to understand experiences of the Jobseekers Regime and Flexible New Deal (JRFND) from the point of view of customers, Jobcentre Plus staff and provider staff, and establish the extent to which JRFND leads to additional customer employment outcomes.

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