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Evaluation of the Job Outcome Target Pilots: findings from the qualitative study

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Contents

List of tables

List of figures

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ADF	Adviser Discretion Fund
CMS	Customer Management System
EOT	Employer Outcome Target
ESF	European Social Fund
FMS	Five Minute Signing
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HR	Human Resources
IB	Incapacity Benefit
IS	Income Support
JET	Job Entry Target
JOT	Job Outcome Target
BMD	Business Measurement Division (Analytical Services)
LMS	Labour Market System
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MI	Management Information
NAO	National Audit Office
PDS	Performance and Development System
PRI	Policy Research Institute
PSA	Public Service Agreement

QA	Quality Assurance
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
RDV	Response to Displayed Vacancies
WPLS	Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

Summary

The Job Outcome Target (JOT) is a potential replacement for the Job Entry Target (JET) which has been in operation within Jobcentre Plus since 2002. Essentially, JOT measures **all** off-flows from benefits into work, including those for which there has been no specific intervention (submission to a vacancy, participation in contracted provision, Adviser Discretion Fund (ADF) grant, etc.) on the part of Jobcentre Plus. JOT also captures those customers who are not claiming benefits but obtain work though Jobcentre Plus intervention.

JOT marks a significant departure from the existing JET system in that it is not necessary under JOT, for Jobcentre Plus to demonstrate that an intervention has taken place in order to 'claim' a job entry for performance measurement purposes. This has several important implications: Firstly, JOT obviates the need for Jobcentre Plus to 'manufacture' interventions in order to claim a job entry through, for example, providing an ADF grant to a customer who obtains a job independently of Jobcentre Plus. The practice of 'speculative submissions' to enable job entries to be counted through the JET system could also be regarded as inappropriate and wasteful.

Other potential beneficial consequences from the operation of JOT include the idea that Jobcentre Plus staff are likely to work more as a team, as all parts of the office stand to achieve equal credit for performance, whereas as a team, if staff do not have individual JETs, as under JET, there were some incentives for undesirable competition in this regard. Frontline staff, in principle, should be more willing to advise customers to use self-service channels or undertake other forms of job search, as there is less fear of 'losing' that individual from the system. Use of non-contracted providers should increase for similar reasons.

Due to the potentially significant impact of adopting such a radically different approach to measuring performance, it was decided to pilot JOT in seven Jobcentre Plus districts. It was also decided to pilot two different options: Under Option 1, job outcomes are measured with reference to Inland Revenue data which, when integrated with data on benefits, is capable, in principle, of identifying off-flows from benefit into work. Option 2 relies on tracking, by Jobcentre Plus, of people ceasing to claim benefits, with the perceived advantage that data retrieved in this

way would be available after a shorter period of time than the six months estimated for Option 1. The pilots went 'live' on 10 January 2005.

Jobcentre Plus commissioned the Policy Research Institute (PRI), Leeds Metropolitan University, to undertake a qualitative evaluation of the operation and impact of the JOT pilots. The research took place over three phases: Phase 1 involved a baseline assessment of the views and expectations of staff in the pilot districts. Phase 2 also focused on staff and examined early implementation issues after around three months of the pilots' operation. Phase 3 was a more extensive exercise involving interviews and focus groups with Jobcentre Plus staff, a survey of customers, interviews with providers and employers and analysis of results from the large-scale survey of employers conducted by FDS on behalf of Jobcentre Plus in order to calculate the indicators for the Employer Outcome Target (EOT). Phase 3 took place in July 2005, around six months after the JOT 'go live' date.

The evaluation was organised around twelve 'key questions' which form the basis of the findings presented in this summary. The key questions are crucial to decisions regarding whether and how to roll out JOT on a national basis, namely:

- the impact of JOT on off-flows from benefit into work;

- the impact of JOT on overall employment rates;

- the impact of JOT on outcomes for high priority groups;

- the impact of JOT on submissions and/or follow-up activity;

- the impact of JOT on cost-effectiveness and use of self-help channels;

- the extent to which JOT enables staff to focus efforts on hardest to help customers;

- whether it is possible to performance manage effectively under JOT;

- the impact of JOT on people management and cultural change;

- the impact on employers of the JOT approach;

- the impact on providers of the JOT approach;

- the existence of an adverse impact from JOT for particular customer groups; and

- the lessons that can be learned from the pilot for any national roll-out.

The first three key questions have been addressed exclusively through the quantitative evaluation, conducted in-house by the Business Measurement Division (Analytical Services) (BMD), that ran parallel to this study. The findings presented here relate to the last nine key questions and are, in most cases based solely on the qualitative evidence. However, reference is made, where appropriate, to key findings from the quantitative study.

Submission and follow-up activity

The key question under consideration here is: *'Does JOT improve the efficiency of Jobcentre Plus by reducing the amount of activity around submissions and/or follow-up?'*

• There is very strong evidence from the qualitative study that there has indeed been a significant reduction in resources devoted by local offices to follow-up and submission activity, linked to the widely understood perception that there is no need to 'chase destinations' under JOT.

• The clearest manifestations of such resource savings relate to speculative submissions and the use of the ADF, both of which reduced dramatically in the JOT pilot districts. The picture, in relation to 'ordinary' submissions, was mixed, with most districts reporting an initial decline, followed by a recovery as it managers began to realise that it was still necessary to submit customers to jobs under JOT, albeit with a greater focus on 'appropriate' submissions.

• No clear pattern emerged as to the scale of the resource savings resulting from JOT, but most respondents were clear that such savings are significant. In the case of the Option 2 districts, however, it was reported that these resource savings had been cancelled out by the extra resources required to establish, operate, monitor and validate the process of tracking the destinations of individuals that had ceased to claim benefits. These conclusions are supported by the findings of the Value for Money study undertaken as part of the quantitative evaluation.

• In summary, the qualitative research demonstrates clearly that efficiency savings have indeed been made in the follow-up and submissions process as a direct result of the introduction of the JOT pilots.

Use of self-help channels

The relevant strategic high level question is: *'Does JOT encourage cost-effective use of self-help channels?'*

• Jobcentre Plus staff and customers reported overwhelmingly that the use of self-help channels had increased noticeably since the introduction of the JOT pilots in January 2005. However, this was widely reported as part of an ongoing change and JOT was seen as only one factor contributing to increased use of self-service channels.

• The qualitative evidence is consistent with the view that JOT has reinforced and supported an already existing process of increasing reliance on self-service channels by customers, and contributed to increasing efficiency by reducing incentives for staff to expend effort and resources on customers that are capable of helping themselves.

- These conclusions are broadly consistent with the findings of the quantitative evaluation, which identified no detectable impact of JOT on submissions to Jobcentre Plus Direct, but suggested that take-up of Apply Direct increased since the introduction of JOT.

Focus on hardest to help customers

The third strategic high level question asks *'Does JOT enable staff to focus their efforts more effectively on the hardest to help customers?'*

- Increasing the focus of staff activity on the 'hardest to help' customers has been a central theme of Jobcentre Plus' vision and strategy for several years. In principle, JOT should further encourage advisers, in particular, to focus on the highest Priority Groups (1 and 2) among Jobcentre Plus customers.

- Despite a number of complicating factors, Jobcentre Plus respondents were able to give some examples of how they had increased their focus on the harder to help, spending more time with people with disabilities or Income Support (IS)/ Incapacity Benefit (IB) customers for example. Some managers and advisers had started to make more effort to find out about relevant local provision (e.g. ESF-funded programmes) and to take a longer-term view of enhancing the employability of these customers.

- It is not possible to state unequivocally, on the basis of the qualitative evidence that JOT has, in practice, enabled staff to focus even more clearly than before on harder to help customer groups. There are some signs, however, of moves in this direction and there is no evidence of any reduction in focus on these groups as a direct result of JOT.

- The quantitative findings in relation to this question were also inconclusive, reinforcing the mixed picture presented in this report.

Performance management

There are two parts to the fourth strategic high level question. Firstly: *'Is it possible to effectively performance manage JOT?'* Secondly: *'What gaps in management information need to be filled prior to any national roll-out?'*

- In terms of the first part of the strategic high level question, the existence of large groups of managers and staff who feel comfortable with performance management under JOT, suggests strongly that it is **possible** to effectively performance manage under JOT. It is clear, however, that broadly equally sizeable groups of managers and staff have experienced some difficulties in adjusting to significant changes in the target and data regime and will require ongoing support and development in order to operate more comfortably in the absence of a constant flow of job entry data.

- Specific gaps in management information relate primarily to the effective tracking of adviser activity in a situation where measuring the relationship between inputs and outputs is becoming more important. The key issues, however, relate to the timeliness of job outcome information, its disaggregation to office level and crucially, guidance on the interpretation of Management Information (MI) that was little used under JET and/or takes on a changed meaning under JOT.

- Ongoing work on 'symptom indicators', outlined in the quantitative evaluation report, suggests that it is possible to produce national forecasts of outcome performance up to two months in arrears, with a relatively small margin for error. Work on 'lever indicators' has, to date, been less successful in identifying indicators that might help to predict outcome performance, and hence, guide management actions in relation to performance variations. This suggests that the experience, skill and intuition of managers and the effective communication of good practice, would be increasingly important under JOT in ensuring adequate responses to poor performance, for example.

People management and cultural change

The first part of the strategic high level question under this heading – *'Is it possible to effectively manage people under JOT?'* – is very similar in nature to the question above on performance management. Under JOT, people management and performance management are so closely inter-related as to amount to the same thing. Clarity in terms of behavioural expectations under JOT would, according to many Jobcentre Plus respondents, help considerably in the process of managing people to achieve the best possible performance with the resources available.

The second part of the question refers to a key issue underpinning much of the discussion with Jobcentre Plus staff, particularly, but not exclusively, at management level – *'Does JOT produce a cultural change within Jobcentre Plus offices?'*

- Many respondents referred to the need for 'culture change' in order to optimise the potential benefits from JOT. The types of changes that were felt to be desirable in the JOT context include a greater focus on qualitative approaches to management ('*managing people not numbers*'); an emphasis on team rather than individual achievement; more flexibility around issues such as the referral of customers to providers and a more outward-looking approach to working with contracted and non-contracted organisations that might help customers to move closer to the labour market.

- Jobcentre Plus respondents were overwhelmingly of the view that, in order for JOT to work effectively in the way intended, a substantial culture change would be required across the whole organisation. Research participants also stated clearly that such a change is unlikely to follow on automatically from the introduction of JOT; they were also unanimous in their view that culture change of the type and scale needed is unlikely to occur over a short period of time such as that covered by the pilots to date. This is not a surprising finding in the light of all that is known about the complexities of cultural change in large organisations.

- In conclusion, JOT does not lead **automatically** to a 'culture change' within Jobcentre Plus. However, it is consistent with, and in many ways is driving, some of the attitudinal and behavioural changes that may lead over a longer period to a 'culture change'. Other factors, and in particular leadership from national, regional and district management, will be required in order to effect the considerable and challenging cultural shifts required.

Impact on employers

- Some Jobcentre Plus staff expressed fears that service to employers may be negatively affected by JOT. In particular, some felt that the increased focus on higher priority groups implied by JOT might lead to declining activity around job fairs, large-scale recruitments and similar events, which typically resulted in large number of job entries for employed individuals and non-claimants.

- On the other hand, it was felt that employers would be positive about the reduction in local office follow-up activity, particularly if resources continued to be devoted to 'customer service' contact with employers.

- The qualitative research – supported by the quantitative evidence – found no evidence of any impact, positive or negative, of JOT on employers, with no employers contacted for this study expressing any awareness of JOT and very few being aware of JETs in general.

Impact on providers

- In principle, JOT should lead to a changed relationship between Jobcentre Plus and providers. In particular, JOT should encourage advisers to refer clients to a wider range of providers, not only contracted providers. The research found evidence that Jobcentre Plus managers and staff are aware of this possibility and are taking steps to facilitate a more flexible approach to referrals by, for example, researching local providers and setting up data bases.

- The vast majority of providers contacted for this study were unaware of JOT and had only a sketchy knowledge of JETs. Cutbacks in the budget for provision and uncertainty about future budgets were the main areas of concern for providers, with JOT having no discernable impact on their activities at the six-month stage.

Impacts on particular customer groups

The qualitative study looked at the impact of JOT on customers in general, with particular attention paid to variations between different groups of customers.

- The 211 customers interviewed for this evaluation study identified a number of changes in their experience of the Jobcentre Plus service that had occurred over the first six months of 2005 and were consistent with the intentions of JOT. In particular, there was a widespread perception among customers that staff were making greater efforts to encourage them to use the self-help channels.

- A small number of customers felt that the service they had received from Jobcentre Plus had declined since the end of 2004, however, a substantial group felt they had experienced an improved service. Many of the improvements cited by customers cannot be attributed directly to JOT. However, the customer survey results are consistent with the view that customers in general have not experienced a decline in service quality in the JOT pilot districts, despite the concerns of some members of staff.

The relevant strategic high level question is: *'Are there any adverse impacts from JOT for particular customer groups?'*

- Some members of staff expressed the concern that JOT might inadvertently affect the service provided to some customer groups. In particular, some customers fall – nominally – into lower priority groups, but in reality may not be job-ready and may require face-to-face contact and assistance early in their spells of unemployment.

- The customer survey sample was not sufficiently large to enable any detailed analysis of responses by customer group, but a review of the 'negative' comments received did not reveal any pattern according to customer group.

- The qualitative research found no strong direct evidence of adverse impacts from JOT on particular customer groups, however, it is not possible to state categorically, on the basis of our evidence that the impacts feared by many staff have not occurred in some instances.

- We can conclude from the qualitative research that JOT has in general had a neutral impact on customer service, with no evidence of negative consequences for any particular customer groups. This finding is supported by the quantitative analysis of outcomes by customer group, which found no significant or systematic variations by customer group.

Lessons for national roll-out

The final strategic high level question is: *'What other lessons can be learned for any national roll-out?'*

- Constant and consistent two-way communication with all levels of staff, tailored, where appropriate, to different groups, is a vital ingredient in the success of any roll-out and will help to embed the types of behavioural and cultural changes that need to take place over the medium to long term. A strong focus on changing behavioural expectations (for example, in relation to more effective team working, referral of customers to a wider range of providers, encouraging customers to use self-service channels and a more qualitative approach to management), while getting across the essential mechanics of JOT, is also important.

- Finally, a key conclusion is that investment in support, training and development activities for all staff is an essential prerequisite for the successful roll-out of JOT. Particular attention needs to be paid to line managers, who need to take a more qualitative approach to people and performance management; advisers, whose roles and approach to performance measurement would change significantly and frontline staff, on whom the onus is placed to ensure that customers are directed to the most appropriate channels to ensure that they receive the best available service.

Recommendations

- In our view, the qualitative study suggests that JOT is feasible as an alternative approach to performance measurement and management for Jobcentre Plus. The principle of JOT is widely supported by Jobcentre Plus staff, and has led – even within a short period of time – to many of the desired changes in staff behaviour and has resulted almost immediately in the reduction or elimination of inefficient and perverse behaviour in relation to 'chasing destinations' and 'buying points'.

- Some moves in the direction of a 'culture change' have been noted, for example in relation to team working, performance management and external collaboration. However, these are part of an ongoing and complex process and will take time to bed in.

- Based on the evidence we collected within the timeframe of the evaluation, the JOT pilots appear to have made little difference to the perceptions of customers or employers about the service they have received from Jobcentre Plus, with JOT pilot offices reporting continued 'customer service' contact with employers. Nor has JOT impacted significantly on relations with providers.

- It is clear from the qualitative research that the decision regarding whether and/ or how to roll out JOT on a national basis is not purely a technical one focusing on whether the system is likely to operate smoothly. The decision will also be influenced by the results of the quantitative study which produced some mixed findings. It found a small negative impact for Option 1 district performance which very narrowly passed the test of statistical significance. Looking at client sub-groups, a significant negative impact was found for PG3 clients and clients claiming for one to six months. In Option 2 districts, evidence of a negative impact was stronger and statistically significant, notably PG3 and PG1 clients (particularly lone parents), people with a claim duration of between one to six months (particularly one to three months), 18-21 year olds and 34-44 year olds. However, these findings need to be qualified by the noted limitations of the quantitative study in relation to the short observation period, incomplete data for the months analysed, the atypical performance of one of the comparator districts and the fact that no allowance could be made for a transitional 'bedding in' period. The quantitative study did support the qualitative findings that Option 1 provides greater potential for cost savings, particularly in regard to the validation process.

- The external evaluation team's view of the qualitative findings suggests a recommendation that JOT should be rolled out on a national basis as soon as is operationally possible.

- The qualitative study found no substantial or significant differences between Options 1 and 2 in terms of their impact on staff or management behaviour, organisational culture or relations with customers or stakeholders.

- On the basis of the qualitative results alone, Option 1 would appear to be the preferable option, given that the resource costs associated with Option 2 appear to outweigh any resource savings from reduced follow-up with employers under JOT, a finding corroborated by the quantitative evaluation.

- It would be helpful if the period over which Option 1 outcome performance data is made available to districts could be reduced as far as is technically possible. Accurate estimates of recent outcome performance based on incomplete P45/46 data would also help managers to obtain an early (if only partial) indication of outcome performance on a month-to-month basis. At the time of writing this report, the quantitative study was unable to identify any robust 'lever' or causal indicators. However, a number of 'symptom' or predicative indicators (some recordable action between a customer accepting a job and outcome data being reported) were identified which are able to predict – with some margin for error – monthly performance two months in arrears.

- Targets under JOT need to be based, as far as possible, on a meaningful and realistic analysis of the relationship between JET and JOT performance and a degree of flexibility will need to be built in as the whole system beds in, meaning that apparent under or over-performance in the initial period of implementation will need to be interpreted with caution.

- As outlined in the previous section, it is important that the technical process of rolling out JOT be underpinned by an intensive, ongoing and consistent programme of communication, including provision for questions, feedback and suggestions from all groups of staff. Such a communication programme should start as soon as the decision is made to roll out JOT and should focus primarily on desired behavioural changes and associated performance expectations.

- Guidance, support and development programmes will be required especially for line managers (focusing on performance management under JOT); advisers (revised expectations regarding activities with customers and performance measurement) and frontline staff (identifying customer needs and using available services cost-effectively).

- Finally, and very importantly, the experience of the JOT pilot districts to date has created a large pool of expertise, examples of good practice and lessons for the future, which is a potentially invaluable resource for other districts, should the decision be made to roll out JOT nationally. It is essential that this experience is not lost and that ways are found to disseminate the main lessons across Jobcentre Plus in a positive and helpful way.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

On 10 January 2005, seven districts within Jobcentre Plus began to pilot a new job outcome target, based on off-flows from benefit in to work. The new target replaces the Job Entry Target (JET) in these districts. The JET is based on recorded job entries following formal submissions of customers to vacancies by Jobcentre Plus staff. Job entries are recorded and counted for performance purposes only if a valid submission has been made, and proof of the job start has been obtained from the employer. In addition, JET involves a weighted points system, whereby job entries amongst high priority 'hardest to help' customer groups (e.g. lone parents, people with disabilities etc) attract higher performance points. The Job Outcome Target (JOT) pilots also aim to capture differences in outcomes for these key priority groups.

Two separate pilot options were tested, running in parallel from January 2005 until March 2006.

For Option 1 pilot districts, off-flows from benefits into work are measured using the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS). The WPLS links individual benefit records and data from Jobcentre Plus systems, such as the Labour Market System (LMS) – on activity/ programme participation – to employment records held by Inland Revenue through matching individual P45/46 data. This removes[1] the need for any local tracking of job entries, as all the required data is sourced centrally from administrative systems. However, this option involves a lengthy time lag in provision of performance data, as it takes many months for the outcomes to appear through the linked systems and to be reported back via WPLS. For this reason, a Management Information (MI) package was put in place to help managers monitor and manage performance on a timely basis.

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[1] Although in practice, tracking by Employer Direct continued within these districts for contractual reasons during the pilot period.

The four districts piloting Option 1 are:

- North West Wales and Powys;

- Calderdale and Kirklees;

- Devon; and

- Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth.

Option 2 pilot districts adopted an alternative 'known destinations' approach. This captures off-flows from benefit into work by using existing processes and systems, such as recorded submissions activity and customer notifications, to record all known job entries, regardless of whether customers received help directly or not. In these districts, some local tracking is still required to ensure performance is captured. However, this option provides more timely indication of actual performance, although outcomes for workless non-claimants and/or those who have minimal interaction with Jobcentre Plus are not captured.

Three districts are piloting Option 2, these are:

- Grampian and Tayside;

- Greater Mersey; and

- Tees Valley.

The key principles underpinning the JOT pilots are the needs to:

- focus on the Government's key employment priorities as set out in the Department for Work and Pensions' Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets, incentivising staff to prioritise the specified priority client groups and locations;

- focus on the outcomes and value added from the business processes for linking clients with labour market opportunities that Jobcentre Plus is responsible and accountable for delivering;

- help provide incentives that generate appropriate behaviour and continuous improvement and facilitate reductions in unacceptable performance variation;

- support modernisation of Jobcentre Plus and encourage efficient delivery of services and increased use of alternative resource-efficient channels;

- be easily understood at all levels of the organisation, grounded in operational reality and translatable to the individual (subject to cost/benefit trade offs);

- be specific, measurable, meet National Audit Office (NAO) requirements and be supported by rigorous IT-based systems, providing timely and localised recording and performance management information; and

- complement other agendas, such as the National Employment Panel's recommendations on skills and retention and progression in work and flexibilities introduced as a result of Building on New Deal (BoND).

1.2 Rationale for the Job Outcome Target

The JOT differs substantially from the existing JET, and marks a clear shift in approach to performance measurement and management.

The JET system requires Jobcentre Plus to 'treat' all customers moving in to work, regardless of their need for intervention, in order to capture evidence of performance. In some cases, this results in activity which is unnecessary in economic terms (ie, 'deadweight'). For example, job-ready customers may be helped by an adviser to find a job, through formal submissions, when in fact they are perfectly capable of finding work through their own efforts, accessing vacancy information via one of several-self-service channels now available. In addition, the weighted points system creates a 'perverse' incentive to treat some cases. For example, a 'high priority' customer, such as a lone parent, who already has a job offer may be referred to provision, or given discretionary financial help (through the Adviser Discretion Fund (ADF)) solely in order to ensure that Jobcentre Plus staff can 'capture' the outcome for performance purposes. In other words, the JET system requires a tangible link to be established between staff actions and the job entry point score.

Another drawback of the JET system is its failure to capture true performance, as all job entries achieved via self-service channels, for example, via Jobseeker Direct or the internet, are not credited to the organisation. As modernisation and the roll-out of Jobcentre Plus progresses, the number and type of channels available to customers has increased. Customers now regularly make use of electronic and telephone contacts in order to access and apply for vacancies.

Thus, the strategic case for moving to an off-flows based JOT, includes:

• capturing job entries achieved through the expanding number of modernised channels (of which Jobcentre Plus has stewardship), and which involve people applying for jobs directly;

• encouraging the most cost effective use of new self-service channels for those customers who can help themselves, whilst enabling personal advisers to focus intensive support on the hardest to help; and

• removing/reducing the need for expensive follow up activity with employers, thus encouraging staff to spend time on more value-added activities, rather than on measuring and validation work with the sole aim of capturing job entry performance.

1.3 Purpose of the JOT pilots

The purpose of the JOT pilots is to explore:

• whether the pilot measures are workable to support a replacement national target;

- whether it is possible to identify a set of leading indicators which will enable managers to monitor and influence performance;

- any gaps in management information which need to be filled in order to support such a set of lead indicators;

- whether any identified lead indicators should be included as part of a future national target;

- whether the measure is suitable for performance management purposes and for performance reporting;

- whether the measures drive appropriate behaviours in staff;

- how the measures impact on the use of new channels for service delivery;

- whether it is possible to measure outcomes for (at least) all those on benefit and maintain an emphasis on priority groups;

- how to measure the specific contribution of Jobcentre Plus to the achievement of the overall outcomes measured by an off-flows target (Value for Money).

A number of key risks associated with the pilots were identified, namely:

- the size of cultural change required within Jobcentre Plus;

- the feasibility of developing lead indicators that impact effectively on the off-flows target;

- the deliverability of MI via existing/ planned IT changes;

- presentational issues around counting all outcomes in the districts for Jobcentre Plus; and

- the lack of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) ownership of WPLS data, and hence lack of influence over improving its timeliness.

1.4   Culture change and people issues

It was identified at an early stage that a key factor influencing the success of the pilots was delivery of the required cultural change. As already stated, the JET requires Jobcentre Plus to show that a 'valid' intervention or activity with the customer led directly to their movement into work. This involves often complex procedures for tracking and capturing outcomes from 'submissions' and 'placings' into Jobcentre Plus advertised vacancies, and capturing outcomes from providers and through financial incentives. Within an off-flow measure, all movement into work is captured, and it is immaterial, for the purposes of the target, which channel the customer used, whether the customer was seen by one or several members of staff, who undertook the final activity prior to the customer moving into work. This move away from a JET brings a significant shift in management of staff and performance away from a numerical 'jobs target' often focused at individual level and towards more quality and overall performance measures.

More specifically, early work within the pilot districts identified a number of expected and potential changes in staff behaviour and delivery:

- increased referral of job-ready customers, across the range of client groups and benefits, to self-help channels; including the telephone job broking service (Jobseeker Direct) and internet services;

- encouragement and support for customers using self-help channels for the first time;

- more time spent with harder to help customers, identifying routes back to work and sourcing provision to aid the move;

- increased referrals to contracted and non-contracted provision, with an increasing identification of those providers who best help our customers;

- more emphasis on quality issues within management of advisers;

- changed expenditure patterns on financial incentives such as ADF;

- increased level of local labour market knowledge in advisers to support job search wider than Jobcentre Plus vacancies;

- closer working with other recruitment and employment partners;

- a greater link between job broking and benefit processing teams, with a much clearer role for benefit processing teams within the achievement of job outcomes.

1.5   Customer experience

In addition, changes might be expected in how customers experience services as a result of the JOT pilots. The changes expected were:

- **job-ready** customers would potentially receive less advisory time overall. Following initial work with an adviser they would be encouraged to self-help through self-service job search channels. They would be supported through the early stages and then potentially contacted on a 'keep-in-touch' basis;

- **harder to help** customers would see increased adviser input. As job-ready customers are 'handed off' to self-help channels, adviser caseloads should change to include those customers who need help and support in order to become job-ready. There should be more emphasis on activities and provision to prepare such customers for work;

- **all customers** would see an increased emphasis on supplying postcode information (used to allocate performance to a district), notifying Jobcentre Plus when they move into work and the benefits of handing in P45 data to their new employer.

2 Evaluation aims and research methods

2.1 Aims of the evaluation

The evaluation programme was designed to address a number of key questions relating to the implementation and performance of the Job Outcome Target (JOT) pilots. The aim of the evaluation was to inform the decision-making process in autumn 2005 as to whether or not a JOT should be implemented nationally from April 2006.

2.2 Key questions

The key questions investigated through the JOT pilot evaluation were:

1 Does JOT lead to increased off-flows from benefit in to work?

2 Does JOT improve employment rates overall?

3 Does JOT contribute to a reduction in performance variation by improving outcomes for high priority groups?

4 Are there any adverse impacts from JOT for particular customer groups, e.g. ethnic minorities?

5 Does JOT improve the efficiency of Jobcentre Plus by reducing the amount of activity around submissions and/or follow-up?

6 Does JOT encourage cost-effective use of self-service channels?

7 Does JOT enable staff to focus their efforts more effectively on the hardest to help customers?

8 Is it possible to effectively performance manage JOT? What gaps in performance management information need to be filled prior to any national roll-out?

9   Is it possible to effectively manage people under JOT? How does JOT affect staff behaviours, the Performance and Development System, and team/ office/ partnership working? Does JOT produce a 'cultural change' within Jobcentre Plus offices?

10   What is the impact on employers of the JOT approach?

11   What is the impact on providers of the JOT approach?

12   What other lessons can be learned from implementation of the JOT pilots for any national roll-out?

2.3   Scope of the evaluation programme

The evaluation programme consisted of both internal and externally commissioned work, secondary data analysis and primary research. The key components were:

• quantitative analysis of administrative data, using a range of analysis methods, to estimate the actual and potential impact of JOT on off-flows and employment rates;

• quantitative analysis of administrative data, using a range of analysis methods to appraise a range of potential leading indicators ;

• cost-benefit work to estimate the potential savings from implementation of JOT;

• qualitative and observational research with customers and staff to gauge the extent of behavioural/cultural change experienced in the pilot districts and to identify the key lessons learned for national roll-out;

• analysis of employer outcome target (EOT) data to assess whether there have been any changes in employer satisfaction as a result of the JOT approach.

This report presents the results from the qualitative evaluation exercise, which focused primarily upon key questions 4 to 12. Where relevant and appropriate, the qualitative findings are cross-referenced with key findings from the quantitative analysis.

2.4   Research methods

The qualitative evaluation study comprised three phases:

Phase 1 consisted of a baseline study undertaken in the seven pilot districts in November/December 2004. Each district was visited and group discussions were held with a cross-section of staff in order to explore their understanding, views and expectations about the (then) forthcoming JOT pilots. A total of 14 group discussions were held with groups of between six and 15 staff, with representation from a broad range of staff groups.

Phase 2 took place approximately three months after the 'go live' date of 10 January 2005 and was designed primarily to investigate early impacts of JOT and identify any implementation issues that were emerging at this stage of the pilots' operation. Like Phase 1, this part of the study comprised a series of focus groups and interviews with a cross-section of Jobcentre Plus staff in each pilot district. Interviews were held with 25 management representatives and 50 other staff attended focus groups.

Phase 3 was a more comprehensive exercise which took place in June/July 2005, approximately six months after 'go live'. Visits to districts were longer than those that took place in Phases 1 and 2 and a wider range of managers and staff took part in interviews and/or focus groups. Focus groups were arranged in such a way that they involved people from broadly similar staff groups – advisers, team leaders, customer service, frontline and benefit processing. In addition, interviews took place with a range of regional Field Directors and Performance Managers, HR Business Partners and members of the validation panel for Option 2. Thirty interviews were undertaken with management respondents across the JOT pilot districts, 12 with regional and HR contacts and 32 group discussions were held, each attended by between six and 10 people.

Phase 3 also involved more detailed investigation of the impact of JOT on Jobcentre Plus customers, employers and providers. Interviews were held with 211 customers in offices within the pilot districts; telephone and face-to-face interviews took place with around 70 employers and providers and researchers undertook an exploratory analysis of the data from the regular EOT surveys.

Research instruments (primarily topic guides) were designed to elicit information to inform the questions outlined in the High Level Evaluation Strategy (see Appendix E).

3 Communication and understanding of Job Outcome Target

3.1   Jobcentre Plus staff

Staff respondents reported widespread involvement in the communication process prior to Job Outcome Target (JOT) go-live. A variety of different means of communication were used, from email to attendance at awareness raising events run by the districts themselves and by the national tier. In addition, most districts designated at least one member of staff in each office as a JOT coordinator, who could then act as a point of reference for queries and two-way information flow.

Overall, staff thought that the communication process had worked well and comments received were overwhelmingly qualified as being generated by the benefit of hindsight rather than being criticisms of the communication process itself. Staff felt that while emails helped to keep them aware and 'in the loop', at times an excess of email traffic meant that they went unread, or individual staff were unsure as to whether all emails were relevant to their own work and role. Attendance at awareness raising events was thought to be useful and worthwhile. Indeed, many staff reported that where all staff in an office had been able to attend, principally in small offices, this had helped collective understanding. This was more difficult in larger offices, and there was some feeling among staff that prior to a national roll-out, it would be useful for all staff to have attended such events. For instance, the effect of 'cascading' information sometimes led to messages being confused:

> '...we gave people messages about JOT. We said this is what we want you to do and people heard something different. And that is often true in a big change. For example, with all the staff we said that JOT isn't about submitting people to any job, it is about doing a quality submission where there is a match…they heard "don't do any submissions".'

The communication and awareness raising process was also hampered by a number of other factors. These included the relatively late (during November/December

2004) dissemination process. This meant, for instance, that at the baseline staff workshops organised in the first part of December, there was a wide variation in awareness of JOT. Awareness at this stage was less pronounced among some customer facing groups (but not advisers) and benefit processing staff. Other factors which constrained information flow and awareness was the effects of the 'deeming' process which saw Job Entry Target (JET) performance for the entire year being projected from results in the pilot districts up to the end of December 2004. This meant that in each of the pilot districts there was considerable emphasis on ensuring that all performance under JET was captured prior to the JOT go-live date of 10 January. Many staff reported that this detracted unhelpfully from the process of awareness raising and preparing for JOT.

Finally, uncertainty over some of the detail of the pilots also contributed to some misunderstandings and ambiguity. Particular issues mentioned in this regard related to the construction of the JOT target and whether outcome points would still be attributed to Priority Customer Groups 4 and 5, to the timing and detail of the availability of Management Information (MI), and the types of proxy indicator that might be used in the absence of outcome indicators.

By Phase 3 of the evaluation, all staff were aware that JOT had been introduced on a pilot basis in their district and that other districts were piloting an alternative option. Staff also understood the rationale for JOT, with this frequently being described in terms of the overall Jobcentre Plus vision, especially by management respondents. Advisers tended to link JOT to the removal of individual level targets. Other staff tended to link JOT to particular aspects of Jobcentre Plus reform such as increased emphasis on Priority Customer Groups and the redirection of 'job-ready' customers to self-help channels and reduced Response to Displayed Vacancies (RDV) activity. Most staff were also able to distinguish between basic differences between Option 1 and 2 with the former being associated with the retrieval of performance data from the Inland Revenue while Option 2 relied on obtaining this information from following up customers who leave benefits.

However, awareness of more detailed and operational issues was less clear and more ambiguous between different individual staff, staff groups, offices, the two options and between districts. There were also concerns that some messages had been confused during this period, for instance that advisers and other staff no longer needed to submit customers to jobs. This had led to a subsequent round of communications in some districts that submissions activity needed to be resumed, albeit with less emphasis on speculative submissions (especially where these were used previously to 'buy' a job entry) and more emphasis on job-matching activities to ensure better quality submissions. There were also differences of understanding as to whether staff would still help customers to complete in-work benefit claim forms.

Differentiating between staff groups, advisers had a much more detailed understanding of JOT and its implications than did benefit processing staff, for instance. Staff responsible for validating job outcomes in Option 2 districts reported that there were differences between offices in terms of understanding how and where to record and store data relating to customers leaving benefits.

One area where there was a universal ambiguity in understanding, related to the way in which the overall district level JOT target was established, with some suggesting that they suspected that this process (understandably) lacked the intellectual and technical rigour that they had been used to with JET.

Despite JOT being understood as related to modernisation and improving customer service, especially in relation to Priority Customer Groups and the 'harder to help', there were also concerns raised by staff as to alternative motivations for the implementation of JOT. These were particularly related to the efficiency initiatives that are currently under way within Jobcentre Plus.

A number of potential improvements were suggested by both managers and staff to the communication and awareness raising process. Several respondents suggested that pre-roll-out, communication should focus on the role-specific behavioural implications of JOT. It was felt by some, for instance, that the communication process prior to the pilot go-live was both too generic and overly focused on the mechanics of the performance system at the expense of clearly establishing the types of behavioural and cultural changes that JOT is intended to foster.

> '...in the implementation of JOT we focused far more on process than we did on behaviour…JOT is cultural, it is not about process.'

> (District manager)

Some suggested that generic information could be disseminated to all staff which could then be augmented by role-specific information targeted at key staff groups. Some benefit processing staff felt that by receiving the same information as advisers in the run up to go-live, the implications of JOT for their role had been exaggerated. They also reported a sense that 'things have gone quiet' since then, and that for example, they didn't know what performance had been since January, even in Option 2 districts where some information was available. By contrast, advisers reported a need for more specific and detailed information. There was also a marked preference for communication and information flow to be accompanied by behavioural and operational guidance. There was also some preference among staff respondents for a longer lead-in time to allow more inclusive and effective communication and awareness raising prior to roll-out.

3.2   Customers, employers and providers

None of the customers or employers interviewed during Phase 3 was aware of the existence of JOT and only a very small number expressed any awareness that Jobcentre Plus operated a target system. In general, providers were more knowledgeable about Jobcentre Plus targets, with contracted providers, in particular, stating that they were aware that Jobcentre Plus is required to achieve target numbers of job entry points based on the type of customer placed into jobs. Only two out of the 30 providers interviewed for this study had heard of JOT; in neither case was the respondent able to provide more than a very general explanation of how JOT differed from the previous system.

3.3   Summary of key points

The following key points arose from these lines of enquiry:

• The communication process to staff was thought to be effective, but with the benefit of hindsight could be improved further.

• More role-specific information about the behavioural and operational implications of JOT would be useful prior to national roll-out.

• Communication activities would be assisted by the availability of detailed operational guidance tailored to the expected changes for specific staff groups.

• Communication activities may be hindered by an over-emphasis on capturing previous performance in the run up to roll-out.

• Clarity over the construction of the overall district target and the type and timing of support and information from the national tier would help to manage the potential uncertainty that may arise from the introduction of JOT.

• Awareness and understanding of Jobcentre Plus targets, and of JOT in particular, is minimal outside the Jobcentre Plus organisation.

4 Working practices and staff motivation

4.1 General

A general issue raised included the important perception from the districts that Job Outcome Target (JOT) required long-term cultural and behavioural shifts. Since such change only occurs over long periods of time, it was widely reported that change had begun but was by no means complete. These findings are in line with much of the literature on institutional and organisational theory and, therefore, should not be seen as surprising. As such, where changes in working practices reported in the following section appear minimal or incomplete, this should not be understood necessarily as a process failure but simply as an integral part of such organisational change.

The evaluation is also technically difficult as a result of the large number of other initiatives underway in Jobcentre Plus which make attribution of changes in working practices difficult. For example, changes to budgets available through the Adviser Discretionary Fund (ADF) make it difficult to attribute reported changes in the use of ADF to the introduction of JOT. So too, the suspension of contracts with programme providers also make it difficult to attribute changes in the way that advisers refer to provision, to the introduction of JOT. This was made all the more difficult because of the lack of a quasi-experimental element to the methodology which would have allowed comparison of changes in the JOT pilot districts with other comparator districts. Where such attribution problems were encountered, they were overcome by asking respondents themselves to attribute causality to individual or collections of variables. The quantitative evaluation incorporated comparisons with non-pilot districts and the results of this analysis are referred to throughout this report, where relevant.

Another general pattern in responses was discernible in relation to the extent of changes in working practices that had resulted from the introduction of JOT. Advisers, adviser managers and business managers, generally, had noticed quite significant changes in working practices which were at least partially attributable to JOT. However, with the exception of Performance Managers, the greater the 'distance' of respondents from the adviser function, the less significant were any changes noticed. As such, district level managers and more noticeably, regional level managers and also benefit processing staff all reported very low levels of impact on their working practices as a result of JOT.

4.2   Role of advisers

4.2.1   General changes to adviser working practices

Evidence from the baseline phase of the evaluation suggested that advisers saw the main impact of JOT as the removal of individual performance targets, which was widely welcomed. However, there were some concerns related to the loss of motivation and satisfaction for advisers who performed well under Job Entry Target (JET) and increased difficulty in isolating poorly performing advisers. It was also felt that the impact of JOT would be felt disproportionately by advisers dealing with different customer groups. In particular, the expected impacts were welcomed more warmly by advisers dealing with harder to help customer groups. It was felt that JOT would more accurately reflect work done with these groups who often take longer to place in work because of the greater distance to the labour market, the complexity of the challenges involved and the range of potential interventions necessary.

Phase 2 of the evaluation confirmed that some of these expectations had been borne out in practice. Advisers reported an emerging sense of liberation from the pressure of individual performance targets and that they felt that they were more able to deal with the needs of harder to help Priority Customer Groups. This was manifest in both additional time and in terms of less pressure to submit individual customers to jobs to achieve 'quick wins' and instead to work in a more holistic way to tackle their needs and achieve higher quality and more sustainable outcomes. However, these findings were still largely expectations rather than actual experience as a result of the small amount of time that had passed between the introduction of JOT and the fieldwork. Similarly, the relatively short time period covered by the evaluation means that it is not possible to assess the extent to which advisers feel a sense of 'ownership' of the JOT target.

In Phase 3, a number of respondents reported that the adviser role should not change dramatically under JOT '*from that which it always should have been'*. However, at the same time it was widely recognised that the previous JET system had provided incentives for perverse behaviour, particularly with regard to encouraging a focus on 'job-ready' and lower Priority Customer Groups who may enter and exit work frequently, and encouraging the effective 'purchasing' of job entries by 'creating' interventions (such as the disbursement of ADF) to customers reporting

that they had found work unaided and to submitting large volumes of potentially unsuitable candidates to jobs in line with locally set benchmarks in relation to the ratio of submissions to placings.

It was widely reported that these 'perverse incentives' had disappeared under JOT. This enabled advisers to consider the broader needs of customers, though the enabling impact of JOT was limited for some advisers, particularly Lone Parent and New Deal advisers, who had a limited range of provision available.

For other advisers this implied a broader change in their overall working practices, such as increased demand for local labour market and provider knowledge, and at least some of the time released by not having to 'chase destinations' and 'buy' job entries was spent on current local awareness research, particularly using the internet.

Generally, advisers, and indeed most other staff groups, noticed that advisers were now under less immediate pressure than in the JET environment. This was also almost universally felt to be a positive development. Several respondents remarked that the previous overwhelming focus on Job Entries had detracted from the appropriate focus of the adviser role.

However, there was also a definite tendency to report some loss of job satisfaction associated with the loss of the Daily Placing List. This finding was present both in Phase 2 and Phase 3 Fieldwork and consisted of two distinguishable parts: The first was associated with the loss of immediate performance information and confirmation of work undertaken and success achieved. This is a complex issue with connections to a variety of theories of learning in which emphasis is placed on the role of this sort of affirmation of success in confirming internal assumptions about appropriate working practices and cause and effect. It was also noticeable that advisers, in particular, relied on this information to provide external verification of their own workplace performance. As such, many were concerned that without the Daily Placing List they could not prove to line managers that they were working sufficiently hard or achieving sufficient success. Likewise, a notable concern among managers was that the removal of the Daily Placing List also shifted accountability for performance away from individual advisers:

> 'My difficulty with JOT, if I was doing that [adviser] job would be "how do I know what I have achieved today?"'

> (Manager, Option 1 district)

As such, they worried also about the impact on motivation. Taken together these findings suggest that the previous system of immediately visible, transparent and attributable performance information was deeply embedded in the Jobcentre Plus organisational culture. As such, the impact of JOT in disrupting this and reorienting it will be a long-term process.

The second way in which advisers reported the loss of job satisfaction in relation to the removal of the Daily Placing List was much more social and personal in nature. This applied to the disruption of the connection with individual customers that resulted from the less pronounced tendency to personalise the customer/adviser relationship (because individuals' performance measures no longer required this) and from the removal of the requirement to track customer destinations from advisers. This then resulted in a sense of not knowing:

> '...what has happened to this or that customer who I have helped.'

> (Adviser, Option 2 district)

However, this was less an issue for advisers with defined customer case loads (e.g. New Deal advisers) who often build up a long-term relationship with customers anyway, and as such, customers who leave benefit most often inform 'their' adviser of their destination.

Some of these changes in adviser working practices have been assisted and/or offset by interventions at district management level, though for the most part these changes were introduced independently and in advance of JOT. Even where this was the case, both adviser managers and district managers felt that these interventions were perfectly suited to JOT and its underlying rationale. For instance, some districts had recognised the need for greater local labour market knowledge from advisers and had taken steps to increase this. One Option 1 district had appointed Labour Market Champions in each office. Other districts had sought to create handbooks of local provision. Districts had also responded to the need for a variety of additional and alternative indicators of performance to replace the Daily Placing List. For instance, several districts (both Option 1 and Option 2) had introduced an adviser benchmarking tool. In one case this had since been rolled-out in amended form to other parts of the Jobcentre Plus region. In another, the district tool had been adapted from a regional version. An example benchmarking tool[2] is included in Table 4.1. Such tools attempt to replace the previous use of outcome with input and output measures.

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[2] Note that this is presented as an indication of the activities being undertaken at district level and its inclusion does not imply any endorsement or recommendation on the part of the evaluators.

Table 4.1   Alternative adviser input/output measures (adviser benchmarking tool)

Work aspect	Result required/activity	Measurement
• Customer contact time	• Minimum 75 per cent customer contact time (including employers, partners and providers) • Ensure booking is kept ahead within four days • LMIC activity is achieved • Ensure action is taken to identify inappropriate deferrals and waivers and those customers are interviewed	• PA spreadsheet • 'where are we now' reports • PA Quality Assurance (QA) and review of LMIC failures • Observation
• Minimise failed to attends	• To contact all customers prior to interview, using all available methods, e.g. texting or telephone	• PA spreadsheet and JOT MI portal • Observation
• Better-Off-Calculations (BOCs)	• BOC to be completed at 95 per cent of Work Focused Interviews (WFI) • Undertake a review of BOC in 95 per cent of all interventions, correctly recording action taken on Labour Market System (LMS)	• MI portal for % delivered at initial WFI • PA QA • Observation
• Caseloading	• Lone parents from initial WFIs to New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) – minimum 30 per cent agreed • Lone parents from trigger meetings to NDLP – minimum 20 per cent • NDLP into jobs • Sick, disabled, carers and widows from initial WFIs – minimum 20 per cent • Sick, disabled, carers and widows from trigger meetings – minimum five per cent • Sick and disabled into jobs • Non-Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) customers who do not agree to caseloading at the WFI must be seen again within the next 13 weeks • Customers to receive all interviews entitled to	• Measures not yet
• Quality conversions as a result of interview	• Job submissions as a percentage of interviews delivered • Programme starts as a percentage of interviews delivered • Non-contracted provision as a percentage of interviews delivered	• Observation
• Quality documentation	• 100 per cent of JSAg are fully completed in accordance with LMS data standards and JSAg Aide Memoire • 100 per cent of JSAg are updated at new claim, end or permitted period, six months main, ND main and two year+main interviews	• PA QA • Observation

Despite the introduction of such alternative measures at district level, it was frequently remarked that these measures were as yet not fully embedded in organisational culture and there was some ambiguity in adviser and manager

understandings of how to use them to interpret adviser performance. Moreover, advisers reported in Phase 2 fieldwork a concern about the measures to be used in their staff development/appraisal (PDS) meetings. In Phase 3 fieldwork, some reported that job entry performance up until December 2004 was used a proxy for all year round performance. In one district a series of more frequent – weekly – ten minute reviews was in place. In some instances adviser managers reported that they had established weekly team meetings to share information and support between advisers.

One element of the increased emphasis on inputs is the requirement, built into benchmarking tools such as that presented in Table 4.1, that advisers conduct BOCs. Some advisers reported that this was often unnecessary and a waste of time for some customers who for instance are already well aware of how much better off they would be if they entered employment. Phase 2 of the Fieldwork also revealed that, in some cases, there is confusion over what constituted a BOC.

An additional element of the shift away from hard quantitative outcome data was an increased requirement on adviser managers to undertake 'observations' of adviser interviews. While these observations should have always taken place, managers and staff reported that this had not always happened on a regular basis because of constraints on time and resources, as well as the timely availability of outcome data. In a JOT context it was agreed by all that observations were now more of a priority than previously. However, there were still widespread problems in actually conducting them, with most respondents reporting that adviser and business managers still lacked the time and resources to do the required number of observations. As a result, these were often delegated to other advisers. Some experienced advisers also reported that they viewed such observations as either an intrusion or as overly mechanistic and were needed more for new and less experienced staff. Staff also reported that some adviser managers, especially those from a Benefits Agency background, lack the background, skills and experience necessary to conduct effective observations and coaching to support adviser performance.

4.2.2 Work with high priority customers

In the first phase of the evaluation there were strong expectations that the introduction of JOT would increase advisers' focus on high Priority Customer Groups and that the quality of service to these customers would generally improve. In particular, it was felt that there would be increased scope to tailor interventions to meet the needs of diverse and harder to help customers. These expectations were confirmed in the second phase of the evaluation, with advisers reporting that JOT would enable them to spend more time with harder to help customers because of the removal of pressure to chase destinations. However, because the fieldwork for that phase of the evaluation only took place a matter of weeks after JOT had gone live these opinions were largely expectations rather than actual experience. These expectations were also less widely held among New Deal or Lone Parent advisers who already had 'case loads' of defined customers.

The results of Phase 3 fieldwork suggested that advisers thought that JOT was in line with the overall changes underway in Jobcentre Plus in terms of focusing more intensively on Priority Customer Groups 1 and 2 in particular. All advisers, and many other staff and managers, reported that this focus was indeed now in place.

> *'I think that there has been a definite shift in seeing the higher priority customers, because like before when we were concentrating on Job Entries, it was like well if I can get these a job, ones that can help themselves it is still points, I know it is a lot lower points, but really now that is out of the window because you are going to get those points anyway so why work on those people, so in that respect JOT makes you naturally have a shift to people who can help themselves to go help themselves…that is a JOT impact, because under JET you would still want to do this.'*

(District management respondent, Option 1*)*

However, the sense that JOT was the principal driver of these changes was less widely shared. Other influences were also highlighted such as pre-existing modernisation changes, in places the removal of Response to Displayed Vacancies (RDV) and the installation of self-help channels and introduction of floorwalkers. There was, thus, considerable ambiguity about whether JOT had driven this process or merely supported and emphasised pre-existing changes, though the balance of opinion was clearly with the latter point of view. However, it is clear from the qualitative research that changes such as the removal of RDV are compatible with, and to a large extent supportive of, the main principles underpinning JOT.

It was also apparent that advisers thought that they were now more able to focus on harder to help groups but actual evidence of this was inconclusive. Other changes also limited the impact of JOT on high Priority Customer Groups. These included limitations on the types of provision available to New Deal customers, budget cuts for contracted provision, the amount and travelling times to provision in rural areas and new rules on maximum ADF spend. The availability of advisers and the time available in each interview was also thought to be lacking:

> *'...the time given to customers just isn't there. Its no use getting all these memos and what have you when you're struggling to get through all the relevant aspects of a customer interview in a shorter and shorter time.'*

(Adviser, Option 2 district)

These limitations also impacted on different advisers differently. Income Support/ Incapacity Benefit advisers found JOT more enabling and that working with some of their customers was easier because of the enabling role that JOT played, meaning that it was now easier for them to tailor support to the requirements of individuals. For instance, they were now encouraged to refer customers to (free) non-contracted provision, though this was thought to be more driven by budgetary issues than by JOT. Nevertheless this provision was often thought to be particularly beneficial to certain customer groups such as those with mental health problems. In this regard JOT was felt to be particularly helpful in that it removed the pressure to submit these

customers to jobs immediately. As such, it was now possible to bring customers closer to the labour market more gradually and as a result to potentially facilitate more long-term and sustainable beneficial impacts.

By contrast New Deal and Lone Parent advisers reported that they already had case loaded customers and as such the impact of JOT had been less significant. The limitations on the amount of allowable ADF spend was thought to hamper a small number of lone parent customers who might benefit from a larger amount of initial support, for instance for child care. Regulations on the provision for New Deal customers was thought to limit the impact of JOT on the role of New Deal advisers.

4.2.3   Use of Adviser Discretion Fund

One of the major expectations surrounding the introduction of JOT was that the use of the ADF would change. In Phase 2 fieldwork, respondents offered some evidence that this was taking place, even during January 2005. Phase 3 fieldwork revealed a much more pronounced tendency to report that the use of the ADF had both declined and become more 'appropriate', a finding supported entirely by the quantitative evidence which suggests that ADF awards in JOT districts were running at approximately 60 per cent of the rate in non-JOT areas.

> *'The inappropriate use has stopped'.*

In particular, advisers and other staff reported that the ADF was no longer distributed to 'buy' job entries, a process that was assumed to be widespread in the previous JET system. Interestingly, one adviser Manager suggested that the changing use of ADF had contributed to renewed confidence and job satisfaction, as staff had previously felt 'obliged' to distribute ADF to ensure that they claimed all possible performance but felt that (especially in the case of individuals that they knew abused the system or claimed ADF more than once) this was dispiriting and demoralising. It was also commented that the refusal of ADF to a customer had led to a confrontation in which the adviser in question required the support of the relevant adviser Manager, though this was felt to have been a positive, rather than negative, experience.

There are several important qualifications that should be taken account of in relation to reports of the changed use of ADF. First, staff in small offices, in particular, reported that the perception that ADF was widely misused to 'claim' Job Entries under JET was over-exaggerated. Second, despite the clear indication that the use of ADF was changing in larger offices, interviewees found it difficult to attribute the changed use of ADF solely to JOT. At least as important in this process was the recent drastic reduction in the budgets available for distribution, though even where this was felt to be the driver it was also reported that JOT supported these developments. However, where respondents were able to distinguish between the impact of JOT on ADF use and the reduction of budgets, there was less support for the latter. It was felt by some that JOT enabled greater adviser autonomy over the use of ADF but that the reduction of budgets, and specifically the reduction of the level of the cap on single ADF allocations, constrained that autonomy in a different way.

The combined impact of JOT and the limit on ADF spend was though, leading to advisers looking at wider ranges of support for customers. For instance, some districts reported encouraging a greater use of Work Trials. However, this was again thought to be more as a result of efficiency concerns than it was JOT.

4.3 Role of other staff groups

4.3.1 Customer service

Customer service and frontline staff such as reception staff and floorwalkers are responsible in the main for redirecting lower Priority Customer Group customers to self-help channels such as warm phones and job points. Though this is now happening across the pilot districts, there were problems with attributing this directly and solely to JOT as many staff reported that the management pressure to do this pre-dated JOT. Several factors also slowed the adjustment to these ways of working.

The first of these was the cultural change required. Many, though not all, staff reported that redirecting customers to self-help channels felt like a decline in customer service. This view was particularly influenced by a perception that *'call centres do not offer good customer service'* and *'people like to be dealt with face-to-face'*.

These views were supported, at least initially, by experience with Jobcentre Plus Direct which, many staff reported, lacked capacity to deal with the volume or type of calls. Staff, therefore, reported both queues at warm phones and that customers would often be referred back to the office to get job application forms. While in most districts there were reported improvements between Phases 2 and 3 of the fieldwork, this was still clearly an issue in one pilot district where ongoing problems were reported. Referral of customers to such channels when they lacked capacity meant that in the Phase 2 fieldwork, some staff reported that this caused tensions with customers. However, this was a less prominent finding in Phase 3 fieldwork, at least outside this particular district. Despite these concerns, staff did report increased referral of lower Priority Customer Groups to self-help channels and there was a notable decline in concerns (though still strongly held by some) about the customer service implications of this:

> *'This group of customers want to help themselves anyway.'*

4.3.2 Benefit processing

Benefit processing staff universally reported that JOT had made very little difference to their role:

> *'...very little of the pilot has affected us in any way.'*

Most staff reported that this was unexpected since the communication process had led them to believe that JOT would have had a significant impact. As such, they thought that the initial communication process could have been more tailored to their specific needs and requirements.

The only noticeable difference for this group of staff, in respect to JOT, involved the change in Option 2 districts in record keeping for customers leaving benefit. This involved passing information to tracking teams to follow-up customers who leave benefits. However, benefit processing staff tended to separate themselves from this process:

> '…we have to do it, but it is not really our target. That's the responsibility of the tracking team, not us.'

Benefit processing staff also reported a sense of detachment from the JOT process and were not informed, for instance, of current performance, even where this information is available. This detachment may be significant since some Option 2 district staff initially hoped that JOT would be more inclusive of benefit processing staff, securing greater commitment and recognition of their contribution to district level performance. During Phase 3 fieldwork, some concerns were raised as to the commitment of benefit processing staff, particularly with regard to the completion of JCP25 forms.

> 'Benefit processors have been doing virtually the same job for twenty years, its going to take time for the culture to change.'

(Team leader, Option 2 district)

Some staff were concerned, for instance, that incomplete record keeping would make tracking and validation more difficult. Discussions with the validation team suggested that sufficient information had been recorded but that there were issues related to the lack of standardisation in the way in which this information was recorded.

4.4   Submissions

The data on submissions collected during interviews with Jobcentre Plus staff is solely qualitative in nature, relying on staff perceptions of changes. Hard evidence of actual change was gained from the results of the quantitative evaluation, and is referenced in this section where appropriate.

All staff reported that submissions had declined markedly after the go-live date of 10 January. Indeed, the overall drop had caused concern among managers at district level in several districts. As a result, staff had been encouraged to continue submissions but to increase their quality by engaging in more matching activity and refraining from large numbers of speculative-submissions. In line with this, several districts had established daily monitoring of submissions through clerical recording sheets.

Subsequently, it was reported that the level of submissions had recovered, though not to previous levels. There was, thus, ambiguity at district management and at adviser level as to whether the decline in submissions reflected increased quality or simply a drop-off in activity, though a small number of respondents at either adviser or adviser Manager level reported that they thought that as many as 50 per cent of submissions under JET were speculative or artificial submissions created to claim a job entry.

There is some support for this qualitative picture from the quantitative analysis of submission data for the JOT pilot districts, compared with non-JOT areas. In relative terms, submissions in all JOT areas up to June 2005 were below the rate for non-JOT areas and there is a mixed picture in terms of trends over time. In some districts, submissions did indeed recover between March and June (in relative terms at least) while in others, the trend is broadly downwards throughout the JOT pilot period.

Despite this, several respondents made reference to their uncertainty in relation to previous (deeply held) assumptions about 'submissions to placings' ratios. Whereas under JET, low outcome performance would have led to pressure from management at a regional and district level to increase the volume of submissions to improve outcome performance, such assumptions were now questioned and management respondents in particular were unsure about the correct input response to perceived low outcome performance[3].

Respondents were asked to identify any perceived changes to the types of submissions made. In line with district advice, most staff reported that speculative submissions had dropped markedly, and that 'illegitimate' speculative submissions (those generated to claim a job entry) had now ceased entirely. This finding is corroborated strongly by the quantitative analysis.

Staff respondents reported widespread involvement in the communication process prior to JOT go-live. A variety of different means of communication were used, from email to attendance at awareness raising events run by the districts themselves and by the national tier. In addition, most districts designated at least one member of staff in each office as a JOT coordinator, who could then act as a point of reference for queries and two-way information flow.

Respondents were also asked about changes to the relationship with, and willingness of staff to submit customers to, employment agencies as well as other channels such as recruitment web sites. However, while some did report an increased willingness to use employment agencies, as a result of the removal of individual performance

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[3] The quantitative study was able to calculate submissions-to-placings ratios for Option 2 districts, with the initial indications being that ratios in JOT districts are lower than those in non-JOT areas, suggesting the possibility of more appropriate submissions under JOT.

attribution, significant barriers remained, especially for harder to help customers. In the main these were related to cultural issues of mistrust:

> *'…a lot of staff won't refer to an employment agency because it's a lot of hassle for not very much benefit. Customers referred to agencies often come back saying that they have been put on a list but have been given no idea as to when or whether they will be placed in work.'*

> *'Agencies often advertise that there are jobs available when there obviously aren't.'*

4.5   Individual motivation and incentives

Phase 1 and 2 findings revealed a variety of expectations and early experiences with regard to motivation and incentives. First, the removal of individual targets was thought to be liberating, removing the considerable pressure, particularly on advisers, that existed in the JET system. Second, there were concerns about how staff would prove what they had been doing and what contribution they had made. Third, some reported that some advisers *'were beginning to hide'*, as a result of the loss of accountability provided by individual performance figures.

Phase 3 fieldwork again confirmed these positions. For the most part, advisers reported that they did feel liberated by the removal of the pressure of individual level targets. Across the board, this factor was mentioned when summarising the overall benefits of JOT suggesting that it was a significant beneficial change. Moreover, JOT was also felt to have removed perverse incentives, as discussed above, in relation to submissions activity and the use of ADF and this was felt to be beneficial to job satisfaction and motivation.

On the other hand concerns remained among advisers and particularly at district management level about a loss of motivation resulting from the removal of the accountability and transparency of the Daily Placing List. However, this is a complex issue. Respondents reported that JET and the immediacy of outcome information had provided accountability and transparency at individual level, as well as an important source of 'real-time' information which could be used to adjust behaviour to increase performance. As such the Daily Placing List, for instance, acted as a source of information for what is termed 'single loop learning'. This means that individuals and teams could use outcome data to vary input behaviour between a range of predetermined and deeply embedded options, the principal one being to vary the rate of submissions. The loss of this information, thus, led to uncertainty:

> *'If you are an adviser, at whatever grade, whatever you are doing, you worked from the placing list. If you weren't on it for a few days , for a few weeks, you started getting the message , what am I doing wrong?…you got the message immediately that perhaps something wasn't right…what can I do to put it right?…with the greatest respect, now we are just doing the job and hoping that somewhere along the line somebody gets a job.'*

(Adviser, Option 1)

However, the loss of this information has not only led to uncertainty but to questioning of these deeply embedded assumptions about the relationship between input behaviour (for instance the number and type of submissions and referrals) and outcomes. As such, some respondents presented this as a complex challenge to replace the motivations and incentives operable under JET with a new system which would match the requirements and objectives of the modernised organisation. While it was appreciated that JOT was aligned with these: *'JOT is a change to doing the right thing, rather than just achieving outputs'*, there was also a concern that the performance management structure did not yet fully translate incentives and motivations to an individual level:

> *'If Option 1 is to be rolled out we need to work quite closely on the reward, satisfaction and behavioural element of what we are trying to get our staff to do.'*

> (Option 1 management respondent*)*

This general questioning of assumptions, which applied to both options, corresponds to 'double loop' learning, a more fundamental interrogation of the relationships between inputs, processes and outcomes than occurs in single loop learning.

One way in which it was suggested that this might be achieved was through the greater use of adviser benchmarking tools, where these were in place. Indeed, in one district where such a tool was in use, district management respondents reported that the fact this tool was not yet fully embedded in the organisation and that staff had not fully understood how to use the information that it presented, was a barrier to realising the full benefits of JOT. As such, they suggested that putting in place such a tool and clearly explaining to managers and staff alike how to use this information was a necessary precondition for a national roll-out of JOT. This same district is now also introducing weekly individual review sessions to set and monitor both long- and short-term individualised objectives.

Generally, it was reported that the introduction of JOT marked a shift in accountability for performance, and, therefore, incentives and motivations to adviser and office level management. As such, the impact on motivations tended to differ according to the skills and confidence of staff at this level.

> *'...the more imaginative ones* [within the new system] *can operate quite well.'*

> (District management respondent, Option 2 district)

Where adviser managers and business managers were well skilled and confident, they reported a less pronounced likelihood of declining motivation and a greater use of alternative measures to incentivise staff. Where these staff were less skilled or confident, there was a larger likelihood that motivation would decline. A further contributory factor here was office size. It was reported, generally, that in smaller offices, management supervision was easier and, as such, it was also easier to ensure that motivation remained high. It is not possible to assess, at this stage of the operation of the JOT pilot, the extent to which these differences in skills, confidence and motivation feed through to differences in outcome performance at individual, office or district level.

Motivation and incentives were most often referred to in the context of advisers. However, some frontline and customer service staff reported that they had found the Daily Placing List itself to be demotivating in that it disproportionately reflected the work of advisers, ignoring the contribution of other staff groups, often who would refrain from actually submitting a customer to a job in order to allow advisers to claim the relevant performance attribution. As such, these staff groups tended to report that JOT had increased their motivation by reflecting their contribution to district performance.

Finally, in regard to motivation, it was universally noted that the impact of JOT was difficult to disaggregate from a wide number of changes to the organisation which disrupted motivation. In particular, current staffing reductions and redeployment were cited as a demotivating factor.

4.6   Team working

Phase 1 findings found a baseline position of a high degree of tension over the attribution of individual performance and some degree of conflict between staff over who could claim 'points' for a particular job entry. This was particularly the case where advisers saw a customer over a period of time and then were not available when that customer reported that they had found employment and so another adviser or member of staff claimed performance. This was a particular issue for part-time staff:

> '[in the past] *I've seen quarrels between people when they said that the points were meant for them and that someone else has taken them… and I didn't like it, it created animosity.'*

> (Floorwalker, Option 1 district)

Phase 2 findings found some evidence of increased team working as a result of JOT, but Phase 2 fieldwork was undertaken relatively soon after the go-live date. Increased team working and a reduction in work place tensions was a prominent feature of findings in Phase 3, reported by virtually all staff:

> '*…there is without doubt more evidence of team working.'*

This was particularly the case with regard to the relationship between different advisers but also, to a lesser extent between advisers and frontline staff:

> '*…they are not arguing the toss as such, we are all out to help each other and it doesn't matter if I've seen somebody this week given them information and they come in next week and it is you he sees and who gets the points, whereas before it would have done.'*

> (Manager, Option 1 district)

Discussions with one Validator, who spends a lot of time working in local offices or running validation sessions across different districts, revealed a 'palpable' difference in atmosphere and team working. Discussions with adviser managers revealed less

conflict and less time spent resolving conflicts between advisers over claiming individual performance. One District Programme Quality Management Team (DPQMT) respondent reported less time spent responding to adviser queries with regard to the attribution of performance and one employer engagement team reported a resource saving of one full-time equivalent (FTE) as a result of not having to respond to queries from advisers chasing destinations and checking validations. Advisers themselves also universally reported enhanced team spirit even if this was not always able to be demonstrated by specific examples of increased team working.

This was reported as bringing more benefits than merely a better working environment. The removal of competition between advisers also resulted in a number of other benefits. Prominent among these was an increased willingness to share labour market knowledge, vacancy information and good practice. One adviser Manager reported having introduced weekly case loading meetings at which advisers would share knowledge and experiences. The success of these was attributed to JOT.

4.7   Summary of key points

A number of key issues stand out in terms of staff working practices:

• Staff feel under less pressure to achieve individual performance targets.

• JOT is thought to be aligned with an increased focus on Priority Customer Groups, but is not the sole driver in this process. Some staff also retain concerns about the implications for customer service to lower Priority Customer Groups 4 and 5 and job-ready customers, though this is less the case where self-help channels have been improved.

• There is some evidence of this enabling a more holistic and appropriate focus on harder to help groups, though this is limited by a number of other factors related to resources and the types and quality of provision available.

• JOT has removed perverse incentives around submissions and the use of the ADF.

• JOT has resulted in reduced volumes of submissions, but the evidence around increased quality is less certain.

• There are concerns about the motivational and job satisfaction impact of the loss of individual performance measures, but where alternative measures are being used confidently, these are partially offset.

• JOT has caused a re-consideration of assumptions about the relationships between inputs and outcomes.

• There is evidence of increased team working as a result of the loss of individual performance targets, which may result in a better quality service through the sharing of information and good practice.

5 Management practice and management issues

5.1 Adviser and business managers

Phase 1 and 2 of the evaluation found that the role of adviser and business managers was changing as a result of Job Outcome Target (JOT). In particular, there was a shift in the skills needs of these staff groups away from hard statistical analysis skills to softer and more people-centred and qualitative skills. This was found to be posing significant challenges for some adviser and business managers, while others reported that they 'relished' this challenge.

Phase 3 fieldwork largely confirmed that these challenges persisted. It was widely felt that the introduction of JOT had shifted the responsibility for maintaining performance from advisers to adviser and business managers. Alongside this responsibility came new demands, particularly in relation to people management:

> 'I think that one of the key issues, and it is one we are still having to work on, is that managers are having to be much more hands on…rather than relying on data feed.'

(Option 1 district management respondent)

Whereas the immediacy and transparency of individual Job Entry Target (JET) performance figures had allowed adviser and business managers to isolate good and bad performance easily, JOT made this a more challenging task, relying on 'softer' social and qualitative skills. Analytically, it challenged these staff groups to look at alternative input, process and output-related data to interpret individual performance. Second, more people-centred skills are necessary to undertake observations, coach and support advisers and encourage the sharing of good practice. It was reported by other staff groups, including senior managers at district and regional level, that there are concerns over whether adviser and business managers currently have these skills:

> *'If I am managing an office today, under JOT I don't really know what my performance is, prior to JOT I knew on a day to day basis what my performance was…however none of that reflected the quality or the business potential to improve.'*

(District management respondent, Option 1 district)

For instance, in one Option 2 district, district managers thought that about half of all adviser and business managers lacked the skills necessary to work well under JOT. It was generally felt that those with an adviser background themselves, and certainly those with a an Employment Service rather than Benefits Agency background found these tasks easier. Several pilot districts had recognised these concerns and put in place support for this level of management, for instance through the use of adviser benchmarking tools or through training events and encouraged adviser managers to use different existing measures:

> *'I think that they need to realise that this is a change, that it is a long lead-in period, that you are not going to get the information, you are going to be uncomfortable in between, but job entries never were the 'be all and end all', there are other benchmarks that you can measure them [advisers] by…and that was a panic that we had a bit, not at senior management level, but lower down: 'you've taken my benchmark away that I measured against, so what am I going to do', well 'you measure against the other five that you have still got and I think it is that bit that they need to understand.'*

(District management respondent, Option 1 district)

One district also reported that they had amended the Quality Assurance Framework for observations to support the observation process. All districts reported that they were placing an increased emphasis on adviser and business managers actually conducting observations, whereas it had been widely recognised that these were quite often not carried out in the past. Despite this increased emphasis, many respondents reported that the required number were still not being completed as a result of a lack of time and resources. Generally, shifting the behaviour of this level of management was reported by some as one of the most challenging elements in the implementation of JOT.

Interestingly, however, while the adviser and business managers interviewed as part of the fieldwork did report that they needed to use different skills, they did not report that they had problems adjusting to these changes. Indeed there was some suggestion that the image of adviser and business managers managing solely in relation to the Daily Placing List and other rapid outcome data was simplistic. These interviewees seemed comfortable with using different types of performance information, some of which came from the available Management Information (MI) and others from adviser activity sheets and benchmarking tools in addition to conducting observations. There are several potential reasons for the disjuncture of views between adviser and business managers on the one hand and other staff groups on the other. One possible explanation is a misconception, among senior managers in particular, about the capacity of other staff groups, partially created in

the previous context, in which JET provided incentives for only a very narrow range of management behaviour. Another possible explanation is that the adviser and business managers interviewed did not want to admit to having difficulties. Finally, it might be that the more competent adviser and business managers were selected by the districts for interview and, as such, these may have reflected more accurately the 50 per cent of adviser and business managers who are competent in the areas required by JOT. In the interests of ensuring that the most appropriate level of support is in place, it would appear to be prudent to assume that the rough 50:50 split is indeed accurate. This would have the advantage of suggesting that good practice could be distilled by existing adviser and business managers and then generalised through training and more detailed guidance. One of the business managers interviewed reported that they had been helped in interpreting the range of alternative data to the Daily Placing List by attending a Leaderships Pathways course.[4]

5.2   Senior managers

Senior managers were not included in Phase 2 fieldwork, beyond a small number of interviews with district management staff. In Phase 3, detailed interviews were held at district level and a range of telephone interviews were also conducted with regional level managers.

Some of the key issues in relation to staff at these levels related to understandings of performance and MI and reactions to poor performance. In Option 2 districts there were some moves to rectify this by collecting initial data from the follow-up process and using this in advance of the validation process. In Option 1 districts there is clearly an even longer period prior to receiving performance information and districts with adviser benchmarking tools have seen these as a major help in responding to the challenge of a lack of outcome data:

> *'...sometimes we felt like we were swimming in the dark, but I think that we would have felt like we were drowning a bit…you would have had to put something in place and it wasn't as big a shock because we already had got something in place.'*

> (District management level respondent, Option 1 district)

As with adviser and business managers, a mixture of views was apparent with regard to understanding performance data, but there was a generalised acceptance of the need to look beyond outcome data:

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[4] 'Managing Inactive Benefits'.

> *'...when I first started I used to say that "job entries rule OK!", it was job entries and the Daily Placing List, they were the "be all and the end all"...but this isn't and never was the only measurement...now these have been taken out of the scene, we have had to change and look at different ways of doing it, how many submissions are they doing, are they doing better off calculations, are they persuading customers that they are actually better off if they are in a job, and the contact time...other measurements have come more to the fore-front now.'*

(District management respondent, Option 1 district)

In some districts, the loss of immediate outcome performance data had clearly presented a major challenge for senior managers. However, in some others, there was a more relaxed and positive approach to this challenge, with several district level managers suggesting that this was an opportunity to review assumptions about interventions. Even where this more positive attitude was in place, however, the uncertainty about when performance data was to be made available still caused problems. Moreover, in Option 1 districts in particular, there was uncertainty about whether and when being under the target profile should be a cause for concern and at what point in the year all actual performance would be reflected in the district points total:

> *'...we have still only got two-thirds of the target, and you don't know, we are hoping that the third 'download' will get the other third, but you really don't know do you.'*

(District management respondent, Option 1 district)

At regional level, interviewees unsurprisingly had less detailed knowledge and experience of JOT and, therefore, tended to report expectations or anecdotal evidence of the impact of JOT rather than direct experience and hard evidence. Where these respondents did have some detailed knowledge, this tended to inform a positive view of the impact of JOT on working practices and staff behaviour which were in line with the views expressed at district level. For instance, one regional performance manager reported that '*there is no doubt*' that JOT had changed working practices, that '*..it has had the effect of undoing the top button*' and '*...allowing advisers to back their own judgement, something that we have not always been very good at in the past*'. Another regional level respondent concurred, arguing that JOT had enabled staff to '*think about what is genuinely best for customers, it is now easier for staff to do this*'. While these respondents reported that the impact of JOT was positive, the full benefits in terms of workplace behaviour had not yet been realised because of the time needed to change organisational cultures:

> *'...we are talking about 10-15 years of being dominated by performance targets and information.'*

(Regional management level respondent)

However, familiar concerns about the loss of accountability for individual level performance were also raised, as was uncertainty about the factors influencing

performance, with regional level analysis of performance often ignoring the JOT pilots at the moment. Regional level interviewees reported that they believed that old assumptions about the relationship between submissions and outcomes were no longer valid but they did not know how similar operative assumptions might be recast. Asked whether they would be able to isolate good or bad performance in the context of JOT roll-out, regional level respondents were uncertain and suggested that guidance was needed in order to aid the interpretation of alternative performance data, thereby offsetting the time lag in the production of outcome data. Just as at district level, this uncertainty invoked different views with some clearly feeling uncomfortable without 'seeing the figures' from the quantitative evaluation but others welcoming the opportunity to question old assumptions.

Among most staff groups there was a strongly expressed concern that roll-out of JOT would also require a significant shift in culture and behaviour at the senior management and even ministerial level. In particular, this would need to be aimed at ensuring that short-term – apparent – under-performance would not result in the resort to 'old' measures such as pressure to increase submissions.

5.3   People and performance management

5.3.1   Management views and experiences

The substantive people and performance management issues raised in the fieldwork relate to the isolation of individual, particularly adviser, performance. These have already been dealt with above. Additional challenges are related to the establishment of suitable individual level objectives. There were considerable concerns throughout all the districts that the current solution to this issue – to set generic objectives asking staff to make 'a contribution to district level performance' – was not sufficient, with respondents describing them as '*woolly*' and '*ambiguous*'. HR Business Partners reported that there are moves away from these job objectives for 05/06 to align them with the overall Jobcentre Plus vision but also to allow some degree of significant local management flexibility.

In Phase 2 fieldwork, individual staff members, particular advisers, reported concern that they would be asked to demonstrate job entry performance after the go-live of JOT and in Phase 3, there were reports that the appraisal process had been completed using job entry performance up until December as a proxy for whole year performance. Several districts used the adviser benchmarking tool to assess individual adviser performance, while one district had also introduced a weekly appraisal based on a 'Plan-do-review' process, in which individual objectives would be set and reviewed on a short-term basis. However, individual objective setting remained an area of uncertainty and concern and most respondents reported the need for some central guidance on this issue.

5.3.2   Role of HR Business Partners

Despite the obvious need for some level of support from HR Business Partners, for instance in dealing with the issues raised in relation to setting individual objectives, most respondents from this staff group reported very little engagement with JOT, beyond a role in establishing the initial generic objectives. Where HR Business Partners had been more involved their responses reinforced findings from other elements of the fieldwork. Overall, this group of staff thought that JOT did provide high level incentives for the 'right' sort of behaviour but lacked clear mechanisms to translate these to individual level meaning that there is some potential for staff to 'hide'. In particular they expressed concerns at the skills bases at adviser and business manager level and the need to reorientate the desired and required competencies for these roles and for advisers. Advisers would increasingly need true consultancy, appraisal, questioning and sales skills to assess the needs of customers and persuade them of the benefits of work. Adviser managers and business managers would increasingly need to strengthen their coaching, people and supporting skills to support advisers and to share good practice. These skills and competencies will then also need to be incorporated within job specifications and promotion criteria. Where HR Business Partners had been more heavily involved in JOT, they also supported the need for accountability of advisers and the need for input and process measures to assess individuals' contributions. This staff group reported that though culture change was underway, it would be a long-term process. It was felt that this would be supported by more focused guidance and support aimed at changing workplace behaviour in role-specific ways and understanding these changes.

5.4   Management Information

Outcome performance and MI was a major area of discussion in all three phases of the evaluation. At Phase 2 there was a degree of uncertainty expressed by respondents about the level and frequency of outcome performance and MI available and the lack of guidance on interpreting it. There was also some dissatisfaction with the clarity about exactly what information was to be available. Districts also reported that they had established their own clerical data collection systems to fill the void.

At Phase 3, a number of these themes recurred, principal among which was the delay in the availability of outcome performance information, especially in Option 1 districts. However, respondents in Option 2 districts also reported problems associated with delays in outcome performance information and the regularity of its production. Option 1 districts stated that they had accepted that there would be an initial delay but had expected that once they had received their initial information, the flow would be more regular. This was reported by some as the single largest factor:

> 'The delay in MI, the discomfort of not knowing exactly where you are'.

Many management respondents were, thus, disappointed with the availability and regularity of 'downloads' of outcome performance information so far, which has been a barrier to reinterpreting, for example, the underlying assumptions about the relationship between submissions and outcomes. This challenge has compounded the inbuilt issue in relation to uncertainties about the capture of JOT outcomes. In Option 1 districts these are centred on the time taken for employers to return evidence (P45/P46) to the Inland Revenue and any subsequent processing time. Option 2 districts reported uncertainty over whether all job outcomes were being captured, particularly in relation to the completion of JCP 25 forms.

Other concerns expressed include the view that the nature of the supporting MI included is insufficient for the requirements of people and performance management under JOT. It was reported that while the impact of JOT has been to shift management attention toward input and quality issues, the MI does not reflect this and is insufficiently behavioural in nature:

> '...the MI feeds that we get around adviser activity is insufficient in my view… to give us the quality data that we need…the type of data that we get out…what we don't know from the system is how much time has an adviser spent with a customer, that's one of the fundamentals. We know how many interviews we have delivered, but for example New Deal Gateway interviews, they are entitled to x number of interviews at Y amount of time, if we are not delivering that as a basic, then we are not getting the opportunity to push the customer forward…so one of our fundamentals is to make sure that we are delivering the guarantee to customers, that we are seeing then for the right amount of time, the right number of interventions and moving them forward. Then we need to drill down to well, what has gone on in that interview, which is supported by the QUAF intervention, but also some of the other benchmark measures that we are looking at, so we are aiming at 75 per cent of time spent with customers'.

To bolster existing information, suggested measures included the number of interviews resulting in specific outputs such as referrals to provision (of different types), submission to jobs and other less tangible outputs that could measure the distance travelled toward the labour market. Other technical concerns were also raised, for instance about the availability of time series data through the MI portal.

The result of dissatisfaction with the time delay in MI in particular has been that several districts were generating their own separate performance information, for instance through adviser benchmarking tools. While this may appear to be duplicate work, management respondents tended to suggest that the information provided was useful and contributed to their capacity to manage, focusing on input rather than outcome measures.

5.5   Summary of key points

A number of key issues emerged from the evaluation in terms of management practices:

- JOT impacts on the role of adviser and business managers, changing the type of data to be included in data analysis and removing the emphasis from this to more people-centred skills of observation, coaching and supporting behavioural change.

- Some adviser and business managers may lack these skills, especially where they do not have a job broking or adviser background.

- Support is needed from the national tier to facilitate behavioural change among adviser and business managers in the form of standardised and role-specific guidance and training.

- Senior managers face significant cultural change if JOT is to be rolled out, particularly in relation to interpreting under-performance.

- People management issues are to the fore in the implementation of JOT and thought needs to be given to how high level targets can be translated to the individual level.

- Management Information has been problematic for the pilots in different ways: In Option 1 districts, the expected delay in receiving outcome information has led to uncertainty but also prompted questioning of assumptions about the relationship between inputs and outcomes and has led to the development of alternative input measures. However, uncertainty has been augmented by a perceived irregular flow of outcome performance information, in the sense that information was not always received when expected, and a lack of understanding about the 'normal' timescales for the capture of performance through the Inland Revenue. In Option 2 districts, the shorter delay in accessing MI has also caused uncertainty and there are additional concerns about the robustness of the capture of outcomes through the JCP 25 process.

- While the focus of the pilot activities has been within the districts, JOT also implies a significant cultural change at senior management level (district, regional and national), particularly in terms of reactions to revealed short-term performance, especially in the case of Option 1.

6 Overall staff opinions of Job Outcome Target

6.1 Positive feedback

Overall, the general principle of Job Outcome Target (JOT) was thought to be a positive and significant change, especially in the way that it impacts on behavioural incentives. Specifically, JOT, in both Option 1 and Option 2 districts was felt to be in line with the modernisation of Jobcentre Plus, encouraging a greater focus on the harder to help and to addressing the needs of these customers in a more holistic way.

In Option 1 districts, JOT was also clearly associated with achieved and potential resource savings or a redeployment of resources from following up customers to frontline service delivery.

> *'I love it, it is marvellous…it allows us to focus on the right things for people…and I have got to comment on the resource saving.'*
>
> (Manager, Option 1 district)

Savings in the districts themselves were augmented by the expectation of further savings in the validation process for Option 1, whereas Option 2 was thought not to involve any major resource savings in this regard. Resource savings may also have been associated with Option 2 districts, however, for instance in relation to the use of Adviser Discretionary Fund (ADF) and the increased savings from less time spent in job entry-related conflicts and resolving them, which were findings associated with both options.

A key headline theme was also the impact on the role of advisers and specifically, the removal or reduction of unhelpful pressure from this group of staff. Further, by removing the potential competition between individual staff for job entries, JOT was also clearly thought to enhance team working, making for a more efficient and pleasant working environment.

6.2   Issues to address

Despite the overall positive message received from staff in both Option 1 and 2 districts, there were shared concerns about the implications of the removal of real time performance information, though this was a less acute concern for Option 2 than it was for Option 1 districts. This was manifest in a number of ways including the:

• loss of job satisfaction for advisers associated with the removal of the Daily Placing List, which both impaired satisfaction resulting from the confirmation and 'proof' of successful workplace activity and the personal satisfaction resulting from 'knowing' the destination of individual customers;

• loss of daily performance information which management at district and office level used to adjust activities on a daily basis was unsettling, especially for Option 1 districts;

• loss of individual level data has posed challenges for people management in terms of setting individual level objectives;

• implied changed behaviour under JOT throws up skills challenges and, therefore, has implications for the types of guidance and training provided to staff and for the job descriptions and person specifications used for recruitment processes.

These challenges were in addition to problems associated with the lack of guidance and support to aid the change in workplace behaviour, which potential mean that this change will take longer.

Moreover, the beneficial impact of JOT was thought to be limited by a range of factors, including:

• staff cuts and the uncertainty of staff in the current environment;

• the availability of appropriate provision in the local area;

• the budgets available for contracted and non-contracted provision;

• the budget and flexibility of ADF;

• restrictions on provision for New Deal customers;

• the nature of the local labour market.

> *'It's a very good principle, but unless you have the products, the providers and the jobs to sell, you are limited.'*

6.3   Suggestions for national roll-out

Several suggestions to improve the process of national roll-out were received:

Delay roll-out to benefit from additional time-series data and experience – These suggestions included running JOT alongside Job Entry Target (JET) for an additional year to ensure that the full knowledge of performance under JOT is taken account of in setting targets and that there is increased time for the communication and awareness raising process and the development of resources and support for behavioural and workplace change.

Support and resources for implementation – The need for enhanced national support for change in the form of written guidance and training products around role-specific behavioural change. It was also suggested that these should be part of the communication and awareness raising process in advance of JOT. Some respondents also indicated the desirability of setting aside sufficient staff time (ie taking staff 'off-line') to manage the implementation process.

Detailed operational guidance – Was needed to clarify expectations about detailed operational issues, particularly recording interventions and activities on Labour Market System (LMS).

Alternative benchmarks – There was also a widespread reported need for enhanced input information, of the type developed already by several districts, and support and guidance in interpreting this for managers.

Clarity and regularity of Management Information (MI) – A key theme was the need for increased clarity over when MI would be available and that this would be regularised. It was felt that this might help to overcome uncertainties caused by delays in MI. For Option 1 there is also a need for greater understanding of the timescales associated with capturing performance.

Management time – There is a need for additional management time to undertake observations.

Clarity over management expectations – A recurring theme was uncertainty over the expectations of managers and the implications associated with performance under JOT. For advisers and frontline staff this was manifest in uncertainties over how their performance would be measured. For adviser and business managers this was manifest in uncertainty about what site level performance should be and what implications would result from an apparent 'under-performance'. District level managers were concerned that the targets set for JOT (understandably) lacked the robustness of the previous JET target and that any under-performance might not actually reflect actual performance. They were also concerned that higher levels of management might in the future react inappropriately to short-run trends in JOT performance which could no longer be understood in the same way as under JET, especially in Option 1 districts.

Clarification and amendment of HR policies and practices – The changed skills needs under JOT may necessitate a reconsideration of competencies required for specific roles and, thus, amendments to recruitment and promotion arrangements. Staff development initiatives would also need to address these issues.

6.4 Summary of key points

Overall, staff were positive about the introduction of JOT and thought that JOT was positive and more in line with the objectives of Jobcentre Plus than was JET. JOT was particularly associated with enabling and providing incentives for positive behavioural change. These were thought to be largely similar impacts in both Option 1 and 2 districts. In addition, Option 1 districts saw significant resource savings.

The major drawbacks associated with JOT were the changes in availability of real time performance information, especially in Option 1 districts. A range of other negative responses were more associated with external factors which limit the positive impacts of JOT, rather than being negative elements of JOT itself. Again, these did not substantially vary between Option 1 and 2 districts.

7 Relations with customers

Jobcentre Plus staff expressed a range of views during the Phase 1 and 2 fieldwork visits about the likely impact of the Job Outcome Target (JOT) pilots on the service offered to customers. The focus groups conducted during the Phase 3 fieldwork explored in more depth how staff felt that the JOT pilots has actually impacted on customer service. Discussions revolved around three main groups: new claimants, 'job-ready' or 'lower priority group' customers and 'harder to help' or 'higher priority group' customers.

The overwhelming view of staff was that the **new claims** process had not been influenced to any great extent by JOT. Changes had certainly occurred, with staff noting the increasing use of telephone-based claims and shorter interview times with new claimants. However, these changes were driven not by JOT, but by the introduction of CMS2 and – in the relevant districts – by the 'Trailblazer' initiative.

While JOT had not caused changes in the operation of the new claims process, staff respondents did note that shorter interview times, in particular, posed challenges for frontline staff in distinguishing between those new claimants who were 'job-ready' and capable of using the 'self-service' channels effectively, and those who might require extra assistance even at such an early stage of their claim:

> *'One of the knock-on effects from the Five-Minute Signing (FMS) must be that those who might benefit from a Disability Employment Adviser or someone who could be eligible for early entry onto New Deal, are not going to be picked up as easily. In quite a lot of cases, it was only through the contact they would have from their fortnightly signing that advisers could get to know the customer a little bit and refer them on if it was appropriate. But with just a FMS, there's just not enough time.'*

The level of customer service provided for customers in the 'lower' priority groups, such as employed people, non-claimants and the short-term unemployed, was a cause for concern for many Jobcentre Plus staff, and in particular, for those in 'frontline' positions. As noted earlier in this report, respondents recognised that JOT reinforced the already existing trend of encouraging such customers to use the 'self-service' channels such as Jobcentre Plus Direct, the Jobpoints and (in some offices) internet terminals.

While most staff recognised the logic behind encouraging the use of self-service channels, particularly in the light of pressure on resources, significant levels of concern were expressed abut the desirability and efficacy of such an approach and a number of focus group participants expressed the view that 'lower priority group' customers were receiving a poorer service under JOT than they did under Job Entry Target (JET).

Concerns about the customer service impact of JOT revolved around three main issues: Firstly, it was felt that a 'blanket' approach to encouraging the use of self-service channels was leading to poor service for customers who had difficulties in using the telephone, Jobpoints or Internet, yet nominally fell into 'lower point' categories. Examples cited include migrants with a poor command of English, some older people and people with mental health, confidence or communication difficulties. Such people, it was felt, tend to prefer face-to-face contact, whereas staff felt that they are being strongly encouraged against providing such a service:

> *'On the one hand, we're pretending that we're concentrating on customer service but we're abandoning a lot of the one-to-one approach. Other organisations seem to be moving back to actually seeing people just as we're starting to move away from that.'*

The second broad area of concern relates to the quality of the service provided by the self-service channels. Examples were given of Jobpoints not working and long queues at the 'warm phones' (exacerbated by the roll-out of CMS2). Some respondents questioned the quality and commitment of call centre staff, many of whom are temporary and have little knowledge of the customers or the local labour market. There was some evidence from Phase 3 of a slight improvement in this situation, but there remained a substantial body of opinion among frontline staff that face-to-face contact is the preferred mode of service delivery for staff and for many, but not all, customers.

Finally, some frontline staff and supervisors felt uncomfortable about making decisions regarding whether to encourage customers to use self-service channels or make an early referral to specialist advisers or programmes. The short time available to speak to customers and the limited information available, caused some of these difficulties, but several respondents also noted that they needed additional support and training in order to feel more confident about making decisions which, they felt, would have an important influence on the probability of a customer getting a job quickly.

The views summarised above were widely but not universally held, albeit mainly by frontline staff and their supervisors. However, respondents found it difficult to provide specific examples of complaints made by customers either formally or informally.

7.1 Customer views

The customer survey described in Chapter 2 provides a basis on which to compare the views and expectations of staff with the stated experiences of a cross-section of Jobcentre Plus customers in the pilot districts. Interviews took place with 211 customers, who were asked to indicate what changes they thought had occurred in the Jobcentre Plus service between the last six months of 2004 and the first six months of 2005.

The customer survey attempted to elicit an unprompted response regarding any changes in the service that customers had noticed. Respondents were also asked to state whether they had noticed any changes in six specified areas: contact with frontline staff, contact with advisers, quantity/quality of jobs available, number of jobs to which submitted, type of jobs to which submitted and use of self-service channels. This is referred to in Figure 7.1 as 'prompted'. Finally, respondents were given 'detailed prompts' outlining the type of changes that they may have noticed under each of the five broad headings.

The main changes in customer service that respondents were able to identify, with no specific prompts, focused heavily on the organisation of the signing on and related processes within the Jobcentre Plus offices and the attitude and approach of Jobcentre Plus staff. Of the 126 spontaneous comments recorded by interviewers[5], 104 were broadly positive and only 17 could be interpreted as negative or critical. The five remaining comments were neither positive nor negative in nature.

In order of frequency, 'positive' comments by respondents related to more polite, efficient, friendly and/or helpful staff, a more personal service or a more pleasant office environment (43 comments); reduced waiting times, better organisation of appointments, more efficient process (40 comments); greater use of and/or improved self-service channels (18 comments) and more time with and/or better service from advisers (three comments).

The 'negative' views were varied and included longer waiting times, more bureaucracy (six comments); less polite, efficient, friendly and/or helpful staff (three comments) and a range of other comments made by one or two people including problems encountered in using Jobpoints, perceived adverse changes in benefit rules and a reduction in the number of staff available.

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[5] Some respondents made comments about more than one aspect of the service.

Table 7.1   Customer perceptions of change in Jobcentre Plus service between 2004 and 2005: unprompted responses

Category	'Typical' quotes	No. of responses
Staff and office environment: positive comments	*'Staff appear more relaxed and friendly.'* *'All staff are more friendly and approachable. You don't feel so guilty about being unemployed.'* *'A more pleasant, warmer, friendlier place to visit. Staff try harder to help.'* *'There is a more personal service.'*	43
Better organisation, lower waiting times etc	*'The system for making a new benefit claim has changed for the better…you don't have to visit the office as often as last year.'* *'…the time* (for appointment with New Deal adviser) *is always kept, which wasn't the case last year. Since the Jobpoints were put in…it is much quicker accessing information.'* *'You get more direct help from reception staff.'* *'Things seem better organised.'*	40
More use of self-service channels	*'To make enquiries, you are now directed to using the telephone number, either from the Jobcentre or from home.'* *'…you have to use the phones more which cuts out the face-to-face contact.'*	18
Improved contact with adviser	*'I now have more appointments with my personal adviser...the adviser's assistance is more intense and personal.'*	3
Problems with bureaucracy	*'The signing on procedure is long winded compared to last year.'*	6
Other 'negative' comments	*'The Jobpoints are more unreliable than last year …I was happier with the 'board' system.'* *'They check up more to make sure you are looking for jobs.'*	11
General/neutral	*'I think the Benefits Agency has joined in with the jobcentre.'*	5
Total unprompted comments		126

Figure 7.1   Customer perceptions of change in service 2004-05: prompted response
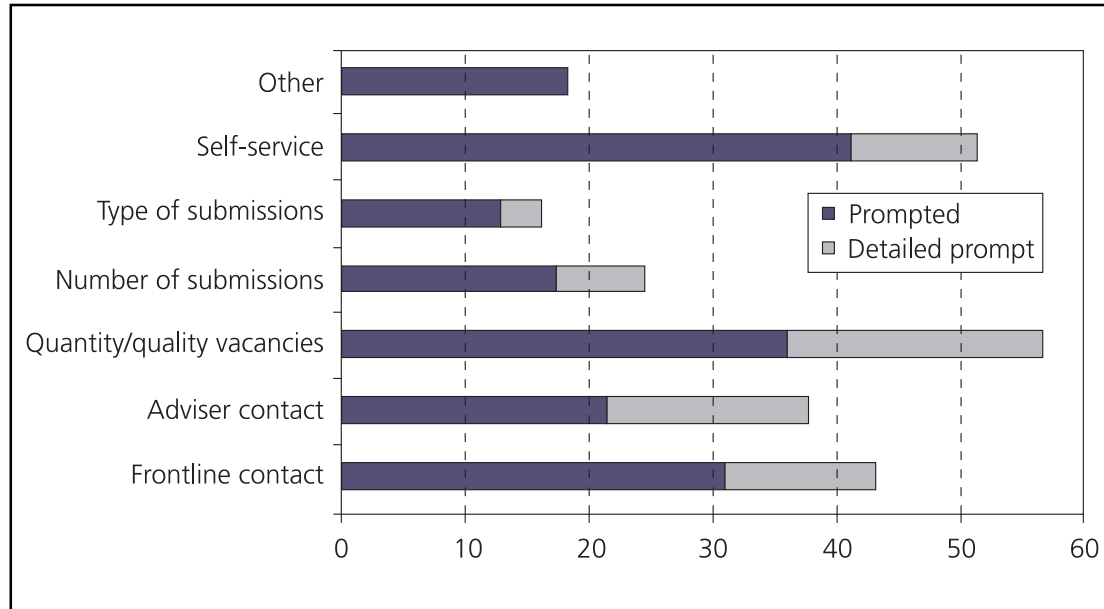
Interviewees were prompted by the mention of broad categories of customer service that may have changed and this elicited responses from a considerable number of customers (Figure 7.1). Just over two out of five respondents felt that there had been some change in their use of **self-service channels** and a further ten per cent recalled specific changes when given a more detailed prompt outlining the type of change that they may have noticed (see questionnaire – Appendix E)

The vast majority of specific comments regarding changes in the use of self-service channels related to increased use of Jobpoints, the warm phones and the Internet to search for jobs or to pursue benefit-related enquiries. Only four respondents felt that they were making less use of self-service channels, one giving no specific reason, two because they were about to start jobs, another stating a preference for face-to-face contact:

> 'I am using the phones less often. They don't provide the help I need. I prefer talking to my adviser about vacancies to see if they are suitable for me.'

Most respondents did not specify the reasons for their increased use of self-service channels, but there was a broadly even split between those respondents who specified that they had been encouraged or instructed by Jobcentre Plus staff to use the self-service channel and those who stated that they did so out of personal choice and preference:

> 'They seem to want you to use the phones more. My adviser is very helpful but for general enquiries they direct you to the phone.'

Some respondents felt that the quality of the service provided by Jobpoints and/or Jobcentre Plus Direct had improved, and this had prompted them to increase their use of these facilities. Others emphasised their own increasing confidence and ability to use self-service channels:

> 'I use the Jobpoints more this year because last year I was afraid to use them. Now I'm more confident…'

The vast majority of respondents that expressed an opinion were broadly positive about their increased use of self-service channels:

> 'Jobpoints are easier to use; they give better results and are quicker than searching.'

There were, however, a small handful of critical comments regarding self-service channels:

> 'The staff do suggest the use of the warm phones … which I don't like as I prefer speaking face-to-face'.

Comments on the **quantity and/or quality of vacancies** available at Jobcentre Plus varied in ways that do not appear to reflect any changes that may have occurred as a result of JOT. The most common response was to state that the overall number of vacancies has increased, although a sizeable minority felt that the number of vacancies in general and/or the type of vacancy they were seeking had declined in number. A small handful of respondents (four) noted that the number of agency jobs advertised by Jobcentre Plus had increased.

Detailed comments on changes in **contact with frontline staff** broadly reflect those previously presented in relation to unprompted customer response, focusing on waiting times and the personal characteristics of staff members in terms of politeness, approachability, helpfulness, etc. As with the unprompted comments, the clear balance of opinion was positive about the changes, with a small number of critical comments:

> 'I think it's a better service. People are more willing to help you. The staff on the welcome stand came over and had a word while I was on the Jobpoints and also gave me a leaflet.'

Just under 40 per cent of respondents who had seen a **Jobcentre Plus adviser** noted some changes in this service, following general and specific prompts by interviewers. On balance, respondents felt that they were spending some more time with their advisers, although a small number said that the time they spent with advisers was shorter. In most cases, advisers were found to be more helpful than in the past. Comments about the specific service received were not common:

> 'I get more time and help from advisers. It's not as hurried as last year'.

Thirty-five respondents stated, after prompting, that they felt that they had been **submitted** to more jobs in the first half of 2005 compared with the second half of 2004. Ten customers said that they had been submitted to fewer jobs. In terms of

types of submission, customers tended to focus on the variety and range of jobs, with the overwhelming consensus being that this has increased since 2004. A number of respondents did note that they felt that Jobcentre Plus was being less indiscriminate in submitting them, with a greater focus on the type of jobs that they felt most suited to:

> *'There are now more normal jobs to suit me. Last year, there were big lists of jobs of no interest to me. Now it's retail, computers and trade jobs. Last year it was bar work and a lot of part-time work.'*

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt that the service they had received from Jobcentre Plus had got better, worse or stayed the same between the last six months of 2004 and the first six months of 2005. The response to this question is summarised in Figure 7.2. It is clear from this that only a very small group of respondents felt that the overall service had declined, with the remaining respondents split broadly evenly between those who perceived no change and those who felt that the service had improved.

Figure 7.2   Customer perception of change in service quality, 2004-05 (%)
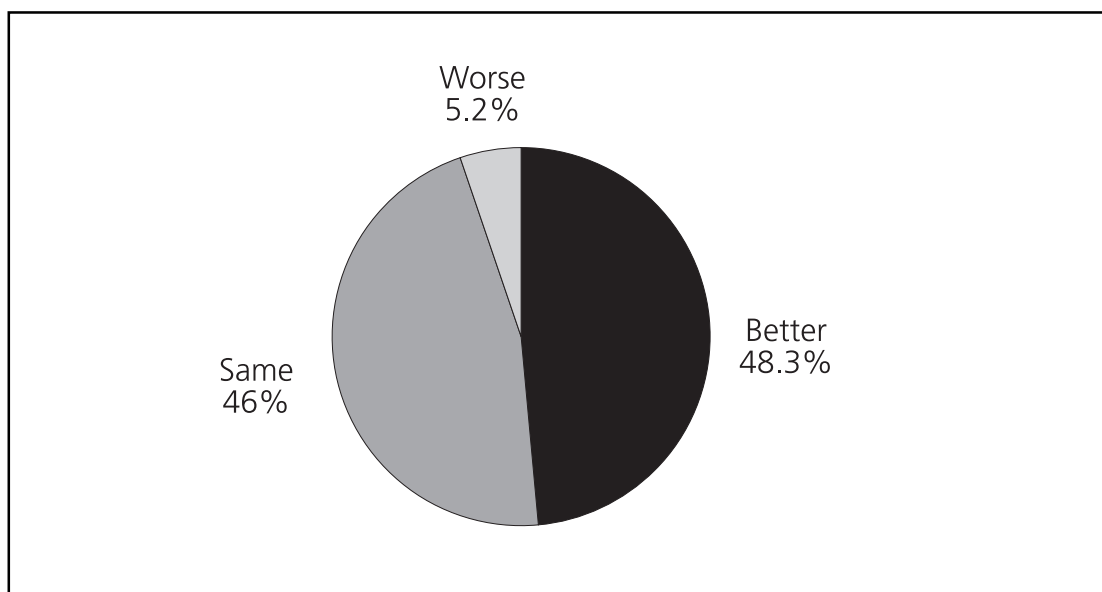
The characteristics of those who felt that the service had declined do not differ in any noticeable sense from the remaining interviewees. Nine out of the eleven customers citing a decline in service were male, only one was on a Jobcentre Plus scheme, none were claiming Income Support and none were lone parents.

7.2   JOT and customer service: overview

Given the fact that no customers expressed any awareness of the JOT pilots, it is not possible to state unequivocally the degree to which the changes in service mentioned by customers responding to the survey can be related directly to JOT. A

wide range of factors, some related to individual offices and other to individual customers, have clearly contributed to the changed perceptions of customers. In particular, changes in the process for new claims and signing on, driven primarily by Customer Management System (CMS) and Trailblazer, appear to have had an impact on service levels and quality that has been noticed by customers.

The customer survey findings do, however, corroborate the findings from interviews with staff that there has been an additional push to encourage customers to use self-service channels, in some cases in conjunction with other interventions involving discussions with advisers. The majority of customers expressed positive feelings about this trend and indeed, many felt that they had increased their use of self-service channels of their own volition, encouraged by perceived improvements in service quality.

This last point highlights a key discrepancy between the views of some staff and those of the majority of customers interviewed for this study. Staff expressed some fears that customers may be unhappy about the more limited opportunities available for face-to-face discussion and/or that considerable numbers of customers may be deterred from using telephones or computers through limited skills or confidence. This view was not borne out by the survey respondents, only a few of whom expressed any degree of concern and indeed some of whom noted that they felt increasingly confident about using the self-help channels, partly due to staff assistance.

Customer perceptions of trends in available vacancies appear to vary according to individual and local circumstances, but the majority view was that the number and variety of vacancies on offer through Jobcentre Plus continues to increase, with Jobpoints and the Internet playing a role in enabling customers to identify relevant opportunities. It is unlikely that JOT played any role in driving this generally (but not universally) perceived trend. However, the evidence supports the view that a considerable proportion of customers continue to use Jobcentre Plus to search for jobs despite reduced pressure on staff to try to steer customers towards Jobcentre Plus vacancies.

There is some evidence on the margins that Jobcentre Plus may be increasingly likely to carry vacancies from agencies and some limited evidence of a more focused approach to the submission of customers to suitable jobs ('quality submissions') rather than a more indiscriminate volume-based approach that some customers perceived to have been dominant in the past. However, the evidence for this, while consistent with what might be expected under JOT, is relatively weak and inconclusive at this stage.

Finally, and of key importance, the customer survey found no evidence to support the assertion of some staff that JOT would lead to widespread disaffection with the service provided by Jobcentre Plus, particularly among customers falling into the lower priority ('1 and 2 point') groups. A small minority of customers did feel that the overall standard of service had declined since the introduction of the JOT pilots, but there is no clear pattern in terms of customer characteristics.

There is no strong evidence to suggest that the negative experiences of these 11 respondents were related directly to JOT. The comments made by this group about the service they received were mixed, but focused primarily upon perceived inefficiencies in the service, delays in processing claims, perceived unfairness in terms of the benefit rules and isolated negative experiences with 'rude' or 'unhelpful' members of staff.

On the other hand, a substantial group of customers interviewed for this study felt that the overall service had improved. In the absence of comparable information for non-JOT areas, it is not possible to attribute this improvement solely to JOT. However, the result is consistent with the view that any adverse consequences on customer service are negligible.

8 Relations with employers and providers

8.1 Relations with employers

8.1.1 Staff views and experiences

It has already been noted that employers are overwhelmingly unaware of the Job Outcome Target (JOT) pilots and that very few have any awareness of the Jobcentre Plus target system in general. Most members of staff interviewed during Phases 1 and 2 of the fieldwork were unable to comment in any detail on the likely or emerging impact of JOT on relations with employers, largely due to the fact that the majority of Jobcentre Plus staff have limited contact with employers. Such contact is limited to senior managers, employer engagement teams, field account managers and Vacancy Services teams.

The staff view about the likely impact of JOT on relations between Jobcentre Plus and employers was varied. Broadly speaking, three types of opinions were expressed: Firstly, there was some feeling that JOT might marginally improve relations with employers by discouraging staff from submitting large numbers of customers to jobs for which they may not be suitable. Furthermore, employers may notice a reduction in follow-up calls from advisers and vacancy services staff anxious to validate job entries.

At the other extreme, a small number of staff respondents were concerned about a possible decline in service for some employers consequent upon a further shift in the focus of Jobcentre Plus' activities towards the 'harder to help'. This may alienate some employers that were involved in activities such as job fairs that tended to result in large number of '1 and 2 point' job entries. The majority view, however, was that the impact of JOT on employer relations would be very small and unlikely to manifest itself over a short period of time.

Staff also pointed out that other changes were occurring in relation to the Jobcentre Plus 'offer' to employers that might lead to changes in employer perceptions of the service provided, notably the increased use of Apply Direct, which means that Jobcentre Plus is unaware of which customers are applying for posts and employers may find it difficult to distinguish between Jobcentre Plus applicants and others. More generally, increasing use of call centres to contact employers and experiments with internet-based communication of vacancies, is further reducing the link between employers and individual districts.

During the Phase 3 fieldwork, staff respondents were pressed to provide examples of how JOT had impacted upon relations with employers. For the most part, respondents found it difficult to come up with such examples and the prevailing view was that JOT had not materially affected relations between the JOT districts and local employers.

Some examples were provided, however, of changes in approaches to activities such as jobs fairs, which were in line with JOT in shifting the focus away from lower priority groups towards groups such as the long-term unemployed, lone parents and people with disabilities.

Staff respondents confirmed that JOT had led to a reduction in routine follow-up calls by district staff to employers, chasing up submission in order to confirm job entries. Terms such as 'pestering' and 'hassling' were used to describe such activity and staff respondents expressed relief at not having to undertake this activity and a feeling that employers were happy not to have such frequent contact. Vacancy services staff in particular felt, however, that it was important to make regular contact with employers for 'customer service' purposes and, indeed, felt that they had marginally more time to do this in the absence of pressure to 'chase points'.

On the other hand, some examples were given of positive feedback from employers, believed by Jobcentre Plus respondents to be JOT-related:

> *'One employer…who has used the Jobcentre a number of times before, was recently very pleased because previous recruitment rounds for him had seen us send through 40 or 50 applicants with … maybe two taken on. This time we submitted six, six turned up for interview and all were taken on.'*

The indicator of the impact of JOT on employer perceptions most frequently cited by Jobcentre Plus managers was the Employer Outcome Target (EOT). The perceptions of managers in the JOT districts (not corroborated at this stage by quantitative evidence) were that there had been no noticeable or systematic change in district-level EOT scores and that it was too early to interpret any data that was coming through.

8.1.2 Employer Outcome Target survey findings

The research team undertook an exploratory analysis of the data available from the surveys used to generate the EOT over the period July 2004 to June 2005. The primary focus of the analysis was on the overall satisfaction expressed by respondents

regarding the service that they had received from Jobcentre Plus. Table 8.1 summarises some of the key findings from a comparison of the JOT districts with the non-JOT districts between the second half of 2004 and the first half of 2005.

It is important to note that the EOT responses reflect the activities of Jobcentre Plus call centres, which are not covered by the JOT pilots, in addition to employer interaction with the JOT pilot districts themselves.

Table 8.1   Selected employer satisfaction indicators from EOT survey: comparison of JOT and non-JOT districts, 2004 and 2005 (column %)

	JOT districts		Non-JOT districts	
Indicator	**July-December 2004**	**January-June 2005**	**July-December 2004**	**January-June 2005**
Overall satisfaction with service				
Very satisfied	50.2	50.7	47.6	50.2
Fairly satisfied	39.6	38.6	40.5	38.6
Neither	5.1	5.9	6.0	6.2
Fairly/very dissatisfied	4.2	4.4	5.1	4.4
Enough applicants to choose from?	67.0	70.2	65.2	69.2
Did all applicants attend interview?	26.2	26.0	23.9	24.0
Were interviewees job-ready?	85.2	86.3	85.2	86.6
Did Jobcentre Plus fill vacancy?	56.4	55.8	54.1	55.9
Level of contact from Jobcentre Plus				
Too much	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.6
About right	84.1	83.9	81.7	83.1
Too little	12.3	12.5	15.0	13.3

Table 8.1 suggests very few differences in the selected indicators between JOT and non-JOT districts for the first six months of 2005. Responses in terms of overall satisfaction, sufficient numbers of applicants, job readiness and frequency of contact are almost identical. JOT districts scored more highly that non-JOT districts in relation to whether all applicants attended an interview.

The figures suggest that there has been a slight (but not statistically significant) reduction in the percentage of vacancies filled by Jobcentre Plus in the JOT pilot districts, a finding which – if confirmed by future analysis – is consistent with a reduced emphasis under JOT on proving Jobcentre Plus intervention. Conversely, non-JOT districts recorded a statistically significant increase in the percentage of vacancies filled by Jobcentre Plus.

The last response, together with the increasing percentage of respondents stating that there were enough applicants to choose from and/or that applicants were 'job-ready', is consistent with the view that submissions are becoming marginally more 'appropriate' under JOT. At a minimum, it can be concluded that there is no

indication from these results that submissions have become any less 'appropriate' under JOT.

It should be noted that, in broad terms, employer satisfaction indicators for the JOT pilot districts remained constant or increased slightly between the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005. For the non-JOT districts, the picture is one of improving results, but starting from a base that was lower than was the case for the JOT districts. There is no obvious explanation for this observation, other than that the JOT pilot districts were all rolled-out Jobcentre Plus districts prior to 'go live'. Some of the non-JOT districts are likely to have been behind the JOT districts in some aspects of their development and may have been going through a 'catch up' period during early 2005.

Finally, very few employers, either in the JOT or non-JOT districts, felt that they had too much contact from Jobcentre Plus. Indeed, around one in eight respondents felt that the level of contact was 'too little', implying a desire for higher levels of contact in the future.

8.1.3   Employer interviews

As outlined in Chapter 2, 40 employers that had some relation with the JOT pilot districts were interviewed in order to explore any differences they may have perceived in the service that they had received since the introduction of the JOT pilots.

These discussions revealed that most of the interviewed employers had long-standing relationships with Jobcentre Plus in relation primarily to the recruitment of new staff. While some had attended job fairs or undertaken interviews in Jobcentre Plus offices, for the most part, contact was limited to supplying vacancy information and liaising with Jobcentre Plus about candidates for the jobs.

A key finding is that in most cases, employers communicate with Jobcentre Plus by telephone and increasingly with centralised call centres rather than local offices. Only around a quarter of our interviewees had any sort of regular contact with an office within a JOT pilot district. It is not surprising, therefore, that knowledge among employers of Jobcentre Plus targets and JOT in particular was minimal.

Employers reported very few problems with Jobcentre Plus bureaucracy, with most being geared up to provide information about candidates that had turned up for interviews, been offered employment, etc. There were no complaints about being 'pestered' by Jobcentre Plus staff contacting them for 'point chasing' purposes[6]. Conversely, no desire was expressed for increased numbers of such calls.

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[6] Note that, although follow-up of employers by JOT pilot offices for the purposes of verifying job entries reduced considerably or ceased entirely, follow-up by Employer Direct continued throughout the JOT pilot.

Employers, in most cases, were unable to identify changes in the service provided by Jobcentre Plus between the last half of 2004 and the first half of 2005. In cases where employers had noted changes in the flow of applicants (in most cases in a downward direction), this was attributed to local or occupational labour market changes and not to Jobcentre Plus activities.

8.2   Relations with providers

8.2.1   Staff views and experiences

Jobcentre Plus staff were asked in Phases 1 and 2 to consider how JOT might affect relations between Jobcentre Plus and providers, both contracted and non-contracted. At management level, there was widespread recognition that JOT should, in principle, mean that advisers feel less pressured to refer customers to contracted provision, due to a high likelihood of any subsequent job entries being 'captured' under Job Entry Target (JET). Conversely, JOT should provide an incentive for advisers to refer customers to the types of provision that are most appropriate to their needs and most likely to improve their chances of getting a job, regardless of whether the provider was contracted to Jobcentre Plus or not.

During Phases 1 and 2, a number of examples were given of situations in which advisers felt inhibited from referring customers to non-contracted provision such as Employment Zones, college courses, Learning and Skills Council (LSC)-funded programmes or European Social Fund (ESF) initiatives. In addition to the issue of potentially 'losing' job entry points, advisers (and their managers) in general felt inadequately informed about the provision that is available in their local areas and how it might benefit their customers. The hope was expressed that reduced time spent 'chasing points' under JOT might enable advisers to spend more time researching the available provision.

Phase 3 interviews revealed that limited progress had been made since JOT 'go-live' in terms of broadening the scope of provision to which customers are referred. Advisers and their managers continued to recognise the potential inherent in JOT and provided examples of initiatives designed to improve adviser knowledge and awareness of provision. However, limited evidence was forthcoming of any noticeable shift in the pattern of referrals to provision. A number of factors contributed to this:

Firstly, and most significantly, reduction in the budgets available for contracted provision and uncertainty regarding the availability of such provision in the future, occupied the minds of many advisers and adviser managers. In principle, this should provide an incentive for advisers to seek other, non-contracted, provision. However, this was not happening to any great extent at the time of the Phase 3 fieldwork.

One reason for this limited response was the feeling that any time savings that occurred as a result of not having to 'chase points', had been offset by pressures on resources, for example through the adviser efficiency initiatives and attempts to introduce new benchmarks for adviser activity. These developments appear to have further reduced the level of attention given to searching for alternative provision.

Furthermore, advisers noted some of the practical barriers in the way of referring some customers to non-contracted provision. For example, in the case of New Deal, advisers are obliged to refer customers to approved provision; similarly for customers with basic skills needs. Issues of eligibility (e.g. for ESF projects) and worries about whether participation might affect benefit entitlement were also raised as concerns that are holding back some advisers from encouraging customers to enter programmes that are available in the local area.

Finally, some staff respondents, particularly (but not exclusively) in rural area, commented on the limited availability, accessibility and in some cases, quality of both contracted and non-contracted provision.

At district management level and to some extent at business manager level, there was a recognition of the need for Jobcentre Plus to become more involved in local initiatives and partnerships in order to learn more abut the types of programmes and providers that are available and to influence their development. One business manager stated that she had increased the amount of time that she spends visiting potential providers and has encouraged advisers to do the same.

It is clear that changes in the pattern of provision have not taken place to any great degree within the JOT pilot districts, with any small-scale changes being overshadowed by significant cutbacks to the contracted provision budget and the uncertainty this has created. The result, according to advisers, has been an overall reduction in referrals to contracted provision, with no significant compensating referrals to non-contracted provision.

Thirty providers were interviewed during Phase 3 of the qualitative study with a view to obtaining information about how JOT has impacted on the relationship from the provider point of view.

8.2.2   Provider views and experiences

Providers, and contracted providers in particular, were primarily concerned with two key issues: Firstly, their dealing with Jobcentre Plus led them to believe that the organisation was going through considerable change, for example involving potential job losses. The overwhelming feeling was that staff morale in Jobcentre Plus was low and that this was adversely affecting relationships with providers.

Secondly, contracted providers had all experienced – to some degree or other – the cutbacks and uncertainties associated with the budget for provision. Some providers had had contracts terminated; others had contracts reduced and others had contracts extended for relatively short periods. This was all creating uncertainty in the minds of providers, which meant that the issue of the JOT pilots was of relatively little significance to them.

Providers across the board felt that the number of referrals had reduced since January 2005, but did not attribute this to JOT. This finding is corroborated by staff interviews, which pointed to a trend of reduced referrals linked to budget cutbacks.

Providers expressed no major concerns about the bureaucracy associated with Jobcentre Plus contracts and the tracking of customer progress.

As noted, providers discerned major changes in their contracts with jobcentre Plus, but none that could be related to the operation of the JOT pilots.

8.3   Summary of key points

Employers are overwhelmingly unaware of the JOT pilots and very few have any awareness of the Jobcentre Plus target system in general.

Jobcentre Plus staff expressed mixed views regarding the likely impact of JOT on relations with employers. Some were concerned that JOT might harm employer relations due to an increased focus on higher priority customer groups. Others felt that relations would be improved as a result of reductions in routine follow-up activity.

Evidence from discussions with employers suggests strongly that JOT has had no discernable impact on them during the first six months of the pilot's operation.

Jobcentre Plus managers and advisers recognised the potential for changes to occur under JOT in relations between Jobcentre Plus and providers, with advisers looking to refer customers to a wider range of provision.

The qualitative research found little evidence of any significant changes in Jobcentre Plus behaviour in this regard; however, some districts and offices had introduced initiatives to increase adviser awareness of local provision.

Providers' main concerns related to changes in Jobcentre Plus budgets and contracting procedures; few were aware of JOT and none could identify any changes that had occurred as a direct result of JOT.

9   Overview of main findings

This section presents an overview of the main findings from the qualitative study, utilising the evaluation framework and in particular the 'strategic high level questions' (Appendix E) as its framework.

The evaluation was organised around twelve 'key questions' which form the basis of the findings presented in this summary. The key questions are crucial to decisions regarding whether and how to roll out the Job Outcome Target (JOT) on a national basis, namely:

- the impact of JOT on off-flows from benefit into work;

- the impact of JOT on overall employment rates;

- the impact of JOT on outcomes for high priority groups;

- the impact of JOT on submissions and/or follow-up activity;

- the impact of JOT on cost-effectiveness and use of self-help channels;

- the extent to which JOT enables staff to focus efforts on hardest to help customers;

- whether it is possible to performance manage effectively under JOT;

- the impact of JOT on people management and cultural change;

- the impact on employers of the JOT approach;

- the impact on providers of the JOT approach;

- the existence of an adverse impact from JOT for particular customer groups; and

- the lessons that can be learned from the pilot for any national roll-out.

The first three key questions have been addressed exclusively through the quantitative evaluation, conducted by the Analytical Services team within Business Measurement Division (BMD), that ran parallel to this study. The findings presented here relate to the last nine key questions and are, in most cases, based solely on the qualitative evidence. However, reference is made, where appropriate, to key findings from the quantitative study.

9.1   Submission and follow-up activity

The key question under consideration here is:

'Does JOT improve the efficiency of Jobcentre Plus by reducing the amount of activity around submissions and/or follow-up?'

There is very strong evidence from the qualitative study that there has indeed been a significant reduction in resources devoted by local offices to follow-up and submission activity under JOT linked to the widely understood perception that there is no need to 'chase destinations' under JOT. Advisers and vacancy services staff are spending less time on contacting employers to check on the progress of submissions; speculative submissions have all but ceased and the inappropriate use of Adviser Discretionary Fund (ADF) to 'buy' job entries no longer occurs in the JOT pilot districts.

The clearest manifestations of such resource savings relate to speculative submissions and the use of the ADF, both of which reduced dramatically in the JOT pilot districts. The picture in relation to 'ordinary' submissions was mixed, with most districts reporting an initial decline, followed by a recovery as it managers began to realise that it was still necessary to submit customers to jobs under JOT, albeit with a greater focus on 'appropriate' submissions.

Evidence on the volume and quality of submissions in general is mixed, with a widespread view that fewer submissions were being made under JOT than previously, but some uncertainty as to whether this represented an increase in the quality of submissions or reflected a general feeling that it was no longer necessary to submit large numbers of customers to vacancies. Evidence from customers confirms this mixed picture, with most reporting that they had been submitted for more jobs, but a sizeable minority perceiving a reduction in the number of submissions.

The research suggests that there are potentially some positive indirect benefits from the fact that the JOT system no longer requires individual Jobcentre Plus staff members to prove that an intervention occurred before a job entry can be counted towards the target. Respondents reported significant reductions in conflicts between staff members or groups regarding the attribution of job entries, with a consequent reduction in time and effort spent by managers and others on conflict resolution.

No clear pattern emerged as to the scale of the resource savings resulting from JOT, but most respondents were clear that such savings are significant. In the case of the Option 2 districts, however, it was reported that these resource savings had been cancelled out by the extra resources required to establish, operate, monitor and validate the process of tracking the destinations of individuals that had ceased to claim benefits. These conclusions are supported by the findings of the Value for Money study undertaken as part of the quantitative evaluation.

In summary, the qualitative research demonstrates clearly that efficiency savings have indeed been made in the follow-up and submissions process within local offices as a direct result of the introduction of the JOT pilots.

9.2 Use of self-help channels

The relevant strategic high level question is:

'Does JOT encourage cost-effective use of self-help channels?'

Jobcentre Plus staff and customers reported overwhelmingly that the use of self-help channels had increased noticeably since the introduction of the JOT pilots in January 2005. However, this was widely reported as part of an ongoing change and JOT was seen as only one factor contributing to increased use of self-service channels. Other factors include an increasing policy focus on the 'harder to help', efficiency initiatives to reduce footfall (ie. personal visitor traffic) in Jobcentre Plus offices, reduction/removal of Response to Displayed Vacancies (RDV) services and changing customer competences and preferences.

It can, therefore, be concluded that JOT has acted as an enabling and reinforcing factor in the increased use of self-help channels, primarily through reducing the pressure on frontline staff to 'chase points' even among Priority Customer Group 4 and 5. JOT has not, however, been the main driver of this process.

Some staff and a small number of customers expressed concerns about the appropriateness and/or quality of the service provided through the self-help channels. Queues for 'warm phones', problems with Jobpoints, concerns about the quality of call centre staff and limited confidence or skills among some customer groups were all cited as factors that might inhibit the efficiency and effectiveness of self-help provision.

Furthermore, staff highlighted the need to ensure that the 'right' people are referred to self-help channels, primarily those who are 'job-ready' and capable of searching for jobs independently. This decision is crucial in order to avoid undue pressure on frontline staff if resources are used to help those who can help themselves. On the other hand, referring customers to self-help channels who would benefit from early intervention may be a false economy in the medium term, if such customers remain unemployed for long periods and need more intensive assistance later on. The skills and confidence of frontline staff are, therefore, key to ensuring the efficiency of the self-help referral process.

A further inhibiting factor to the efficient use of self-help channels relates to the views of many Jobcentre Plus staff about what constitutes 'good customer service'. The predominant view among frontline staff is that customers prefer face-to-face contact and, by implication, that referring them to self-help channels represents less good service. This view was not corroborated by customers, most of whom were either positive or neutral about the Jobcentre Plus service, however, it is clear that deeply-held views about customer service need to be addressed in order to maximise the impact of JOT on the efficient operation of self-help channels.

In conclusion, the qualitative evidence is consistent with the view that JOT has reinforced and supported an already existing process of increasing reliance on self-

service channels by customers, and contributed to increasing efficiency by reducing incentives for staff to expend effort and resources on customers that are capable of helping themselves. The skills and confidence of frontline staff, and in particular, their attitudes to customer service, are central to ensuring that the potential benefits from JOT are maximised.

These conclusions are broadly consistent with the findings of the quantitative evaluation, which identified no detectable impact of JOT on submissions to Jobcentre Plus Direct, but suggested that take-up of Apply Direct increased since the introduction of JOT.

9.3   Focus on hardest to help customers

The third strategic high level question asks:

> *'Does JOT enable staff to focus their efforts more effectively on the hardest to help customers?'*

Increasing the focus of staff activity on the 'hardest to help' customers has been a central theme of Jobcentre Plus' vision and strategy for several years. The introduction of the points system under Job Entry Target (JET) was explicitly aimed at reinforcing and encouraging such a focus, and evaluations have established that Jobcentre Plus managers and staff understand this and have made considerable efforts to focus more and more clearly on the harder to help.

In principle, JOT should further encourage advisers in particular to focus on the highest Priority Groups (1 and 2) among Jobcentre Plus customers for three main reasons: Firstly, reduced immediate pressure to achieve job entries should lead to advisers taking a longer-term view of the customer's route back to work involving, for example, referrals to relevant providers rather than premature submissions to jobs.

Secondly, JOT may enable advisers to spend more time with customers that require extra help, as a consequence of not having to spend unproductive time on 'chasing points'.

Thirdly, the removal of individual targets as a consequence of JOT should lead to the reduction or removal of inappropriate 'hoarding' by advisers of the more job-ready customers who are more likely to yield performance points under JET.

All of the above arguments were recognised and appreciated by managers and advisers. However, the predominant feeling was that changes of this type are likely to take place over a long period of time, as advisers become more used to the new system. A further set of contingent factors relate to the attitudes and practices of individual advisers and managers. Some felt that they had always taken the approach of providing the most appropriate service for individuals, regardless of the consequences for JET points. Others were clearly driven primarily by personal achievement as verified by JET points.

A number of changes running concurrently with JOT, for example, the adviser efficiency Initiative and cutbacks in ADF and provider funding, also ameliorated the potential impact of JOT on adviser attitudes and provision for the harder to help.

Despite these complicating factors, Jobcentre Plus respondents were able to give some examples of how they had increased their focus on the harder to help, spending more time with people with disabilities or Income Support (IS)/Incapacity Benefit (IB) customers for example. Some managers and advisers had started to make more effort to find out about relevant local provision (e.g. European Social Fund (ESF)-funded programmes) and to take a longer-term view of enhancing the employability of these customers. Some customers reinforced this by noting that they felt that they were spending more time with their advisers and that advisers were more 'helpful' or 'friendly'.

It is not possible to state unequivocally, on the basis of the qualitative evidence, that JOT has, in practice, enabled staff to focus even more clearly than before on harder to help customer groups. There are some signs, however, of moves in this direction and there is no evidence of any reduction in focus on these groups as a direct result of JOT.

The quantitative findings in relation to this question were also inconclusive, reinforcing the mixed picture presented in this report.

9.4   Performance management

There are two parts to the fourth strategic high level question: Firstly:

> *'Is it possible to effectively performance manage JOT?'*

Secondly:

> *'What gaps in management information need to be filled prior to any national roll-out?'*

Effective performance management is an issue that was at the forefront of the minds of many Jobcentre Plus participants in the qualitative research, particularly those in management positions. Two key issues dominated discussions: Firstly, one consequence of JOT was the removal of individual and (in Option 1 districts) office performance targets, bringing the need to focus more clearly on 'managing people rather than numbers'. Secondly, performance information under JOT is no longer available on a daily basis, with significant time lags before managers had a picture of how their area of responsibility had performed.

Attitudes towards, and practices within, this changed situation varied significantly. Many management respondents reported that they relished the challenge of the new environment, released from the constant pressure of daily reporting of job entry information. These more confident managers felt that they were well able to cope without regular job entry information and were able to identify good and bad performers – and act accordingly – without recourse to crude, and potentially misleading, job entry data.

On the other hand, the research did identify a sizeable group of managers who felt that they were struggling to identify and manage performance under the new environment, with statements about feeling 'lost' without the Daily Placing Lists being relatively common. Some individuals, and particularly advisers, also stated that the daily flow of job entry information under JOT had provided a degree of reassurance and motivation that was absent under JET.

In terms of the first part of the strategic high level question, the existence of large groups of managers and staff who feel comfortable with performance management under JOT, suggests strongly that it is **possible** to effectively performance manage under JOT. It is clear, however, that broadly equally sizeable groups of managers and staff have experienced some difficulties in adjusting to significant changes in the target and data regime and will require ongoing support and development in order to operate more comfortably in the absence of a constant flow of job entry data.

In relation to management information, the only difference between JET and JOT is that the Daily Placing List is not used under JOT. All other Management Information (MI) remains that same as under JET. What is different, however, is the way in which that information is used and interpreted. One important example relates to submissions, which potentially take on a different meaning under JOT due to a much reduced focus on ensuring that customers are submitted to Jobcentre Plus vacancies. Measures that focus on the quality rather than the quantity of submissions, for example, are particularly relevant under JOT.

Information about the activities of advisers and their relationship with job outcomes was felt to be increasingly important under JOT. Although such information did exist previously, it was not used heavily and not related systematically to job outcomes. Several respondents reported a need for MI development in this area and districts were experimenting with their own clerical tracking systems and benchmarks for adviser activity.

With the exception of information on adviser activity, there was limited demand from managers and staff for more management information. The key issues were the relevance of the information (as already noted), its accuracy, usability and above all its timeliness. On the last point, respondents would prefer information on job outcomes to be made available as soon as possible and for accurate assessments to be made of the percentage of actual job outcomes for specific months that are covered by the data feed. Managers in particular, but also many staff, would like the information to be disaggregated to office level in order to aid the process of identifying the main drivers of performance.

In conclusion, specific gaps in management information relate primarily to the effective tracking of adviser activity in a situation where measuring the relationship between inputs and outputs is becoming more important. The key issues, however, relate to the timeliness of job outcome information, its disaggregation to office level and – crucially – guidance on the interpretation of MI that was little used under JET and/or takes on a changed meaning under JOT.

Ongoing work on 'symptom indicators', outlined in the quantitative evaluation report, suggests that it is possible to produce forecasts of outcome performance up to two months in arrears, with a relatively small margin for error. Work on 'lever indicators' has, to date, been less successful in identifying indicators that might help to predict outcome performance, and, hence, guide management actions in relation to performance variations. This suggests that the experience, skill and intuition of managers and the effective communication of good practice, would be increasingly important under JOT in ensuring adequate responses to poor performance, for example.

9.5   People management and cultural change

The first part of the strategic high level question under this heading – *'Is it possible to effectively manage people under JOT?'* – is very similar in nature to the question on performance management. Under JOT, people management and performance management are so closely inter-related as to amount to the same thing. Clarity in terms of behavioural expectations under JOT would, according to many Jobcentre Plus respondents, help considerably in the process of managing people to achieve the best possible performance with the resources available.

The second part of the question refers to a key issue underpinning much of the discussion with Jobcentre Plus staff, particularly, but not exclusively, at management level – *'Does JOT produce a cultural change within Jobcentre Plus offices?'*

Many respondents referred to the need for 'culture change' in order to optimise the potential benefits from JOT. The types of changes that were felt to be desirable in the JOT context include a greater focus on qualitative approaches to management (*'managing people not numbers'*); an emphasis on team rather than individual achievement; more flexibility around issues such as the referral of customers to providers and a more outward-looking approach to working with contracted and non-contracted organisations that might help customers to move closer to the labour market.

Jobcentre Plus respondents were overwhelmingly of the view that, in order for JOT to work effectively in the way intended, a substantial culture change would be required across the whole organisation. Research participants also stated clearly that such a change is unlikely to follow on automatically from the introduction of JOT; they were also unanimous in their view that culture change of the type and scale needed is unlikely to occur over a short period of time such as that covered by the pilots to date. This is not a surprising finding in the light of all that is known about the complexities of cultural change in large organisations.

The precise nature of the culture change required was articulated in different ways by different respondents. The core components, however, were common to most Jobcentre Plus staff, focusing on the need for a shift away from a (numerical) target-focused culture; a move from individual- to team-based notions of performance; a greater focus on managing people rather than data; a longer-term perspective on

performance and a more outward-looking approach to provision and to collaboration with other agencies.

The qualitative research identifies some examples of changes (often in attitudes rather than practice at this stage) across all of these components of culture change. For example, many respondents reported a less competitive atmosphere between individuals and groups; some managers were making more effort to get involved in local partnerships; the nature of MI under JOT was reported to be helping some managers to shift from short-term crisis management to longer-term strategic approaches.

These trends were not – six months into the JOT pilots – substantial, widespread, universal or occurring in an holistic way. Rather, they were embryonic, albeit consistent with the basic premise of JOT. There were some indications that staff who had joined Jobcentre Plus under the JET regime expressed particular difficulties with adjusting from a target-focused largely individualistic culture, which is the only one they had ever known. Conversely, some longer-serving staff appeared more comfortable with the changes required by JOT.

In conclusion, JOT does not lead **automatically** to a 'culture change' within Jobcentre Plus. However, it is consistent with – and in many ways is driving – some of the attitudinal and behavioural changes that may lead, over a longer period, to a 'culture change'. Other factors, and in particular leadership from national, regional and district management, will be required in order to effect the considerable and challenging cultural shifts required.

9.6   Impact on employers

Some Jobcentre Plus staff expressed fears that service to employers may be negatively affected by JOT. In particular, some felt that the increased focus on higher priority groups implied by JOT, might lead to declining activity around job fairs, large-scale recruitments and similar events, which typically resulted in large number of job entries for employed individuals and non-claimants.

On the other hand, it was felt that employers would be positive about the reduction in local office follow-up activity, particularly if resources continued to be devoted to 'customer service' contact with employers.

The qualitative research – supported by the quantitative evidence – found no evidence of any impact, positive or negative, of JOT on employers, with no employers contacted for this study expressing any awareness of JOT and very few being aware of JETs in general.

9.7   Impact on providers

In principle, JOT should lead to a changed relationship between Jobcentre Plus and providers. In particular, JOT should encourage advisers to refer clients to a wider range of providers, not only contracted providers. The research found evidence that

Jobcentre Plus managers and staff are aware of this possibility and are taking steps to facilitate a more flexible approach to referrals by, for example, researching local providers and setting up data bases.

The vast majority of providers contacted for this study were unaware of JOT and had only a sketchy knowledge of JETs. Cutbacks in the budget for provision and uncertainty about future budgets were the main areas of concern for providers, with JOT having no discernable impact on their activities at the six-month stage.

9.8   Impacts on particular customer groups

The previous questions were primarily concerned with the internal impact of JOT on the operation, management and culture of Jobcentre Plus. The next strategic high level question shifts the focus of attention onto a key 'external' group:

> *'What is the impact on customers of the JOT approach?'*

The 211 customers interviewed for this evaluation study identified a number of changes in their experience of the Jobcentre Plus service that had occurred over the first six months of 2005 and were consistent with the intentions of JOT. In particular, there was a widespread perception among customers that staff were making greater efforts to encourage them to use the self-help channels.

Mixed results were obtained in relation to vacancies submissions. Some felt that the numbers of vacancies and submissions had increased, whereas others perceived a reduction. While the former group slightly outweighed the latter, there is no clear pattern in terms of customer experiences in the JOT pilot areas.

Only a small number of customers interviewed for this study felt that the service they had received from Jobcentre Plus had declined since the end of 2004; however, a sizeable group felt they had experienced an improved service. Many of the improvements cited by customers – for example more efficient signing on processes and 'friendlier' staff – cannot be attributed directly to JOT. However, the customer survey results are consistent with the view that customers in general have not experienced a decline in service quality in the JOT pilot districts, despite the concerns of some members of staff.

The qualitative evidence leads us to conclude that the JOT pilot has had a broadly neutral impact on customer service across a range of groups, a finding that is consistent with the mixed, but generally inconclusive, quantitative evidence regarding the job outcome performance of different customer groups.

A related strategic high level question is:

> *'Are there any adverse impacts from JOT for particular customer groups?'*

Some members of staff expressed the concern that JOT, through further encouraging the use of self-service channels, might inadvertently affect the service provided to some customer groups. In particular, some customers fall – nominally – into lower

priority groups, but in reality may not be job-ready and may require face-to-face contact and assistance early in their spells of unemployment.

Principal among the groups of concern to frontline staff were people who were unable to speak English well. These include migrants (e.g. from Eastern Europe) and some members of ethnic minority groups, for example, some women. Other groups that were felt to be potentially vulnerable under JOT were older people with limited IT skills and people with mental health and confidence problems who may feel inhibited about using the telephone.

Jobcentre Plus respondents provided largely anecdotal evidence of adverse reactions from some customers who wanted face-to-face contact, but no systematic evidence (e.g. surveys, official complaints) was available.

The customer survey sample was not sufficiently large to enable any detailed analysis of responses by customer group, but a review of the 'negative' comments received did not reveal any pattern according to customer group.

Offset against concerns regarding the impact of JOT in relation to 'lower priority group' customers, was the view, expressed by some specialist advisers, that groups such as people with disabilities, people with mental health issues and those claiming IS or IB were receiving a slightly more appropriate service as a result of reduced short-term pressures for job entries.

We can conclude from the qualitative research that JOT has, in general, had a neutral impact on customer service, with no evidence of negative consequences for any particular customer groups. This finding is supported by the quantitative analysis of outcomes by customer group, which found no significant or systematic variations by customer group.

9.9   Lessons for national roll-out

The final strategic high level question is:

> 'What other lessons can be learned for any national roll-out?'

Most of the specific lessons for any national roll-out are explicitly or implicitly contained in the answers to the previous seven questions. In particular, the research findings emphasise the fact that roll-out cannot, and should not, be a one-off event, nor should it be regarded purely as a technical exercise in changing the way in which outcomes are measured and targets set.

Constant and consistent two-way communication with all levels of staff, tailored where appropriate to different groups, is a vital ingredient in the success of any roll-out and will help to embed the types of behavioural and cultural changes that need to take place over the medium- to long-term. A strong focus on changing behavioural expectations (for example, in relation to more effective team working, referral of customers to a wider range of providers, encouraging customers to use self-service channels and a more qualitative approach to management), while getting across the essential mechanics of JOT, is also important.

Finally, a key conclusion is that investment in support, training and development activities for all staff is an essential prerequisite for the successful roll-out of JOT. Particular attention needs to be paid to line managers, who would need to take a more qualitative approach to people and performance management; advisers, whose roles and approach to performance measurement would change significantly and frontline staff, on whom the onus is placed to ensure that customers are directed to the most appropriate channels to ensure that they receive the best available service.

10 Recommendations

In our view, the qualitative study suggests that Job Outcome Target (JOT) is feasible as an alternative approach to performance measurement and management for Jobcentre Plus. The principle of JOT is widely supported by Jobcentre Plus staff has led; even within a short period of time to many of the desired changes in staff behaviour; and has resulted almost immediately in the reduction or elimination of inefficient and perverse behaviour in relation to 'chasing destinations' and 'buying points'.

Some moves in the direction of a 'culture change' have been noted, for example, in relation to team working, performance management and external collaboration. However, these are part of an ongoing and complex process and will take time to bed in.

Based on the evidence we collected within the timeframe of the evaluation, the JOT pilots appear to have made little difference to the perceptions of customers or employers about the service they have received from Jobcentre Plus, with JOT pilot offices reporting continued 'customer service' contact with employers. Nor has JOT impacted significantly on relations with providers.

It is clear from the qualitative research that the decision regarding whether and/or how to roll out JOT on a national basis, is not purely a technical one focusing on whether the system is likely to operate smoothly. The decision will also be influenced by the results of the quantitative study which produced some mixed findings. Overall, it found that there was little district-level impact on performance in Option 1 districts but suggested that there may be some negative impacts on PG4 and PG5 clients. In Option 2 districts, the quantitative study found that some evidence of negative impact at the district level and for some customer groups, notably people with a claim duration of between four to six months, 18-21 year olds and lone parents. However, these findings need to be qualified by the noted limitations of the quantitative study in relation to the short observation period and incomplete data. The quantitative study did support the qualitative findings that Option 1 provides greater potential for cost savings, particularly in regard to the validation process.

The evaluation team's view of the qualitative findings suggests a recommendation that JOT should be rolled out on a national basis as soon as is operationally possible.

The qualitative study found no substantial or significant differences between Options 1 and 2 in terms of their impact on staff or management behaviour, organisational culture or relations with customers or stakeholders.

On the basis of the qualitative results alone, Option 1 would appear to be the preferable option, given that the resource costs associated with Option 2 appear to outweigh any resource savings from reduced follow-up with employers under JOT, a finding corroborated by the quantitative evaluation.

It would be helpful if the period over which Option 1 outcome performance data is made available to districts could be reduced as far as is technically possible. Accurate estimates of recent outcome performance based on incomplete P45/46 data would also help managers to obtain an early (if only partial) indication of outcome performance on a month-to-month basis. At the time of writing this report, the quantitative study was unable to identify any robust 'lever' or causal indicators. However, a number of 'symptom' or predicative indicators (some recordable action between a customer accepting a job and outcome data being reported) were identified which are able to predict, with some margin for error, monthly performance two months in arrears.

Targets under JOT need to be based, as far as possible, on a meaningful and realistic analysis of the relationship between Job Entry Target (JET) and JOT performance and a degree of flexibility will need to be built in as the whole system beds in, meaning that apparent under- or over-performance in the initial period of implementation will need to be interpreted with caution.

As outlined in the previous chapter, it is important that the technical process of rolling out JOT be underpinned by an intensive, ongoing and consistent programme of communication, including provision for questions, feedback and suggestions from all groups of staff. Such a communication programme should start as soon as the decision is made to roll out JOT and should focus primarily on desired behavioural changes and associated performance expectations.

Guidance, support and development programmes will be required especially for line managers (focusing on performance management under JOT); advisers (revised expectations regarding activities with customers and performance measurement) and frontline staff (identifying customer needs and using available services cost-effectively).

Finally, and very importantly, the experience of the JOT pilot districts to date has created a large pool of expertise, examples of good practice and lessons for the future, which is a potentially invaluable resource for other districts, should the decision be made to roll out JOT nationally. It is essential that this experience is not lost and that ways are found to disseminate the main lessons across Jobcentre Plus in a positive and helpful way.

Appendix A
Discussion guide – Jobcentre Plus staff[7]

> **Note to interviewers**: *The guide covers a wide range of topics and it is **not** expected that every topic will be covered in depth in every interview / focus group. Judgement should be used in ensuring that the most appropriate questions are asked of each respondent/group and that interviews/focus groups should last **no more than one hour. NB: where reference is made to priority groups, can specific note be taken of which priority group is being discussed***.

1.   Communication and understanding of targets

1.1   How well do staff now **understand** the pilot target system, as compared with December of last year?

1.2   In what ways might the communication and understanding of JOT be **improved** in any future national roll-out?

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[7]   Note that slightly revised versions of this discussion guide were used for interviews with members of the Option 2 validation team, HR business partners and regional field managers and performance managers.

2.   Changes in working practices

Ask as open question and probe/prompt as appropriate to role of respondent

2.1   What changes have occurred in working practices since the introduction of JOT?

2.2   Do staff understand how they personally contribute to the target and its achievement?

Prompts

Follow up with employers and customers

2.3   (*Option 1*) To what extent are staff **'chasing destinations'** despite the fact that this is no longer necessary? If they are, why is this? Have there been any changes in the way the district works with **Employer Direct** on employer follow-up?

2.4   (*Option 2)* How are staff **following up people who have left the register**?

2.5   Have there been any changes in the **process** for dealing with people who advise Jobcentre Plus that they have got a job (*e.g. spec subs, 'end of week' rush, AD*F)?

2.6   Are staff still following up submissions with employers? If so why?

2.7   In particular (how) has the use of the Adviser Discretion Fund (**ADF**) been affected by JOT?

2.8   Have there been any changes in the way that **teams** within the district are working together?

2.9   In particular, has there been any change in the working relationship between **job-broking and benefit-processing staff**?

2.10   Has there been any change in the working relationship between **advisers and frontline staff**? (e.g. re referral of customers)

2.11   Do staff believe that they are now working more effectively under JOT?

Customer service

2.12   What changes have been made in relation to the **new claims** process (*e.g. emphasis on postcode information, methods of identifying job-ready customers*)?

2.13   What changes have there been in relation to the treatment of **non-claimants** and/or **job-ready customers**? (*e.g. increased direction to self-help channels*)? How are these groups identified? What role is played by floorwalkers, frontline staff etc? Any changes in help provided to customers re using self-help channels?

2.14   What changes have there been in the way in which **'harder to help'** groups are being treated?

2.15   Specifically, are staff spending more time with harder to help customers?

2.16   Do staff feel that there is an increase in the quality of service to harder to help customers (and what evidence can they cite to support this)?

2.17   Overall, what has been the impact of JOT on **customer service** for the different groups? (Particularly with ethnic minorities) Any evidence to back up statements?

Submissions

2.18   Has there been any noticeable change in the practice of **submissions** for vacancies (*e.g. fewer spec/ordinary submissions; more targeted submissions than existed under JET*)?

2.19   Any change in the **type of jobs** for which customers have been submitted (*e.g. part-time, low paid*)?

2.20   Any feedback from **employers** re quantity and/or quality of submissions?

Referrals to providers

2.21   Has the frequency of referrals to providers changed? If so why/how?

2.22   Has the type of customers being referred changed? If so, why/how?

2.23   Is there any evidence of staff referring clients to a broader range of **provision** than that currently formally contracted? Is there any evidence of change in the way in which the district is **working with providers**?

2.24   Has the role of **DPQMT** changed as a result of JOT?

2.25   Has there been any change in the relation with **employment agencies** as a result of JOT?

2.26   Do staff feel that they have sufficient knowledge of what provision is available in their local area for all different types of customer, including the harder to help?

Relations with employers

2.27   How has JOT affected the way in which the district works with **employers**?

2.28   Has the role of **RDV** changed as a result of JOT?

2.29   Has there been any changes in relation to **recruitment events**, job fairs, etc?

2.30   How has JOT affected the way that the district works with Jobcentre Plus Direct?

2.31   Employer Direct, **National Sales Team**, FAMs etc?

3.   Motivation, behaviour and skills

Motivation and behaviour

3.1   In what ways has the move away from **individual targets** affected staff motivation? Does this vary between staff groups?

3.2   Do **advisers** use their **time** differently as a result of changes to the target system? If so, how?

3.3   How is JOT being translated into **individual work objectives (for PDS purposes)**?

3.4   Do staff feel that the introduction of JOT provides sufficient incentives for them to prioritise harder to help customers?

3.5   Is there any evidence so far of more effective **team working** as a result of JOT?

3.6   Are there any noticeable differences in the way that staff **relate to customers? Employers? Providers? Partners?**

3.7   Has JOT had any other noticeable impact so far on **staff motivation or behaviour**?

3.8   Specifically, are staff more willing to refer job-ready customers to self-help channels? If not, why?

3.9   Are staff more willing to refer job-ready customers to Jobcentre Plus Direct now? If not why?

3.10   In particular, are there still queues at warm phones or do customers directed to self-help channels still return to the Jobcentre Plus office for face-to-face help? If so why?

3.11   How are staff **monitoring** their own performance?

3.12   How do staff perceive that their individual performance **contributes** to the overall achievement of the JOT target?

3.13   To what extent and in what ways do **efficiency and productivity** issues impinge on the ability of individuals and teams to contribute towards the achievement of the JOT target?

Staff skills and confidence

3.14   Do staff feel that they have the **skills and/or knowledge** necessary to work within the new target system?

3.15   Specifically, do staff (eg advisers) have sufficient training/skills/confidence to work more intensively with harder to help customers?

3.16   Do frontline staff have the training/skills/confidence necessary to redirect lower priority customers to self-help channels?

4.   Management issues

Note: these questions are most relevant for management interviewees but some could be covered in the focus group if time permits

General management issues

4.1   What are the main **changes in management practice** that have occurred as a result of the JOT pilot (*probe to isolate JOT form other changes that may affect management practice*)?

4.2   What are the **key management issues** that have emerged following the introduction of JOT?

4.3   What factors are impacting on your ability to **manage JOT effectively**?

4.4   How does the JOT pilot affect the achievement of other **Jobcentre Plus targets**?

People and performance management

4.5   What issues are raised by the implementation of JOT for people management as opposed to office/district management?

4.6   What steps are being taken to address **people management** issues? How far have HR been involved in this process?

4.7   **What do managers need** (e.g. information, support, guidance, training) in order to manage effectively under JOT?

4.8   What **risk areas** have been identified?

4.9   How are managers **monitoring the performance of staff**? (what tools are they using to do this?)

4.10   How do managers know if they have a high/low performing adviser?

4.11   How do managers know if they have a high/low performing team?

4.12   How do managers know if they have a high/low performing district?

4.13   Have there been any problems with performance management, and what have these been?

Management information

4.14   In what ways is the available **management information** being used to monitor performance at individual team and district levels?

4.15   **How useful** is the available management information for this purpose?

4.16   Are there any **gaps** in the available MI?

4.17   If so, (how) are these being filled at **local level** (e.g. local benchmarking tools)?

4.18   How might the MI and LMS systems be **improved** for the national roll-out of JOT? (NOTE HERE TO INTERVIEWERS – IT SYSTEMS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BE CHANGED IN ADVANCE OF ROLL-OUT SO EXPECTATIONS RE THIS SHOULD BE MANAGED).

5.   Overall opinions of JOT

5.1   What are the **benefits** of the JOT system?

5.2   What are the **drawbacks** of the system?

5.3   Are there any **improvements** that could be suggested to the operation of the JOT pilots?

5.4   What lessons have been learned so far that would be helpful in planning any **national roll-out** of JOT?

6.   Other issues not mentioned

Appendix B
Discussion guide – employers

Evaluation of Job Outcome Target (JOT) pilots

Stage 3: six month assessment

Topic guide for interviews with employers

> **Note to interviewers**: *In order to minimise the burden on employers, it is important that the interview is kept to a maximum of **15 minutes** unless it is clear that the respondent is happy to talk for longer than this.*

As a filter, all employers should be asked if they have used Jobcentre Plus services in the last six months prior to arranging an interview.

1.   Use of Jobcentre Plus services

1.1   Which Jobcentre Plus services have you used **in the last 6 months** (i.e. since 10 January 2005)? (PROMPT IF NECESSARY) NOTE TO INTERVIEWERS – IF THE EMPLOYER HAS NOT USED SERVICES IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS THE INTERVIEW CAN BE TERMINATED.

1.1.1   *Placed vacancies in Jobcentre Plus office-how many?*

1.1.2   *Placed vacancies through Apply Direct- how many?*

1.1.3   *Attended job fair or other recruitment event*

1.1.4   *Conducted large-scale recruitment exercise*

1.1.5   *Used Jobcentre Plus office to conduct interviews*

1.1.6   *Other*

1.2   Which of these services did you use **in the last 6 months of 2004** (i.e. between July and December 2004)? (PROMPT AS ABOVE)

1.3   Did you notice any **difference in the service that you received** between the last 6 months of 2004 and the first 6 months of 2005? (PROMPT IF NECESSARY)

      1.3.1   Contact with Jobcentre Plus sales staff

      1.3.2   Contact with Jobcentre Plus local office staff

      1.3.3   Contact with Jobcentre Plus call centres

      1.3.4   Quality of labour market knowledge of Jobcentre Plus staff (and does this match their needs)?

      1.3.5   Quantity and quality of job applicants submitted by Jobcentre Plus

      1.3.6   Quantity and quality of speculative applicants?

      1.3.7   Time taken to fill vacancy

      1.3.8   Level of bureaucracy involved e.g. form-filling, telephone follow up etc.

1.4   Have any of these changes affected your working relationship with Jobcentre Plus? If so, how and why?

2.   Awareness/understanding of Jobcentre plus target system

2.1   Are you aware that Jobcentre Plus operates a target system?

2.2   If, so please outline briefly your understanding of how this system works

2.3   Are you aware that (NAME OF DISTRICT) district has been piloting a new target system since January 2005?

2.4   If, so please outline briefly your understanding of how this system work

2.5   (If aware of JOT) do you feel that the new system has impacted on your relationship with Jobcentre Plus? If so, how?

3. Other comments about recent service received from Jobcentre Plus

Basic details

3.1 Name of respondent

3.2 Position of respondent

3.3 Sector

3.4 Size of establishment (no. of employees) at the site and across the whole organisation. Note here whether interaction with Jobcentre Plus is managed at this site or by another office within the organisation?

3.5 Independent or part of group?

Appendix C
Discussion guide – providers

Evaluation of Job Outcome Target (JOT) pilots

Stage 3: six month assessment

Topic guide for interviews with providers (both contracted and non-contracted)

> **Note to interviewers**: *In order to minimise the burden on respondents, it is important that the interview is kept to a maximum of 30 minutes unless it is clear that the respondent is happy to talk for longer than this.*

1.   Contact with jobcentre plus

1.1   What dealings have you had with Jobcentre Plus **in the last 6 months** (i.e. since 10 January 2005)? (PROMPT IF NECESSARY)

1.1.1   Discussion/negotiation of contracts

1.1.2   Referral of Jobcentre Plus customers to programmes

1.1.3   Contact re quality assurance (DPQMT)

1.1.4   Contact re monitoring of customer progress

1.1.5   Placement of customers into jobs

1.1.6   Other

1.2   What types of contact did you have with Jobcentre Plus **in the last 6 months of 2004** (i.e. between July and December 2004)? (PROMPT AS ABOVE)

1.3   Did you notice any **difference in the nature of your contact with Jobcentre Plus** between the last 6 months of 2004 and the first 6 months of 2005? (PROMPT IF NECESSARY)

   1.3.1   Contact with Jobcentre Plus local office staff

   1.3.2   Contact with Jobcentre Plus advisers

   *1.3.3   **(Contracted providers only)** Contact with DPQMT*

   *1.3.4   **(Contracted providers only)** Quantity and methods of customer tracking (including who is responsible for this).*

   1.3.5   Quantity and quality of referrals

   1.3.6   Level of bureaucracy involved e.g. form-filling, telephone follow-up etc.

   1.3.7   Frequency of contact with Jobcentre Plus

   1.3.8   Interest of Jobcentre Plus staff in the type and range of provision available and relative success rates

2.   Awareness/understanding of jobcentre plus target system

2.1   Are you aware that Jobcentre Plus operates a target system?

2.2   If, so please outline briefly your understanding of how this system works

2.3   Are you aware that (NAME OF DISTRICT) district has been piloting a new target system since January 2005?

2.4   If, so please outline briefly your understanding of how this system works

2.5   (If aware of JOT) do you feel that the new system has impacted on your relationship with Jobcentre Plus? If so, how?

3.   Other comments about recent contact with Jobcentre Plus

Basic details

3.1   Name of respondent

3.2   Position of respondent

3.3   Service provided

3.4   Type of organisation e.g. private, voluntary, community, college etc.

3.5   Independent or part of group?

3.6   Contracted or non-contracted?

Appendix D
Questionnaire – customers

DISTRICT ID		
ID NUMBER		

leeds metropolitan university

Job Outcome Targets Face to Face
Customer Survey Questionnaire 2005

Introduction

Hello, my name is XXXX, and I am from Leeds Metropolitan University. We are currently conducting a survey on behalf of Jobcentre Plus to find out what people are using the Jobcentre for today and to see if they have noticed any changes to the service provided by the jobcentre in the last six months or so.

Would you be willing to take part in an interview? It will only take around 10 minutes to complete.

Say as necessary - all replies are completely confidential and cannot be linked to individuals. Results are given to Jobcentre Plus as statistics only and the study cannot affect any benefits you may be claiming.

Interviewer Name:
....

Jobcentre Plus Office:
....

Date of Interview:
....

Duration of Interview:
....

JobCentre Plus District	ID
Calderdale and Kirklees	01
Devon	02
Grampian and Tayside	03
Greater Merseyside	04
Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth	05
North West Wales and Powys	06
Tees Valley	07

Section A: Your use of the Jobcentre

1   Could you tell me the main reason why you visited this Jobcentre today?

DO NOT PROMPT, CODE ONE ONLY

1	TO ENQUIRE ABOUT A JOB VACANCY (F2F WITH A MEMBER OF STAFF)
2	TO ENQUIRE ABOUT A JOB VACANCY (USING WARM PHONES)
3	TO LOOK AT VACANCIES ON THE JOBPOINTS
4	TO ATTEND AN INTERVIEW WITH AN ADVISER
5	ATTEND FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW (SIGN ON)
6	TO REGISTER AS UNEMPLOYED / MAKE NEW CLAIM FOR BENEFIT
7	TO ENQUIRE HOW TO QUALIFY FOR/ CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT AND/ OR OTHER BENEFITS (SUCH AS INCAPACITY BENEFIT, DISABILITY BENEFIT ETC)
8	TO SIGN OFF (STARTING A NEW JOB)
9	TO ASK ABOUT EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING SCHEMES
10	TO ASK ABOUT A JOB RELATED MATTER (NOT A VACANCY ENQUIRY)
11	TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT / ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW WITH STAFF
12	TO MAKE A COMPLAINT
13	OTHER **(PLEASE SPECIFY)** ……………………………………………………………………………………………… ………………………………………………………………………………………………

2   And did you do anything else whilst here today?

DO NOT PROMPT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1	TO ENQUIRE ABOUT A JOB VACANCY (F2F WITH A MEMBER OF STAFF)
2	TO ENQUIRE ABOUT A JOB VACANCY (USING WARM PHONES)
3	TO LOOK AT VACANCIES ON THE JOBPOINTS
4	TO ATTEND AN INTERVIEW WITH AN ADVISER
5	ATTEND FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW (SIGN ON)
6	TO REGISTER AS UNEMPLOYED / MAKE NEW CLAIM FOR BENEFIT
7	TO ENQUIRE HOW TO QUALIFY FOR/ CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT AND/ OR OTHER BENEFITS (SUCH AS INCAPACITY BENEFIT, DISABILITY BENEFIT ETC)
8	TO SIGN OFF (STARTING A NEW JOB)
9	TO ASK ABOUT EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING SCHEMES
10	TO ASK ABOUT A JOB RELATED MATTER (NOT A VACANCY ENQUIRY)
11	TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT / ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW WITH STAFF
12	TO MAKE A COMPLAINT
13	NOTHING ELSE
14	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) ……………………………………………………………………………………………… ………………………………………………………………………………………………

3   How frequently do you visit this or other local Jobcentres in the area?

PROMPT FOR AN APPROXIMATION AND CODE ONE ONLY

4   Did you visit this or other local Jobcentres in the area at all between June and December last year (2004)?

CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

1   YES   **(GO TO Q6)**
2   NO   **(GO TO Q5)**
3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q5)**

5   What do you think about the service you receive from Jobcentre Plus?

PROBE FOR BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPRESSIONS

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……………………………………………………………………………………*Go to Q30*

Section B: Changes in Service

I'd now like to ask you about any changes you may have noticed in the service provided by Jobcentre Plus between the last 6 months of 2004 (ie from June to December last year) and the first 6 months of this year (ie from January 2005 up to now).

(Interviewers MUST ensure that the respondent has understood the timescales before asking the following questions.)

So first of all can you tell me……

6   Have you noticed any changes in the service provided by the Jobcentre Plus in that time, and if so what are they?

    PROBE FOR CHANGES (WITHOUT GIVING EXAMPLES)

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(Interviewers note: if respondent mentioned in Q6 any changes relating to the subjects covered in questions 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22 or 25 then they do not need to ask that question but should instead record option 4 and follow the routing to the next question)

7   Have you noticed any difference in your contact with frontline Jobcentre Plus office staff, for example the floorwalkers, receptionists, signing on staff between these periods?

    CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

      1   YES   **(GO TO Q9)**
      2   NO   **(GO TO Q8)**
      3   NOT APPLICABLE, DID NOT RECEIVE THIS SERVICE **(GO TO Q10)**
      4   **ALREADY ADDRESSED IN QUESTION 5, NO NEED TO ASK (GO TO Q10)**
      5   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q8)**

8   **(If No or Don't know prompt with)** Perhaps you have found it more or less difficult to speak to reception or do you spend more or less time with signing on staff now, have you noticed any changes like these?

    CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

      1   YES
      2   NO   **(GO TO Q10)**
      3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q10)**

9   What differences have you noticed?

PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES

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10   Have you noticed any difference in your contact with Jobcentre Plus advisers
(eg. Personal Advisers, New Deal Advisers, Lone Parent Advisers) between
these periods?

CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

1   YES   **(GO TO Q12)**
2   NO   **(GO TO Q11)**
3   NOT APPLICABLE, DID NOT RECEIVE THIS SERVICE **(GO TO Q13)**
4   **ALREADY ADDRESSED IN QUESTION 5, NO NEED TO ASK   (GO
TO Q13)**
5   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q11)**

11   (If No or Don't know prompt with) Perhaps you've have found it more or less
difficult to speak to an adviser or do you spend more or less time with advisers
now, have you noticed any changes like these?

CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

1   YES
2   NO   **(GO TO Q13)**
3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q13)**

12   What differences have you noticed?

PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES

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....

13   Have you noticed any difference in the quantity or quality of vacancies
available?

CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

1   YES   **(GO TO Q15)**
2   NO   **(GO TO Q14)**
3   NOT APPLICABLE, DID NOT RECEIVE THIS SERVICE **(GO TO Q16)**
4   **ALREADY ADDRESSED IN QUESTION 5, NO NEED TO ASK   (GO
TO Q16)**
5   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q14)**

14   (If No or Don't know prompt with) Perhaps there are more or less jobs on offer
      or the types of jobs available are different, have you noticed any changes like
      that?

      CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

      1   YES
      2   NO   **(GO TO Q16)**
      3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q16)**

15   What differences have you noticed?

      PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES

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16   Have you noticed any difference in the **NUMBER** of jobs to which you have
      been submitted? **(Ensure respondent understands that by 'submitted'
      you mean jobs that Jobcentre Plus have sent them to)**

      CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

      1   YES   **(GO TO Q18)**
      2   NO   **(GO TO Q17)**
      3   NOT APPLICABLE, DID NOT RECEIVE THIS SERVICE **(GO TO Q19)**
      4   **ALREADY ADDRESSED IN QUESTION 5, NO NEED TO ASK (GO
             TO Q19)**
      5   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q17)**

17   (If No or Don't know prompt with) Have Jobcentre Plus staff been contacting
      you more or less often at home to tell you about suitable vacancies, have you
      noticed any changes like that?

      CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

      1   YES
      2   NO   **(GO TO Q19)**
      3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q19)**

18   What differences have you noticed?

      PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES

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      ....

19   Have you noticed any difference in the **TYPES** of jobs to which you have been submitted? **(Ensure respondent understands that by 'submitted' you mean jobs that Jobcentre Plus have sent them to)**

    CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

    1   YES   **(GO TO Q21)**
    2   NO   **(GO TO Q20)**
    3   NOT APPLICABLE, DID NOT RECEIVE THIS SERVICE **(GO TO Q22)**
    4   **ALREADY ADDRESSED IN QUESTION 5, NO NEED TO ASK (GO TO Q22)**
    5   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q20)**

20   (If No or Don't know prompt with) Perhaps you might have been submitted for more or for fewer jobs which you feel are suitable for you, have you noticed any changes like that?

    CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

    1   YES
    2   NO   **(GO TO Q22)**
    3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q22)**

21   What differences have you noticed?

    PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES

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22   Has there been any change in your use of the 'self service' channels, eg. the warm phones, Jobpoints and the Jobcentre Plus website?

    CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

    1   YES   **(GO TO Q24)**
    2   NO   **(GO TO Q23)**
    3   NOT APPLICABLE, DID NOT RECEIVE THIS SERVICE **(GO TO Q25)**
    4   **ALREADY ADDRESSED IN QUESTION 5, NO NEED TO ASK (GO TO Q25)**
    5   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q23)**

23   (If No or Don't know prompt with) Have you been asked to use the warm phones more or less often than before, rather than talking to an adviser, are you using the Jobpoints more or less often, have you noticed any changes like that?

    CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

    1   YES
    2   NO   **(GO TO Q25)**
    3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q25)**

24   What changes have you experienced?

       PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES

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       ....

       ....

       ....

25   Have you noticed any other differences in the services provided by Jobcentre
       Plus between the last 6 months of 2004 and the first 6 months of 2005?

       CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

       1   YES
       2   NO   **(GO TO Q27)**
       3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q27)**

26   What other differences have you noticed?

       PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES

       ....

       ....

27   Between the last 6 months of 2004 and the first 6 months of 2005, do you
       think that the service you received from Jobcentre Plus got better, worse or
       stayed the same?

       CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

       1   BETTER   **(GO TO Q28)**
       2   WORSE   **(GO TO Q29)**
       3   STAYED THE SAME **(GO TO Q30)**
       4   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q30)**

28   In what ways is it better?

       PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES

       ....

       ....

       ....

       ....

Go to Q30

29   In what ways is it worse?

      PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES

      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Section C: Awareness of Jobcentre Plus Target Scheme

30   Are you aware that Jobcentre Plus operates a target system?

      CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

      1   YES
      2   NO   **(GO TO Q36)**
      3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q36)**

31   Can you please explain how you think this system works?

      PROBE FOR DETAIL

      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

32   Are you aware that (insert name of district) has been piloting a new target
      system since January 2005?

      CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

      1   YES
      2   NO   **(GO TO Q36)**
      3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q36)**

33   Can you please explain how you think this new system works?

      PROBE FOR DETAIL

      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

34   Do you feel that the new system has impacted on your relationship with
      Jobcentre Plus at all?

        CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

        1   YES
        2   NO   **(GO TO Q36)**
        3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q36)**

35   How has it impacted on your relationship?

        PROBE FOR DETAIL

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....

Section D: Respondent Details
I'd now like to ask you a few details about yourself for classification purposes only.

36   Record Gender   **DO NOT ASK:**

        1   MALE   2   FEMALE

37   Are you currently registered on any Jobcentre Plus scheme, for instance New
      Deal?

        CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

        1   YES
        2   NO   **(GO TO Q39)**
        3   DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER **(GO TO Q39)**

38   Which scheme is it?

        PROBE FOR DETAIL

....

....

....**If on scheme interviewer can self code Q39**

39   Which of the following best describes your current circumstances, are
      you…….?

        PROMPT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

        1   Registered unemployed and signing on
        2   Not registered unemployed but claiming benefit
        3   In work – not claiming benefits
        4   In work (less than 16 hrs) – claiming benefits
        5   Not in work not receiving benefits
        6   On a Jobcentre Plus scheme
        7   Other **(Please Specify)**...

ASK ALL RESPONDENTS NOT IN WORK

40   How long have you been out of work? (in months) **PROMPT FOR AN APPROXIMATION**

ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

41   Which, if any, benefits are you currently receiving?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1   Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
2   Income Support (IS)
3   Incapacity Benefit (IB)
4   Severe Disablement Allowance
5   Maternity Allowance
6   Bereavement Benefits
7   Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
8   Carer's Allowance
9   Tax Credits
10 Training Allowance
11 Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
12 Housing Benefit
13 Council Tax Benefit
14 Other *(Please Specify)*………..……………………………………………………………
15 None
16 Don't know / Can't remember
17 Prefer Not To Say

42   Do you have any long term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?

CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

1   YES
2   NO
3   PREFER NOT TO SAY

43   Are you a single / lone parent (with children up to 16 years of age)?

CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

1   YES
2   NO
3   PREFER NOT TO SAY

44 Would you mind telling me your postcode?

ASSURE THE RESPONDENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND THAT THE DETAILS WILL ONLY BE USED FOR CLASSIFICATION PURPOSES

Postcode:
………………………………………….……………………………………………

45 Other than when making a claim for benefits, has a member of Jobcentre Plus staff asked you for your postcode in the last 6 months?

CODE ONE OPTION ONLY

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW
THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE

Job Outcome Target pilots – key evaluation questions and related questions

Key strategy question	Related questions
Does Job Outcome Target (JOT) improve the efficiency of Jobcentre Plus by reducing the amount of activity around submissions and/or follow up?	How have working practices changed since JOT was introduced?
	Which activities have reduced/stopped as a result of JOT?
	Which have continued/been modified or introduced?
	How has this been beneficial to the business?
	How have submission activities changed? Have the levels of submissions changed? Does this vary by priority group?
	Has the pattern of speculative submissions changed? Has the volume changed? Has they way they are used changed?
	Do staff believe they are now working more effectively? Why/not? How is this evidenced?
	Has local follow up with employers reduced? If not, why not?
	How has JOT affected the delivery of other Jobcentre Plus targets?
	How has JOT been affected by resourcing issues and productivity? Is there any evidence to suggest that JOT encourages an increase in productivity?
	Has follow up with customers changed since the introduction of JOT (particularly in Option 2)? In what way?

Key strategy question	Related questions
Does JOT encourage cost efficient use of self-help channels?	Do staff understand the new target and how it affects their working practices? Are they confident about what they need to do to contribute to achievement?
	How good are the incentives for staff to adopt new working practices in support of JOT?
	Do staff feel incentivised to prioritise the hardest to help and direct others toward self-help channels? What are staff doing to refocus efforts on the hardest to help?
	Are staff now more willing to direct job-ready customers (regardless of priority group status) towards self-help channels? If not, why not?
	Are staff spending more time with harder to help customers (regardless of priority group status)?
	How does JOT affect job satisfaction? How does JOT affect staff motivations? As a team and on an individual level?
	Do advisers feel that they have the necessary skills and/or support to work more intensively with harder to help customers?
	Do staff believe that JOT has improved the services they offer to customers? How?
	Has JOT changed the role of the floor manager?
	How has JOT affected the working relationships local offices have with Jobcentre Plus Direct? Are they now more willing to refer to customers to Jobcentre Plus Direct now job entry points are not allocated to individuals?
	Do staff believe that referring all job-ready customers to self-help channels is always appropriate? Is this a fair system? Does the system adversely impact on some minority groups? In what way? How could this be resolved?
	Do staff believe that referring all PG 5s to self-help channels is always appropriate? Is this a fair system? Does the system adversely impact on some minority groups? In what way? How could this be resolved?
	Do staff think that referring more people to self-help channels will increase the potential for employers to discriminate against certain groups? Do they have any evidence of this happening?
	Do staff think that there are any customer groups receiving worse service now, because of JOT? Why?
	Are job-ready clients being directed towards self-help channels? Is this always appropriate?
	Are harder to help customers receiving more time with advisers? Are their needs being addressed more fully?
	Do job-ready clients find it easy to use the self-help channels? If not, why not?
	Do job-ready clients have adequate access to the self help channels? How could this be improved?

Key strategy question	Related questions
Does JOT enable staff to focus their efforts more effectively on the hardest to help customers?	How have working practices changed since Jot was introduced?
	Do staff feel incentivised to prioritise the hardest to help?
	What are staff doing to refocus their efforts on the hardest to help?
	Which activities have been reduced/stopped as a result of JOT? Which have continued/been modified? Have any new activities/initiatives been introduced to help the achievement of JOT? How has these been beneficial to the business?
	Are staff willing to direct job-ready customers to self-help channels?
	What impacts has JOT had on advisers' time?
	Has JOT allowed staff to spend more time with the higher priority customers? If not, why not?
	How has JOT affected job satisfaction of advisers?
	Do advisers feel that they have the necessary skills and/or support to work more intensively with harder to help customers?
	Do staff believe that referring all job-ready customers to self-help channels is always appropriate? Is this a fair system? Does the system adversely impact on some minority groups? In what way? How could this be re solved?
	Do staff believe that referring all PG 5s to self-help channels is always appropriate? Is this a fair system? Does the system adversely impact on some minority groups? In what way? How could this be resolved?
	Do staff think that referring more people to self-help channels will increase the potential for employers to discriminate against certain groups?
	Do staff think that there are any customer groups receiving worse service now, because of JOT? Why?
	Do advisers have sufficient local labour market knowledge to make appropriate referrals to external provision or submissions to vacancies? And are they helping customers in to externally advertised vacancies, as well as Jobcentre Plus ones?
	Have districts changed the way they use Adviser Discretion Fund (ADF) in light of JOT?
	Do staff use a wider range of providers (both contracted and non-contracted) than they used previously? How knowledgeable are they about the services available to their customers? Do they know which services are most appropriate? Has the customer base that they refer to provision changed in any way?

Key strategy question	Related questions
Is it possible to effectively performance manage JOT? What gaps in performance management information need to be filled prior to any national roll-out?	Does JOT contribute positively to effective performance management? Are there any gaps which need to be filled prior to any national roll out?
	Do staff understand the new target and how it affects their working practices? Are they confident about what they need to do to contribute to its achievement? What tools are they using? What changes have they made?
	What, if any, are the problems with the new target? How are these being addressed?
	How good are the incentives for staff to adopt new working practices appropriate for JOT?
	Can managers effectively manage performance in a JOT environment?
	Is there sufficient Management Information (MI) available to support managers? Is the available MI fit for purpose?
	How could the MI be improved?
	Are there any MI gaps which will need to be filled prior to any national roll-out?
	How have management practices changed since JOT was introduced?
	Is JOT suitable for effectively measuring/monitoring and improving performance? Why? How could it be improved?
	How are managers managing individuals now that numerical targets around job entries are not used? How is performance measured?
	How do managers manage performance of JOT? What MI do they utilise? Do they use any other means and sources of information?
	Are managers able to identify areas in which to improve performance? How?
Is it possible to effectively manage people under JOT? How does JOT affect staff behaviours, the Performance and Development System (PDS), and team/office/partnership working? Does JOT produce a 'cultural change' within Jobcentre Plus offices?	How have management practices changed since JOT was introduced?
	Is JOT suitable for effectively measuring/monitoring and improving performance?
	How are managers managing individuals now that numerical targets around job entries are not used?
	How is performance measured?
	How does JOT work alongside the PDS?
	Are managers able to identify areas in which to improve office performance? How?
	Do staff understand the new target and how it affects their working practices? Are they confident about what they need to do to contribute to its achievement?
	What, if any, are the problems with the new target? How are these being addressed?

Key strategy question	Related questions
	Do staff understand how their performance is being judged in a JOT environment? How translatable is the overall target to performance measures used at an individual/team and office level? Have the changes in the PDS reassured staff that their contribution will be recognised?
	How good are the incentives for staff to adopt new working practices appropriate for JOT?
	Can managers effectively manage performance in a JOT environment? How do managers help motivate their staff, without using personal numerical targets?
	How has JOT affected job satisfaction amongst Job centre Plus staff?
	How has JOT affected staff motivation amongst Jobcentre Plus staff?
	Are managers using numerical targets to assess performance now (e.g. percentage of time spent with customers)?
	Do staff now use a wider range of providers (both contracted and non-contracted)?
	Do staff believe they are working more effectively? Why/why not? How is this evidenced?
	Have relationships with employers (including employment agencies) changed in any way since the introduction of JOT? How and why? Are advisers more aware of their local labour market?
	Have relationships with providers/partners changed?
	How has JOT changed the working relationships between teams/offices/sites?
	Are there stronger links between job broking and benefit processing teams?
	How has JOT affected the working relationships between local offices and Jobcentre Plus Direct?
	Do different parts of the district have changed views on their role/importance in delivering performance?
	Can benefit processing staff recognise and understand their role in achieving the new target?
	Are staff able to see where they contribute to the target? Are staff driven by helping people into work more than achieving their individual targets?
	What new processes have been put in place to facilitate the introduction and achievement of JOT? How well are these working? How have these benefited the business?
	Which activities/behaviours have been reduced/stopped as a result of JOT? Which have been increased/introduced?
	Has the workload for benefit processing staff increased since JOT? If so, how has this been dealt with?
	How has the role of vacancy services teams changed with JOT?

Key strategy question	Related questions
	Has JOT encouraged a team-based working environment?
	How has JOT affected the way staff work with operational colleagues in ESD, particularly Employer Direct and the National Sales Team?
What is the impact on employers of the JOT approach?	Have relationships with employers (including employment agencies) changed in any way since the introduction of JOT? How and why? Are advisers more aware of their local labour market?
	Has JOT allowed employers to discriminate against some priority groups now? If so, how has this been resolved?
	How has JOT affected employers? Have they noticed a difference in the service offered by Jobcentre Plus? Is this an improvement? If not, why not?
	Have employers noticed a difference in the quality and/or quantity of candidates submitted for their vacancies?
	Have employers' relationships with Jobcentre Plus changed? Is this an improvement?
	Do advisers have sufficient local labour market knowledge to make appropriate submissions to vacancies?
What is the impact on providers of the JOT approach?	Have relationships with providers/partners changed? Have the levels of referrals to contracted and non-contracted provision increased?
	Has referral activity changed for different customer groups? In what way?
	Have providers noticed a change in the make up of customers being referred to them by Jobcentre Plus? Are these customers appropriate for the provision on offer?
	Do advisers have sufficient local labour market knowledge to make appropriate referrals to provision?
	How does JOT change how staff use contracted provision? Do they use them more selectively?
	Do staff use a wider range of providers (both contracted and non-contracted) than they used previously? How knowledgeable are they about the services available to their customers? Do they know which services are most appropriate? Has the customer base that they refer to provision changed in any way?
What is the impact on customers (benefit claimants and job seekers) of the JOT approach?	Are advisers spending more time with hardest to help customers?
	Do staff believe that JOT has improved the quality of the service they offer to all customers? Why/why not?
	Do staff believe that referring all job-ready customers to self-help channels is always appropriate? Is this a fair system? Does the system adversely impact on some minority groups? If so, how could this be re solved?
	Are customers experiencing a different service as a result of JOT? Is this an improvement? If not, why not?
	Are customers being asked for their postcode information and to hand in their P45 data to their new employer?

Key strategy question	Related questions
	Have customer relationships with Jobcentre Plus staff (advisers in particular) changed since JOT? Does this vary by priority group?
	Do higher priority customers believe they are receiving an improved service? In what way? Are their needs being more fully addressed?
Are there any adverse impacts from JOT for particular customer groups (for example, ethnic minorities)?	Do staff believe that JOT has improved the quality of the service they offer to all customers? Why/why not? Do staff believe that referring all job-ready customers to self-help channels is always appropriate? Is this a fair system? Does the system adversely impact on some minority groups? If so, how could this be resolved?
	Are customers experiencing a different service as a result of JOT? Is this an improvement? If not, why not?
	Have customer relationships with Jobcentre Plus staff (advisers in particular) changed since JOT? Does this vary by priority group?
	Do higher priority customers believe they are receiving an improved service? In what way? Are their needs being more fully addressed?
	How has JOT affected the service offered to each priority group?
	Are there any changes in the extent to which staff chase up 'unknown destinations' in option 2 districts?
	Are any priority groups being adversely affected by JOT? If so, which ones and why? How could this be resolved?
What other lessons can be learned from implementation of the JOT pilots for any national roll out?	Which processes need to be introduced in a national roll out of JOT? Why?
	Which processes need to be reduced/stopped in a national roll out of JOT? What are the benefits of doing this?
	Should the MI be improved prior to any roll out of JOT? If so, in what way?
	What information/training should be made available to districts prior to any national roll out?
	How has JOT impacted on the role of Employer Direct?
	How have working patterns for these staff changed?
	Have work flows from the different options changed since JOT was introduced?
	Are numbers of unknown destinations reducing in option 2 districts?
	How has JOT impacted upon the other Jobcentre Plus targets? Have there been any unintended consequences? Is it easier/more difficult to manage these other targets now?
	Is there any pressure to still count outcomes data, particularly in option 1? If so why and what are staff doing with this data?
	How has the role of the National Sales Team changed since JOT?
	How has the role of field account managers changed since JOT?